

Communication

MERIT-BASED HR POLICY A DEVELOPMENTAL TOOL OR AN ALIBI PAPER?

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ECONOMIC reforms have brought in drastic changes in the industrial world of post-war periods. What we studied yesterday is not useful today. What we study today may be of little use tomorrow. Further, gap between theory and practice is widening. Besides, people seldom stay long enough in a particular organization to see results of the changes they bring about. Actual problems, which are increasing day-by-day in the organization, need a solution. The future professional should equip themselves with the necessary tools that will ensure smooth sailing in a highly competitive industrial world. These professionals or corporate managers require to define exactly the three M's-Money, Men and Matter to become a proper holding of the organization. Here, the HR development and training have been accepted as an integral part of the corporate philosophy. More and more companies will need expert inputs in these areas. Besides, leadership is all about being comfortable with ambiguities. This quality has also to play a key role.

The economic reforms leading to liberalisation and globalization and also the growing competition in the domestic and global markets give better emphasis presently on HR development. Coming generation will invite a situation where both the HR development and the qualities of a leader remain playing a key role for becoming a world class provider.

Concerns of HR Department in the Coming Years

The present business world has been facing an increasing level of problem day-by-day. One of the main reasons is the fast changing customer expectations beyond limits. The role of HRD man has to change. As the customer expectations know no limit, the managers in all business units are under constant pressure to maintain high quality service – the kind which is akin to international standards. But to develop upto a level of a world class provider of goods and services, it is most essential for the organisation to engender a good team work within its set-up. The corporate sector must strive for and ultimately lead an honest way of doing business. It should avoid resorting to illegal means of doing business. It should adopt transparency in dealings except, business secrets. It should on its own accept and discharge its social responsibilities. It may go for the objective of profit maximisation but not by polluting the environment-ecologically or otherwise.

Besides, the organization cannot afford to fit a square peg in a round hole, neither you can hide the non-performers. The HR department, therefore, has to prepare a complete action plan that can endeavour to enhance the organization's service quality as also meet any exigencies that crop up in day to day functioning of the set-up which we can term as "Succession Plan".

The HR department's main objectives to take up the plan are enhancing productivity, retention of employees, maintaining the world class provider of goods and services, developing HR to the optimum level. As a part of enhancing productivity, the HR department should introduce the multi-skilling and cross-training programmes. The main reason for taking up this programme is the non-availability of employees at the time of requirements. The multi-skilling programme if it is implemented properly will not hamper the organizations service quality and requirements due to exigencies such as transfer of employees, death of employees, arising vacancies, retirement of employee, leave or resigning from their post, etc.

Besides, Cross-training is indeed one way of enhancing teamwork. It provides back-up support in instances where several posts fall vacant. Cross training, on one side, will be highly helpful in the flat and divisional organization structures where large number of employees are working in different divisions and sections: Moreover, through a systematic multi-skilling and cross-training HR Policy and programme, employees can be empowered to act in various capacities. This type of HR Policy may be one of the most effective way of encouraging internal promotions and placement. The highly competitive present day business society and the future generation will definitely benefit from this multi skilling and cross-training HR plans and policies. As the present environment demands cut-throat competition, there is a dearth of well qualified and well trained professionals particularly in the service businesses like hotel and tourism industries. The present multi-skilling and cross-training HR Policy will help best by promoting the companies' own internal personnel to man all key positions instead of recruiting from out side which may require to train and take its own time to adapt in the current business culture of the organization. This system of internal promotion and placement is on one side the answer to employee retention problems. This HR plan if implemented well, will be able to solve, at least to some extent, the problem of high employee turnover.

On the other hand, very interestingly, internal training and promotion system brings down the cost of labour. You may find abundant labour in each and every corner of the country, but very few are well trained and selecting such trained personnel is not an easy task. Because of this, their employment is not cost effective as the recruitment, selection and all the more supervision costs remain high. Training helps in making the employment cost effective. New recruitment leads very frequently selection of such low competency and inefficient workforce. Their inefficiency necessitates a higher number of persons to be employed in the organizations.

