Culture Experience Paper- Visitation

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to observe the role of culture in a 21st-century organization. The goal is to reflect on how the organization operates based on their cultural environment. The overall mission, vision, custom beliefs, and values are important factors to determine when analyzing the day to day operations of a business. The cultural experience was examined by the observer visiting local board members. However, the reflection on the global culture was not highlighted, only the culture of the local business chapter. The mission of the leaders in this organization was to redefine their vision as well as transform their culture to match their worldwide view. Leadership styles were identified to achieve an accurate analysis of obstacles and challenges this chapter faced. Furthermore, by visiting and sitting with leaders in a board meeting, certain obstacles were identified including diversity issues, equality concerns and inconsistency of organizational goals. The assignment also addresses leadership development. In conclusion, the major challenges this business chapter is listed to give more insight on creating a vision for organizations whose culture aligns clearly with future success.

Keywords: culture, success, organization, experience, leadership, development, vision, mission, teams, staff, leaders

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The planned visitation for this cultural experience was previously scheduled to finalize the final steps in a hiring process. The group interview was arranged for Monday, June 11, 2018. The position was to fulfill the role of an area coordinator for a Christian nonprofit global organization. The fourth interview in this expedition was held at the monthly board meeting with nine other board members from diverse backgrounds. The group interview was the decisive stage in the employment procedure. The most ironic part of this interview process centered around the company's hiring objective to incorporate more diversity into their organization. The new state coordinator mentioned a prior interview that he would be implementing a change in culture to create better opportunities for success in the future. Chand (2017) believes that ultimately, the culture of an organization- particularly in churches and nonprofit organizations, but also in any organization – shapes individual morale, teamwork, effectiveness, and outcomes (p.7). Therefore, this paper will discuss the role of leadership as it pertains to a cultural experience with a 21st—century organization.

The Purpose

For various reasons, change in business propels leaders to focus on aspects of a company that will aid in achieving goals and redefines the mission. Burns, Shoup, and Simmons (2014) believe that every organization will handle change differently, and the pace of change will depend on the organization's environmental context (p.138). Although this organization wants to experience change, they do not have strategies in place to attract the type of staff that represents the culture they serve. As they have become more aware of this challenge, they have set a goal to redefine their organization's vision model. According to Chand (2017), top leaders need to

spend at least as much time analyzing their culture as they do crafting their new vision, strategy and marketing plans (p.12).

The board meeting consisted of leaders from different business experiences and age but was not ethnically diversified. The board members comprised of five women and five men all ranging from age 40 to 70. In prior meetings, it was disclosed that not everyone was open to the idea of diversifying on a leadership level. "A toxic culture is like carbon monoxide: you don't see or smell it, but you wake up dead" (Chand, 2017, p.12). From the words of their new state coordinator, the company had run its course on old concepts and beliefs, and for them to grow, they had to maneuver through the complexities of transformation. Burns, Shoup, and Simmons (2014) state that as an organization goes through a transforming/ adaptive process, paradoxically they become more definite and unattainable (p.141). Meaning, a multitude of perspectives are defined over time. However, the author also emphasizes that clarity only reveals new obstacles, challenges, and chaos. The obstacles, challenges, and chaos identified throughout this visitation pertained to different organizational visions at each leadership level. Lack of equality of women in leadership roles as well as a nonexistent presence of diversity in leadership positions. Although this is a global company, the state coordinator pointed out that they have a monoculture organization only in their United States entities and chapters.

Leadership Style

One observation noted through each stage of the interview process was that each leader had a different leadership style. More importantly, it seemed their vision was not uniformed throughout the company. Chand (2017) notes that the shape of an organization's culture begins at the top level (p.9). Throughout the process, leaders at different levels expressed their role and vision. The first interview was with the county director, her style was more of a spiritual leader.

