

Introduction

This essay discusses Sony, General Electric and Intel, the world's three companies that have benchmarked the best practices on the topic of organizational cultural characteristics that support innovation and change. It also discusses the role of ethics and responsibilities in leading innovation and change.

Sony

The Sony Corporation is one of the best-known names in the field of consumer electronics. It was established shortly after the Second World War, and it has introduced a stream of great electronic products. The products include transistor radios, Trinitron televisions, the Betamax VCR, CD players, the Walkman portable cassette players, and the PlayStation game consoles (Wolf P. 2008).

The company's electronics spectrum which includes televisions, personal computers, monitors, audio and video products, computer peripherals, telecommunication devices, and other electronic components generates about seventy five percent of the total revenues. For instance, the sales of the game consoles and software account for about 10% of the revenues. The other part of the total revenue is derived from the Sony's music businesses. These music businesses the Columbia and the Epic record labels. Also about eight percent of revenues are derived from the Sony's motion picture and the television business. This includes the Columbia TriStar studio. Finally, Sony has an insurance business from which revenue of about seven percent is derived from (Flugge J. 2008).

General electric
The general electric Company traces its start to Thomas Edison, who started the Edison Electric Light Company in the year 1878. In the year 1892, a merger of Thomson-Houston Electric Company and Edison General Electric Company created General Electric Company which is the only company that is listed in the Dow Jones Industrial Index today. General electric is a technology and a manufacturing company with diversified services, and a commitment to achieving the customer success and worldwide leadership in each of its business undertakings. General electric operates in more than 100 nations and has about 320,000 employees worldwide. The company's products include the major appliances, lighting products, the industrial automation products, power generation and delivery products, medical diagnostic imaging equipment, electric motors and electrical control equipments. It provides various services including the nuclear power support services, fuel assemblies, military aircraft engines and super-abrasive industrial diamonds. Through National Broadcasting Company, Inc which is its affiliate, general electric company also provides network television services, operates many television stations and provides internet and multimedia programming services. It also offers a variety of financial services through another affiliate called the General Electric Capital Services, Inc (Plummer A. 1971).

Intel

Intel Corporation is the largest manufacturer of semiconductors in the world, with its major facilities located in the United States of America, Asia and Europe. Intel was founded in 1968 and it has changed the world dramatically then. The company has invented the microprocessor that has made possible the first calculators and personal computers. By early 21st century, the Intel Company's microprocessors were found in about eighty percent of personal computers worldwide. The company's products also includes computer chipsets and main boards, the flash memory that is used in the wireless communications and other applications, hubs, routers, switches and other products for the Ethernet networks, embedded control chips that are used in networking products, the laser printers, the imaging devices and storage media. Intel Company remained competitive through its combination of good marketing, well developed research, manufacturing proficiency, legal proficiency, and its alliance with software Microsoft Corporation which is a giant software company (Pizzigati S. 2004).

Organizational cultural characteristics

The organizational culture guides the company through employee self-management and socialization and it supports the company's strategies and implementation efforts. These processes enhance stability and continuity. The individuals learn to adapt as the culture is absorbed. The company's culture is sustained through rituals, ceremonies, stories, and heroes, leadership, policies, and important decisions that are present. When the individual in a company fits with the culture, the relationship becomes powerful and enduring. The company's culture changes when the internal and external forces become strong enough to overcome any resistance to change. The strong cultures enhance organizational performance in two ways. First, they improve the performance by energizing the employees i.e. appealing to their higher values, and rallying them around a set of meaningful and unified goals. Such ideals enhance the employee commitment and effort because they are inherently engaging and fill voids in identity and meaning that some believe, characterize the contemporary Western society. Secondly, the strong cultures boost performance by shaping and coordinating the employees' behavior. The stated norms focus employees' attention on the organizational priorities that guide their behavior and decision-making (Schein H. 2004)

Organizational cultural characteristics of Sony Company

The Sony Company's commitment extends to helping local the communities, fostering better educational systems, funding several research activities to cure diseases, supporting the culture, helping the disadvantaged youths, improving the environment and encouraging volunteerism in employees. The company's efforts reflect the diverse interests of its businesses and focus on several distinct areas such as education, arts and culture, health and human services, civic and community outreach and the environment. The Sony is a strong supporter of arts and culture. The education and volunteerism are key components of the Sony Electronics Inc.'s efforts. The Sony Pictures Entertainment supports the arts education and the community involvement. The company provides assistance when large scale disasters struck. For instance, it has helped the victims of major hurricanes, earthquakes and the attack on the World Trade Center in USA.

