Impact of Remote Work on Organizational Culture

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Abstract-*For decades in organizations culture has been shaped by interactions and face to face employee engagement. A strong and vibrant culture can lead to increased company productivity, better customer satisfaction and more engaged employees. Company culture goes beyond the work that team members do during the day it also incorporates shared values and ideals.*
One of the significant changes in the recent years is the shift towards remote work. With remote workforce assuming importance it is imperative to develop culture that is impactful. Managers must lay clear remote work policies, training protocols and remote onboarding kits and rules of engagement for their employees. This paper attempts to study the impact of remote work on organizational culture highlighting both the benefits and challenges in today's work environment.

Key words: Remote Work, Organizational Culture

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic business landscape coupled high employee expectations and new work culture we must accept that with virtual work is here to stay. Mastering the art of managing remote with hybrid talent is a challenging responsibility of modern-day managers. Managers who can practice managing remote teams are at the advantage of leading a successful modern-day workforce.

Their output is visible in their business outcomes it can also be seen in the increased satisfaction of employees. The workforce can cultivate a healthy work life balance with high levels of productivity, they are able to meet company's goals and increase their teams Retention.

Managing a remote team can be difficult because expecting the workforce to deliver their best without seeing them or potentially meeting them can be a challenge. Remote workforce is bound to get confused about certain processes and expectations, there are chances that the remote workforce is working in different time zones at times like this and it becomes necessary to accommodate everyone's work and management style. Without physical interaction and relying completely on emails and other non-personal forms of communication can be challenging. Without clear rules of engagement and remote working guidelines burnout is inevitable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Processes that work well in a physical environment might need revisiting and alteration to guarantee that they merge well in the remote working context. It is important that companies eliminate practices that slow down the productivity when having to work remotely Amarasinghe,S. (2021). Managers in contact with employees are more aware of the benefits of working remotely. Accordingly, perceived benefits are related to a higher level of reported work effectiveness Kowalski, G., & Ślebarska, K. (2022). Remote working has positively impacted on the performance of employees during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of remote workers because of the pandemic Atoko,S. (2021). The results of the study revealed that remote work significantly impacted employee productivity, communication, and job effectiveness Baakeel, O. A. (2021). Working independently and organizing work tasks, balancing work and home life priorities, and setting personal goals and sticking to them and troubleshooting technical problems are the primary most important skills needed in a remote worker Flores,M.(2019).

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational Culture is a framework of common assumptions, values and beliefs that dictates how organizations treat individuals, and it involves values and attitudes that contribute to an organizations unique and social and psychological environment. It is reflected in the way the organizations connect with each other, with customers, and with stakeholders. The

behaviour of organizational members is strongly determined by organizational cultures. It is the way things are done in an organization. It is the unwritten rules that influence individual and group behaviour and attitudes. Organizational Culture is dynamic, and it must evolve for the organization for it to stay relevant in changing environment.

REMOTE WORK

The increasing prevalence of remote work in recent years can be attributed to various factors including technological advancements, globalization, changing workforce demographics, pandemics and natural disasters and corporate cost savings.

Remote working is not working from the office space, but it is working from the confines of home where the worker interacts with his employer, peers and colleagues through use of technology such as laptops, internet and other collaboration tools. It is believed that employees have more autonomy over their work schedule in a remote work setup.

The evolution of remote work has transformed the way organizations operate, manage their teams, and collaborate across distances.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the impact of remote work on organizational culture.
2. To examine the measures to improve managing remote teams.
3. To understand the challenges involved in managing remote teams.

MEASURES TO IMPROVE MANAGING REMOTE TEAMS

1. Set clear expectations

Creating rules for engaging remote teams should be a priority. Ensuring flexibility and at the same time the rules must be followed by all. Team Meetings must be planned according to everyone's schedule and time zones, deciding the right type of communication channel will also prove to be greatly beneficial.

2. Create accountability

It is important to give employees autonomy and see that they are accountable for their tasks and projects.

They should be able to report on their progress and roadblocks.

3. Be mindful of time zones

The workforce may have their base internationally, therefore its better to use schedule features with email and messaging applications to deliver messages to remote employees.

4. Don't micromanage

The biggest detriment to remote teams is micromanage. If the employees are producing good business outcomes and meeting goals the manger can be assured about the success of their teams. Managers must therefore focus on the output and not on the output. It is important to focus on outcomes not activity so that employees do not feel micromanaged.

5. Allow for flexibility

It is essential to allow flexibility with your remote workers, since the employees are working remotely over which the manager has no control it is important not to create unnecessary rules. In a controlled setting where they are confident of performing as per requirements their productivity can increase.