Yukl (2013) declares that spiritual leadership describes how leaders can enhance the intrinsic

motivation of followers by creating conditions that increase their sense of spiritual meaning in

the work (p.350). Her focus in the interview was to see if potential candidates had a relationship

with God. Furthermore, how would they use God's purpose for their lives to enhance the mission

of the company. Moreover, her vision entailed creating more positions for women as leaders

who had a heart to serve the Kingdom. The second interview, included the county director again

along with the state coordinator. The state coordinator displayed more of a charismatic

leadership style. Yukl (2013) suggest charismatic leaders arouse enthusiasm and commitment in

followers by articulating a compelling vision and increasing follower confidence about achieving

it (p.335). The state coordinator infused excitement and enthusiasm with the new direction of the

company. He also wanted to incorporate more business-minded concepts into the organization

and not focus solely on ministry. Furthermore, he charisma was exuded as he quoted book

excerpts, bridged corporate and ministry experiences as well as forecast future objectives. The

third interview, entailed staff members who were in key roles such as supervising and

administration. Leading to the fourth interview, this visit encompassed business members and

volunteers who served as the voice and direction of the local county. Nevertheless, the change

was initiated from the top and everyone else excluding the county director, had not adjusted to

the new concept of diversification and equality, specifically the board chairman who directed the

board meeting Monday. According to Chand (2017) leaders need to recognize that people have

different degrees of capability to embrace the chaos of change (p.80).

   During the board meeting visit the county director-held the highest position equal to the board

chairman, yet the board chairman's authoritative style overshadowed the county director's position

throughout the meeting. Furthermore, observation revealed that the county director did not elicit any

leadership authority throughout the meeting. She did not voice any opinions, comments, or the direction of the meeting after introductions. The impact of her silence was very noticeable, for, at times, her presence was ignored.   Perhaps the board members had established a foundation for balance, and with one pulling back and the other moving forward, competition or struggle for power was eliminated. Or, could it be as Rosenbach, Taylor, and Youndt (2012) state female leaders often struggle to cultivate an appropriate and effective leadership style one that reconciles the communal qualities people prefer in women with the agentic qualities people think leaders need to succeed (p.153). Although the chairman and county director held the same role of authority, only the chairman displayed characteristics of leadership in this meeting. Yukl (2013) reveals that in most organizations only top executives have sufficient authority to implement new programs or change the structural forms (p. 5).

The other important observation was that the organization's vision was not consistent with the chairman of the board as well. His focus or vision was to maintain the credibility and history of the organization and his leadership style modeled the traits of an ethical leader. "Ethical leaders seek to build mutual trust and respect among diverse followers and to find integrative solutions to conflicts among stakeholders with competing interests" (Yukl, 2013, p. 357). The perplexing part when analyzing the dynamics in the room was figuring out why the county director became completely withdrawn? In hindsight, the state coordinator in the previous interview mentioned that the company had the heart for ministry but not a drive for business. Perhaps he was pointing out that because the county director had a background in ministry the business aspect of leadership was lacking and needed more of a balance.

Leadership Development

There is a belief that leaders are either born or made. Kouzes and Posner (2010) state they have never met a leader who wasn't born. Meaning, if a person is born, then they can be a leader. According to Kouzes and Posner (2010) leadership can be learned and it is an observable pattern of practices and behaviors, and a definable set of skills and abilities (p.120). Hence,

when thinking in terms of leadership development, individuals in this role can aid in their

success. Furthermore, the book entitled *"The Truth about Leadership"* by Kouzes and Posner is

great guide to leadership development. The best part of the book is covered in truth nine or

chapter nine "leaders are learners and learners are leaders" (Kouzes and Posner, 2010).

Development can start from learning. Learning from experiences, failures and effective models

of leadership from others. Development is adopting a mindset of growth. Kouzes and Posner

states that mindsets carry over into performance. "We would be the first to argue that coaching

can facilitate leadership development, but the stark reality is that a leader's mindset, fixed or

growth, significantly impacts his or her inclination to lead" (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, p.126).

Also, deliberate practice and a great support system which includes family, mentors, and coaches

all can support in developing a leader.

Conclusion

The cultural experience assignment portrayed areas in this organization that could benefit

from change and growth. However, change is complex, and staff members must be included in

the organizational transformation to achieve long-term accomplishments. As Chand (2017)

points out, "every organization experiences natural cycles of growth and decline" (p. 76).

Furthermore, this author notes that failure in any one area can propel leaders to revamp their

vision. Failure can birth fresh ideas that align with the organization's current position

(Yukl,2013). For this visitation assignment, there was various dynamics present such as

inconsistency with organizational vision and lack of diversity and equality. However, with an

effective leader and a willing staff, success is in sight. Chand (2017) admits that redefining

failure for your team and your organization is a vital part of creating a strong, inspiring culture

(p.76).

References

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