The Sony Corporation is proud of the many programs and partnerships that have touched thousands of lives in all corners of the world. About 20,000 employees of Sony have responded positively to collecting food for the hungry, building homes for the poor, cleaning the polluted waterways and have helped in many other ways that enhances positive change in the communities in the world (Whitely N. 1993).

Organizational cultural characteristics of Intel Company

The Intel Corporation provides an excellent example of an organization that was dominated by a clan culture. The major features of Intel's culture are collective responsibility, cooperation, and the consensus decision-making. In Intel, teams become a critical part of the work environment, and the accomplishment of the team objectives is valued more as compared to the accomplishment of individual objectives. Intel's buildings are designed with excess of conference rooms where the individuals can meet informally. The managers are always encouraged to share information with each other, criticize each other's actions, and open the decision making to all levels of the organization. Intel believes in long term employment opportunities reassigns the individuals who face career development problems instead of firing them. Grove, Robert Noyce and Gordon Moore, the founders of Intel placed the cultural emphasis on cooperation on teamwork. They run the Intel Corporation as a team and they take an active role in teaching new employees about the organization. For instance, Andrew Grove the Intel President states that his new hire orientation teaching is his most significant contribution to his company. Also, Intel's policies emphasizes on providing equal employment opportunities to all applicants and employees without considering the race, religion, sex, color, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status and gender identity (Law K. 2007).

Organizational cultural characteristics of General Electric Company

The general electric company has been successive in implementing the organizational culture and behavior in categories which includes motivation, group behavior and organizational structure. The General electric company successively puts into use the following characteristics of organization culture (Trevino K.2010).

Attention to detail

The general electric company focuses in detail into critical areas such as the customer service, the quality of products, performance targets and decision making.

Risk taking and innovation

The employees of general electric directs their focus to innovation which is used as the foundation for determining the risks for change in power generation, aviation technology, health care and research facilities.

Aggressiveness

The general electric company provides the necessary tools which increases the aggressiveness of the employees.

Orientation of people

The general electric company regards their employees as their greatest asset and they are always passionate about improving their life styles with new technologies and new ideas.

Team orientation

The GE Company always involves the nurturing of diverse teams in some areas such as global research, public relations marketing and others.

In conclusion, the general electric obtains its stature through successive application of organizational behavior and culture concepts. The GE has very successive frameworks through reinforcement, goal setting and involvement of the employees in decision making process. It also offers many incentives to the employees such as salary increments and allowances (DocShare).

Best Practices for Building an Innovative Work Culture

Innovation is one of the most critical capabilities that the most successful organizations have since it is responsible for the development of new products and services, winning marketing communications programs and successful business strategies. Bottom of Form Companies who wish to create an innovative work must support

and embrace an environment that is conducive to innovation. The following are some of the best practices which embrace an innovative work culture that have been put forward by most authors (Pizzigati S. 2004).

Promotion of the Individual Growth

The employee's willingness to invest creativity at work is produced from the employer's desire to invest in the employee's growth. When the employees believe that their own growth is valued by the employer, they make more innovative contributions. The relevant training should be compulsory and to ensure that all the employees are given the opportunity to benefit from it. This instills a culture that supports the release of individuals from the demanding roles to ensure their development. Good training leads to better understanding of the opportunities which are relevant for career development and provides the employer with increased innovation (Rea J and Kerzner H.1997).

Optimizing the Work Environment

The flexible and well equipped work environments are most conducive to innovation. The functional teams should have the ability to immediately reserve sufficient spaces where adequate seating, boards, and projection equipments are available. The essential office comforts such as water and coffee should also be available to make the employees feel comfortable. The employees should have the freedom and authority to hold meetings to identify efficiency and the workplace improvements.

Build Confidence

Confidence is derived from encouragement and freedom from the fear of making a mistake. The confident employees are always aware of their abilities and they are more likely to experiment with innovative solutions. Encouragement instills confidence in individuals, especially the employees. Confidence can be hampered when the individuals or employees are criticized. The employees should be encouraged to solidify ideas through further experimentation.

