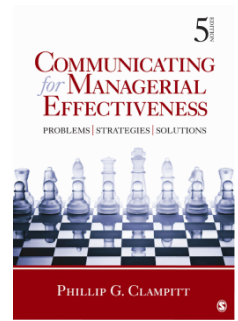


Chapter 4: Imparting the Organizational Culture

Chapter Summary

Every organization, just like every society, has a culture that defines its essence. Culture is the fundamental value and belief structure of the organization collectively shared by the employees that is symbolically expressed in a variety of overt and subtle ways. The type of people in the organization as well as the corporate symbols, slogans, and philosophies are all clues into corporate values.



Corporate culture influences the organization in a number of ways. It influences how an organization analyzes and solves problems as well as how the company responds to change. It also affects employee motivation and customer satisfaction.

How do managers impart the culture? Some ways include: (1) using the socialization process of a new employee to reinforce the organization's value structure, (2) linking values with specific behaviors, and (3) developing symbolic reminders of the core values.

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- define organizational culture
- discuss how culture influences the organization
- describe why organizations have culture and how their values can be discovered
- identify signs in a particular company that highlight the core values that are deeply held by the organization
- discuss how an organization's culture can be evaluated
- identify how leaders can effectively communicate the values of the organization

Outline

- I. What is Culture?
- II. Does Culture Matter?

- A. Culture affects the bottom line
 - B. Culture influences how an organization analyzes and solves problems
 - C. Culture influences how the company will respond to change
 - D. Culture affects employee motivation and customer satisfaction
- III. How Can We Discover the Culture?
- A. Examine the corporate slogans, philosophies and value statements
 - B. Reflect on the type of people in the organization
 - C. Study symbols and heroes
- IV. How Can We Evaluate the Culture?
- A. Does the organization seek to close the gap between the stated culture and actual culture?
 - B. Is the actual culture suited for the organizational challenges?
 - C. Does the actual culture fit the employees' beliefs and values?
- V. How Can Leaders Effectively Impart the Culture?
- A. Craft actionable cultural statements
 - B. Appropriately socialize employees
 - C. Develop symbolic reminders of the core values
 - D. Link values with specific behaviors
 - E. Filter information through the values
 - F. Tell the right stories and create opportunities to originate stories
 - G. Use rewards as powerful reminders
 - H. Manage conflict through the values, not the hierarchy

- I. Routinely evaluate progress on the core values
 - J. Assist in the evolution of the meaning of the values
- VI. Conclusion

Case 4.1: Sustaining Cultural Values

Purpose:

The purpose of this case is to learn how to create and sustain cultural values.

Situation:

You've entered the CEO's orchid-filled office and notice a randomly stacked set of books on storytelling such as *Story Factor* by Annette Simons, *Managing by Storying Around* by Armstrong and *Squirrel Inc.* The CEO of this 500 employee printing firm explains that he has become "enamored" with the idea of managing through storytelling and points to the stack of books. He notes with frustration that he devotes hours to creating timetables, schedules, goals, and policies. He also acknowledges that when he comes face-to-face with employees he will often decide to alter his plans or policies because of their concerns. In fact, some employees have secretly called him a "girly-man" even though they recognize his extraordinary abilities to work with big-name clients and consistently provide a good return to shareholders. He wants you to come up with a list of actionable ideas to transform his company from one driven by policies and schedules to one inspired by stories and a commitment to customers.

Your objectives:

1. Develop a critique (strengths and weaknesses) of the existing managerial philosophy.
2. Create an alternative story-based approach outlining a strategy and related tactics.
3. Provide a critique of the story-based approach (strengths and weaknesses).
4. Suggest an implementation schedule based on sound communication principles.

Case 4.2: Detecting Organizational Culture

Purpose:

The purpose of this case study is to analyze the impact of organizations' cultural values on communication patterns.

Methods:

1. Select two companies to compare and contrast.
2. Collect various "artifacts" (slogans, corporate philosophy, etc.) which are representative of each company's culture.
3. Conduct interviews with various employees to determine organizational heroes, stories and values.
4. Determine two or three critical values of each company that are suggested by your research.
5. Find specific evidence from your research that supports your selection of the values.

Your objectives:

1. Discuss how the values are communicated in each company and how the values interact with one another.
2. Determine the likely communication strengths and weaknesses of the companies based on the above analyses and your knowledge of organizational communication. Provide sufficient rationale for your speculations.
3. Speculate on the "health" of each culture.
4. Compare and contrast the cultures of the two companies.
5. Summarize what the exercise has taught you about communication and organizational cultures.

