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Case Study 1

Question 1

How would you characterize the culture in this company? What are the dominant values?

From the case study, it is clear that the company do have a strict culture. First is the symbol culture is strict whereas they do not allow any type of friendly arrangement in the staff office but they prefer they style of professionals as the tables are arranged formally. That is the reason the executive's office was back arranged to the old formal style when the manager was unhappy with the new friendly style. The second thing that is clear is the power structure; the power is hold only by the upper management as the executive was not allowed to take his own decision to change his office structure. The executive do not hold any power with him to do the changes. In another term, the executive is not authorized enough power do take decision to do changes in his office and change it to his desired and preferable way. He is restricted in term of power. While the third reason for telling the organization have a strict culture is, the organization's structure. The executive and his managers where arranged in a structure of hierarchy whereas the upper level management holds more power in decision making rather than the down level management. This is good in term of managing their staff but, never been good for the staffs as they can't be participating actively in the organizations. The staffs won't come up with their own ideas and very controlled by the upper level management's commands and orders.

Talking about the dominant values of the organization, their first value is their office arrangement, which is symbol of their management is fixed by the upper level management. Next is the power on decision making is owned by the upper level management. These dominant values are not encouraging workers involvement as they are arranged in a very strict and power limited structure.

Regarding the culture traits, the company is very much low on adaptability and involvement. This caused them to be 'poor in term of flexibility'[1] of their organization. But the company has high level of consistency and their mission is focused. These two traits promise them a 'very stable organization'[1].

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[1] The statement is based on Dr. Dan Denison Research. Reference document attached on CD (Soft Copy)

Case Study 1

Question 2

Why did Ted Shelby's change experiment fail? To what extent did Ted use the appropriate change tools to increase employee communication and participation?

       Ted Shelby's change experiment failed because it was not encouraged by his upper level management due to a strict culture. While asking "to what extent" or "how much" did Ted use appropriate change tools to increase employee communication and participation? The answer can be "only half" or "around 50 percent". This is counted on the way Ted Shelby reacted. As the case shows that Ted Shelby had changed his office arrangement and settings to encourage employee's involvement in term of communication and participation. But anyhow, just changing his office settings won't work 100 percent to the motive. And the action that should take to move forward his motive is, he should "walk down the hill", means he should get out of his office and walk to the employees and talk with them to have an active communication. This will encourage participation from employee's side.

Case Study 1

Question 3

What would you recommend Ted do to change his relationship with subordinates? Is it possible for a manager to change cultural values if the rest of the organization, especially top management does not agree?

As discussed in the "question 2" (on page 2), for Ted to change his relationship with subordinates, he need to approach them straight forward and have an active communication which will encourage the employee's participation better directly.

Logic speaking, of course it is not possible to do changes as long as the upper management do not encourage any sort of changes. For an organization to move and operate efficiently, the top management is the most responsible person. But in many cases the top management lack in term of encouraging employee's communication and participation. In most organizations, to over come this problem, the top management do authorize their power to the down level management to have the authority to take decision on what changes the organization need to take to operate efficiently and allows them to implement the changes. This promises flexibility. But for this Ted's case, the top management does not authorize him the enough power to implement the changes. Therefore any changes that Ted attempt to do won't be approved nor allowed by the top management. The conclusion is, top management's approval and authorization is needed to do any change and not possible for a manager to do the changes in the culture values without it.

Case Study 2

Question 1

What techniques increased Rich Langston's communication effectiveness? Discuss.

First technique is the 'open door' policy. This is because the policy had break through the most common barriers in the upward communication. The open door policy enabled his staffs to straightly walk to him and talk about their problems, ideas, suggestions or dissatisfaction with out any restriction blocking them. This puts Rich Langston as the first person to know about the employees in term of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. And open a good communication and understandings between the staffs and Rich Langston the top management.

Next is his techniques of "meeting his senior managers". As explained in the case, Rich Langston do arrange a regular meeting with his senior manager's regarding any issues that are seemed to be inadequate. In another term, inadequate issues are known as rumors around the company. Rich Langston takes his intelligent step by taking about this sort of rumors to his senior managers and gets clarifications from them straight forward and he can work out to solve it. The meeting will give enough time and chance for those senior managers to exchange their opinion and concern regarding the issue that were raised up in the discussion.

Third is the "Three-Party meeting" technique. This was explained in the case itself that Rich Langston arranged this Three-Party meeting after listening to one of his staff's complaint against his manager. Rich Langston did not keep silent after listened to his staff's complain but he immediately arranged the Three Party meeting. And this Three Party meeting had opened a good solution for the problem as the manager and staff was invited for talk together with Rich Langston regarding this matter. And he finally managed to solve this issue smoothly as his technique of "Three-Party Meeting" was the right technique for problem.

