

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE UPON COMPANIES

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1. INTRODUCTION

A highly disputed and full of much significance concept, the organizational culture has the merit of bringing into attention the new vision upon the human resource and on the new type of management implied in the activity of a company.

The organizational culture is formed in time by means of employees, who interact, come into contact with the every day problems, experiment successes and also failures.

The organizational culture may be considered to be the invisible force behind the easy observable and tangible things, the social energy which determine the employees to act positively and also negatively in the process of the work made within the company.

The interest for this concept was developed exponentially, as a continuance of the pressure coming from the inside or outside the companies, pressures which demanded a better knowledge and an amplifying of their competitiveness in order to succeed to survive and develop in the new conditions imposed in the economic or politic field.

Within a company, the organizational culture helps us understand the differences which appear between what is formally, officially declared by the managers and what effectively happens in it. With its help, the different rules, procedures, claiming, declarations or decisions are interpreted and some maybe applied. Moreover, beyond the elements having a formal character which try to establish in a centralized way a certain attitude and behavior among the members of the company., the organizational culture creates and develops to the official versions. Most of the times, a great part of the elements which form the organizational culture are untouchable, unwritten but they have an extremely powerful influence.

Consequently, we can state that there is organizational culture without taking into consideration the company. It is that one which "ties the organization" in a chain of silent significances which give specific human understandings to all activities and organizational processes. Meanwhile, it represents the most important resistance factor in any changing or surviving process of the company.

2. WHY IS THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IMPORTANT?

Out of the definitions given to the organizational culture by many management specialists, the fact that it reflects deeply rooted convictions comes out :

- The way in which work must be organized and the authority exercised;
- The way in which people must be rewarded and controlled;
- The way of necessary and desired planning;
- The work schedule, the outfit;
- The financial stimulus of the employees;

It can also be stated that companies own cultures as well as people have "personalities". The different typed companies have ideas, convictions and different traditions and they are different by their physical aspect, atmosphere and their ways of acting.

The managers of the companies often state that one of the main problems of their company is the "mentality" of the staff. Any "successfully" applied strategy or one which they would like to apply within the companies, without taking into consideration the allotted resources or the "openness" they prove, they encounter an unsurpassed barrier the staff's "old-fashioned mentality". The way in which the staff of the company acts in certain moment, is also a how they "perceive and represent the reality" at a certain moment, is also a consequence of the values, symbols, taboos, rituals and ceremonies promoted within the company, that is the constitutive elements of the organizational culture. The organizational culture determines the employees to act in a certain way, to respect some standards implicitly and naturally and, by their own will, to become convinced sustainers of a certain way of acting that characterizes the company they work for. In Selznick's opinion (1,6), organizational culture is an attempt to penetrate in the living, since, atmosphere, character or image of a company. So, the organizational culture is a way of living and it is materialized in a set of values, symbols, rituals, myths, attitudes and behaviors which are dominant in a company, they are conveyed to the next generations as the normal way of thinking, feeling and acting and they have a definite influence upon the results and evolution of the company.

It is a concept slowly felt in the native companies, even though these have much to retrieve as opposed to the multinational companies that come to Romania with a certain mentality and vision on the success which was built in a steady and competitive environment. The vision makes them be assume. Therefore, the organizational culture is the one to make the difference between a successful company and one which tries to survive.

Thus, the organizational culture constitutes a element of continuity and stability in the company's life, as it is built in time on the basis of some values, standards, customs and mentalities handed down from one generation to another.

3. THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

There is an entire literature dedicated to the organizational change. It implies a change of the way in which we understand the surrounding reality in our every day activities. Thus, some theories have tried to explain the change by means of reporting it to stability, defining change as a state of transitory instability which interrupts an equilibrium that is otherwise, steady (Lewin, 1958). Other explaining patterns have tried to analyze the change through the differentiation among three levels where the forces that generate them can be identified. So, the organizational change aims at the making of some essential modifications of the company as a whole. Or. As it opposed to the small changes, that require unessential changes of the organizational structure, the working time or the people in different managing or implementation functions.

The organizational change requires the changing of the mission and the vision of a company, the introduction of new technologies and new types of activities, the introduction of a system of evaluation of performances and the remarking of the payment of salaries system, essential modifications in the organizational structure, the orientation towards new groups of target-customers with different necessities and a totally different behavior than that of the targeted customers, the introduction of the management system as an objective and so on and so forth.

The organizational change corresponds to a new fundamental and radical orientation, regarding the ways in which the company will work, having essential implications upon the behavior of all employees.

Resistance to change appears when the employees do not support the efforts for change and the causes of this resistance could be: the misunderstanding of the change

motif, the lack of trust, the habits, the fear for the unknown, the weak individual tolerance at changes, economic reasons, the different evaluation of the situation, the powerful organizational culture, etc.

The causes that lead to the resistance to change are :

1. the change is not clearly communicated by the company;
2. the employees perceive more work with less opportunities;
3. the employees are asked to give up to certain behaviors they are used to.

In order for the cultural change to be successful, the following should be taken into consideration:

- The managers of the companies who are forced to shape the human potential have to offer, by means of the appropriate symbols, a great vision to generate the enthusiasm of the employees and to stimulate a personal commitment, an obvious and sincere one, in the fundamental managerial values, indifferently from the development stage of the company;
- The understanding of the previous culture :a new culture cannot develop unless the managers and the employees understood its root ;
- The finding of an efficient subculture within the company and its use as an example for the employees to learn;
- The finding of a method to help the employees fulfill more efficiently their duties, thus a better culture will appear;
- The perspective of a new cultures as a guiding principle for the change;;

Thus, the success of the organizational culture depends mainly on the careful evaluation of the capacity for change both of the employees and also of the company. Therefore, it can be stated that, when the employees are unsatisfied with the current situation and perceive a low personal risk in the case of the change, there is a good preparation for the change. If the employees are satisfied with the actual situation and perceive a high personal risk, the preparation for change is relatively low.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- In a world in which the environment is continually changing and transforming, the organizational culture may or may not help the company evolve;
- It represents an important aspect in the activity of the company, being the "starting point" of the actions, behaviors and perceptions of the employees of the company;
- It makes the employees behave in a certain way, respect certain standards and, by their own convictions, become convinced sustainers of a way of acting specific for the company, according to its objectives and politics;
- The culture represents a controllable aspect of the company that can improve the profit, the growth of sales, the value on the market and the clients' satisfaction ;
- The success of the organizational change depends mainly on the careful evaluation of the change capacity of both the employees and the company;

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