6. Provide regular recognition

In order for remote work not to turn into a monotony it is important as a leader to recognize work done and give due credit. The manager can organize in regular intervals performance awards and celebrate employee milestones.

7. Training employees to work remotely

Collaborating virtually and creating healthy boundaries has to be set in place. In order to do so it becomes essential to bring professionals to train your team on remote work best practices such as training on collaborative applications and software.

8. Talk about Career Progression

Career Progression can take backseat in remote working model. It is important therefore to check with your employees about their desire to acquire new skill and develop new talents.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORK ON CULTURE

Communication and Collaboration

Remote work has reimagined how communication and collaboration happen in virtual environment. Managers have now began placing emphasis on clear, concise, and effective communication. Greater attention to details such as investing in digital too that facilitate seamless collaboration, making sure that distance is not a barrier to teamwork is now emphasized. All this has proved that physical presence is not a prerequisite for effective collaboration.

Flexibility and Autonomy

Adopting flexibility and autonomy in remote work has empowered individuals to design their work schedules around their peak productivity hours it has led to fostering a culture of trust and responsibility. Remote work can lead to decentralization of power and less office politics in many situations leads to reduction in bureaucracy and control. This ultimately leads to higher job satisfaction.

Inclusivity and Diversity

Geographical and Physical barriers are broken down in remote work creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce. This is paving way for tapping global talent pool and bringing together individuals from varied backgrounds and perspectives.it allows an organization to recruit individuals with diverse skills, experiences and perspectives fostering innovation and ensuring problem solving capabilities.

Result oriented Culture

The remote work model has made it possible to shift the focus of work from 9 to 5 workday to a result-oriented approach. This has led to employees consciously contributing to results than have their presence merely in office.

Adaptability Culture

Both companies and employees have had to learn new skills and embrace digital tools to substitute for their absence, thereby fostering a spirit of adaptability. This will bring a long-term change in the way the organizations function.

Work life Balance and Well-being.

Remote work has positively impacted work life balance and wellbeing. Employees are having more control over their work environment leading to better productivity. Remote work provides the opportunity for employees to integrate personal activities into their daily routine. Employers can also incorporate regular wellness initiatives and virtual wellness to promote a healthy work life balance.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORK ON CULTURE

Remote work programs have been found have various downsides they prevent organizations from creating and establishing a strong company culture. Remote work can affect development of company culture in the following ways.

Team isolation

At workplace there is enough provision for interaction and meaningful conversations. When employees take up remote work it is often times seen that they interact with their colleagues only via email and occasional calls.

Anxiety among employees

It is often seen that lack of close contact can hinder trust, connectedness and purpose. Misunderstandings and office politics increases and employees can become victimized. There is generally a sense of anxiety always present among employees.

Harder to foster enthusiasm

Its harder for managers to inspire and foster enthusiasm among employees. Because of different time zones and varying cultures it becomes difficult for employees to stay inspired and motivated at all times.

Managers tend to Micromanage

Managers find it difficult to monitor the deliverables of their employees. The degree of procrastination can spiral out of control and it can put undue stress on the employees and managers likewise.

Burnout

Though flexible working hours can promote a number of benefits it can also become disadvantageous for the

employees as they find it difficult to balance work life and home life leading to burnouts.

CHALLENGES OF MANAGING REMOTE TEAMS

Due to lack of Face to Face interactions Supervisors and managers tend to think and believe that their employees do not work efficiently though research proves otherwise. On the other hand employees feel that remote managers are insensitive to their needs and are therefore not very supportive of them.

Lack of clear expectations can result in a lot of misunderstanding among the employees and employers. Employees may have been good performers when they were at office working face to face, but they may not be very good performers while working remotely because of the need to get more directives and clarity on their working.

Productivity at workplace will require defining clear roles and structure for the employees. In some cases employees may find it difficult to work without clear structure and supervision. Even at time managers may perceive out of sight means the employees are not productive and this can prove to be a big challenge for the effective functioning of the organization.

In a remote work environment spontaneous face to face engagement disappears and communication can become strained, and this can leave room for doubts and suspicion.

Replicating the feeling of community and belonging that exist in a physical office workspace is difficult. This is required to sustain a company culture; remote work also makes culture building exercises more challenging.

CONCLUSION

The success of remote work depends on the company's ability to adapt and embrace new strategies for building and maintaining a strong culture. Organizations that prioritize open communication, which foster a sense of community, which creates a culture of trust can leverage the benefits of remote work while doing away with potential downsides. Remote work culture offers employees choice and flexibility while fostering collaboration a sense of belonging. Latest research is showing that 64% of Gen Z and 63% of millennials consider their office to be

their laptop, headset compared to only 48% of Gen X and 43% of baby Boomers.

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