The HR plan is not a set *recipe* for promotions for all. Instead, its relevance would depend on the initiatives taken by the departmental heads and the individuals in their respective capacities. The multi skilling of the employees help the organization draw the right kind of person from the reserve to be deployed at many of its new locations.

When the new HR plan is taken up, all the departments are required to identify the specific positions where successive planning and/or exigencies planning are required. The respective departments will have to see how the potential employees can be equipped for the identified position. Besides, the departmental heads will be required to analyse the organizational hierarchy with a view to succession and fill vacancies at lateral and vertical levels as and when these occur. This a pro-active approach towards forecasting the requirements of manpower for key positions.

While taking up this merit based-multi-skilling and cross training HR policy, the HR department should also be concerned to the employee's technical knowledge, time management, leadership skill, morale and attitudes. The HR Department will appraise the individuals from time to time during the course of planned development, further probing into areas of improvement and highlighting strengths. Besides, the HRD man has to be a trainer too instead of merely being an organiser of training programmes. The role of HRD man has to change. He should develop HR to the optimum level, whatever be the level of employees. He has to change his dogmas, and instead be innovative and creative. Sticking to the beaten track is no longer possible, he has to chart a new track for himself, based on his organization's needs and necessities.

The training department, while taking care of the established training needs in respect of in-house training, will be responsible for –

- ✍ Taking care of practical training out-lined
 - ✍ Identifying the need for cross-training in related departments
 - ✍ The parameters which may cover in this plan include:
 - Selecting the right kind of candidate
 - Identifying the details of training, both theoretical and practical, proposed to be imported to such identified employees specifically
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- ≠ The longevity of the training process which the individual can become responsible for all those activities
- ≠ Ability to compare strengths and weaknesses for their self-evaluation
- ≠ The capacities of the employee to draw out specific career paths for specific position.

This merit-based HR policy will be a major step in future so that the new generation can compete the cropping-up competition at the same time for achieving and maintaining their objectives and goals.

Implications of Intuition, Creativity and Innovative thoughts in HR Policy

By implementing a new HR policy, we might be the best today. It does not mean that we would be the best tomorrow. For a turbulent competitive environment where the managers don't have enough information or time, they need to constantly innovate, combine their conscious judgement with their non-conscious intuition as a source of knowledge or guidance, to make an effective decision.

The decision making style differ from one executive to another, but all take important decisions. And these decisions are critical as they affect the performance of individual, organization and the business as a whole. In a uncertain/unpredictable business environment, executives and managers cannot just depend on available facts/figures for taking a decision as values, beliefs and feelings are an integral part of the process.

In this context, leaders intertwined by intuition, creativity and innovative ideas gained an advancement in taking an appropriate decision. HR department which is following the in-house placement policy based on multi-skilling and cross-training policy tries to produce such types of leaders and executives whom at one stage or another direct and control the organization in his discretion.

Besides, the present world, we live in a chaos. Still we have to lead, perform and bring about results. The first rule of being a good leader in to be comfortable when nothing is crystal clear. The HR department should hunt for a new leader and/or should train for such a leader having a global mindset to accept challenges. He should be able to take risks and do the analysis of opportunities. Indeed, without the individual even seeking it, the job of being a successful executive creates what we might call psychological space-the freedom to act-which in turn brings risks. The HR policy should also make the employees aware of the risk involved. The employees must understand risk, not remove it. If we remove risk, we remove profit. It, so, comes out the importance of sound and consolidated HR policy which take into the creative, innovative and intuition bound aspects of the whole organization. Because in one stage or the other, the trained employee may come out as a perfect leader manager.

Conclusion

Hence, it can be concluded that the merit-based HR policy which gives emphasis on multi-skilling and cross-training should help the employees and executives equip with the necessary tools that will ensure smooth sailing in a highly competitive environment. Besides, the consummation of intuitive, motivational, innovative and creative ideas in the minds of the employees/executives side by side with the merit-based HR policy help the companies to enter the next millennium without much troubles. I believe, the human resources managers would do well to recognise this aspect. This may help at least the employees and executives to chart a new track for themselves based on their organizational needs and incentives in the coming generation.

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