Conclusion is Rich Langston has increased his communication techniques by adapting and implementing effective communication techniques as mentioned and discussed above.

Case Study 2

Question 2

Do you think that an open-door policy was the right way to improve upward communication? What other techniques would you suggest?

Open door policy is definitely a right way to improve upward communication. This is because it is an open option for the staff to handle their problems. There won't be any barriers in term of meeting the top management. Most staffs are not willing to settle up their problems with top management because they need to follow up to the problem through their managers who is being in between the top management and the staff. The staff knows that when an issue is raised up and placed as complain, it will first of all reaches the hand of the manager before reaches the top management. In this stage, the manager does have their authority to filter the complaint before forwarding it to the top management. This causes complain is now changed or edited and had of course missing out some points. The missed out points are name as "important points" by the staff while the managers named it "not important points". The message that reaches the top management won't be original any more. These sorts of problems do not rise up when an open door policy is implemented.

Beside this technique, the management can also implement the "feedback" technique whereas all changes took place within the organization will called for feedback from the staffs. If there were any disappointment, the changes can be rolled back by the top management immediately.

Other than that, "decision making involving the employees"[2] also highly suggested. Whereas before the company is about to do any changes, the top management could ask opinion from their employees regarding the changes or issues. And top management can react in the right manner to do the changes or solve the issues.

On the other hand, staff always tried to hide and protect their identity when they are about to do a large complain that might impact the organization badly. In this sort of cases, the top level management can encourage anonymous opinion to be accepted. The most common example that implemented in most organizations now days is the

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[2] Technique based on article published by L.M. Dulye & Co., Warwick, NY, www.lmdulye.com, 2003

suggestion boxes and anonymous surveys. This ensures the information of the employee who complained to be ignored and not mentioned at all. The employee will feel safer to give his honest opinion.

Not only those, "Round table Talk" technique also an effective way. This technique calls all the staffs and managers to be held for open discussion regarding their own organization. Many ideas and opinions can be exchanged in here. The staffs and managers will always give equal rights to talk and express themselves. Varies issues can be discussed and varies solutions can be suggested.

Else than all that, "third-party involvement" or "neutral-party involvement" techniques also will contributes much. This is very useful technique when a conflict rise up in organization such as the manager and staff had misunderstanding. Similar to what happened in the case itself. Staffs really hate talking to top management regarding their own manager because the power is hold by top management. The staff is just a staff. Neutral party involvement will give more space for the staff to settle up the conflict. When the neutral party involves, there will be no power differences between the staff and the manager. They both will be treated same and employee's respond is highly appreciated and encouraged. Therefore the staff will feel free to talk about the issue and settle up the conflict.

Case Study 2

Question 3

What problems do you think an open-door policy creates? Do you think many employees are reluctant to use it? Why?

Open door policy has its own disadvantages as its advantages. Open door policy makes easy for employees to meet their top management with no barriers. For example, in the case itself, Rich Langston who received complain from Lorey took an action to arrange 'three-party meeting' with Lorey's manager, and finally the manager confessed that what he did was wrong and agreed to change himself to manage his staffs better. This sounds like an advantage right? But how if the manager did not confess and do not agree his mistakes? The whole story will be twisted and the conclusion is the staff, Lorey will be in trouble and his manager will start to hate him straight forward causing much serious problems. This will complicate the communication and understanding between Lorey, the manager and Rich Langston. In general, we can understand that opening the door for the staffs to walk in and complain will cause much bigger problems if the complain was unable to be solved.

Talking in general, the open door policy won't be a hassle for the staffs to practice. But sure lots of employees are reluctant to use it. In another meaning, they are unwilling to use it. The main reason is, staffs basically work for their salary to continue and improve their living style. And they always have their fear of losing their job. With this open door policy, when staff walk in and make complain, they have fear and chances of losing their job. This even much proved from the case study itself; refer to paragraph 2, line 10, where Rich Langston asked Lorey "have you considered leaving the company?" This is where Lorey himself faced his own fear of losing his job if he refuses to meet his manager.

The conclusion is open door policy is of course an effective technique to encourage upward communication but it is not preferred way by employees. Staffs will prefer anonymous way rather than the straight forward way.

Soft Copy

The soft copy is attached in a Compact Disc (CD) below.

It includes reference document and articles which was collected from varies source with the motive of completing this assignment.