Creating a Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging comes from being valued and appreciated by both work mates and management for one's contributions. A variety of reward mechanisms are effective in acknowledging the employee contributions and showing appreciation. Ownership provides a sense of purpose in the organization, and often provides opportunities for the innovative contributions. When the individuals feel that their ideas are recognized, and that they share a part of the company's success, an inclusive environment has been created (Rea J and Kerzner H.1997).

I agree with the above because innovation has attracted more attention as one of the processes that all organizations must possess in order to retain and increase its viability. Innovation in an organization creates change in the environment that other organizations must follow in order to have a sustainable competitive advantage. Innovation takes a certain frame of mind that tolerates and sometimes thrives on positive change. The importance of ethics in leading innovation using current events in business ethics magazine

Many of the ethics and compliance leaders seek a workforce where everyone is able to demonstrate very high levels of personal accountability. The employees at all levels feel a certain sense of commitment to the organization. If they realize something that doesn't work rightly, they will take action, not because they are told to, but because they need to safeguard the organization that is under their care.

Innovation and productivity is only brought about when the creative people feel safe in an ethical work environment where their ideas are listened to and also respected. Whether to encourage new designs of products or processes to make workflow more efficient, the creative people need to feel that their contributions are worthy, and they undergo suffering because they are trying to make all things better.

It is evident that accountability, respect and open communication drives performance and leads to trust and creativity. They also help in maintaining higher standards of integrity. In the assessment of the success of the company's programs, the owners of the ethics responsibilities should consider the levels of the engagement of employees and their innovations.

SWOT analysis

SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and its analysis is a useful tool for decision-making for all situations in business and organizations. The following SWOT analysis shows General Electric's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats which gives a clear picture of the business environment that General Electric is operating in at the present time (Berkowitz N.1989).

Strengths

These are positive elements, something they do well and is under their control and the main strengths of General Electric include.

- Forming alliances with other popular businesses is a major point for General Electric as it helps in bringing new customers and making the business more effective.
- Being a market leader, General Electric is key to their success as it boosts reputation, profit and market share
- Being financially strong helps General Electric deal with any problems, make many profits and out perform their rivals. General Electric has a high percentage of the market share which implies that it is ahead of many competitors.
- General Electric's position in the market is high and strong – a major strength in this industry as they are ahead of many rivals.

Weaknesses

These are aspects that need to be improved by GE because they put it behind the competitors.

- These weaknesses of General Electric include
- Problems with the stock are a major weakness for General Electric as they need to keep up with demand.
- The GE performance in Asian market is not up to the required level

Opportunities

These are external changes needs and trends that could enhance GE's strategic position and they include the following

- General Electric could receive benefits from Governmental in the form of grants, allowances and training.
- The changes in technology could give General Electric an opportunity to enhance the future success.
- The merger opportunities could be explored for General Electric and used to acquire more new customers and new markets.

Threats

These are factors which restrict, damage or subject the GE Company to risks. The company should be aware of the threats and prepare for them when considering important strategies. The main threats General Electric include

- The regulations requiring money to be spent or measures to be taken could put financial pressure on General Electric.
- Extra competition and new competitors entering the market could threaten General Electric.
- GE is one of the largest producers of pollution in the world and therefore the government regulation on environmental issues is a threat for GE.

The challenges and solutions associated with managing multicultural organizations

Managing communication in multicultural or multilingual organizations is a more complex task, compared to companies of one nationality or speech community. Suspicion and conflict may arise due to communication difficulties in diverse organizations. The barriers to communication in multicultural groups sometimes lead to absenteeism, reduced morale, discord, lack of market orientation and customer focus. This implies that if the companies seeking competitive embrace diversity, they risk the communication problems. To reach an understanding of the problem, a discussion about the implications of functionalist research on intercultural communication is necessary, because it claims that there is a relationship between communication style and the cultural distance. Also, the focus of intercultural communication should direct more attention to the maintenance of social boundaries, instead of the objectified categories that are ascribed to a group, such as nationality (Gail M. 1995).

The role of ethics and responsibilities in leading innovation and change

Specific behaviors that connect ethics and compliance with innovation and productivity are useful in the achievement of both cultural and business objectives, accountability, respect, open communication and it leads to trust within an organization.

Conclusion

Many companies in the world are not able to integrate the ethical behavior with the core behaviors that drive the business success.

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