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Alliance Softball Culture Assessment

Organizational culture is defined as “the underlying beliefs, assumptions, values and ways of interacting that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization” (gothamCulture, 2022). Being a part of the Nyack College/Alliance University softball team for five years, I have been able to assess the organizational culture that has developed and taken place. Using the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), I have been able to examine the current and preferred dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of “employees”, organization glue, strategic emphases, and criteria of success. Divided into these six topics are four culture types: (A) Clan Culture, (B) Adhocracy Culture, (C) Market Culture, and (D) Hierarchy culture.

In scoring Dominant Characteristics, it was clear that the organization was the strongest in Clan Culture. The team has always been fairly tight knit, and members have felt comfortable being themselves and sharing about themselves. What is lacking is a sense of structure, competitiveness, and members willing to take risks. A large reason why this organization has lacked these concepts is a lack of structure and accountability from the manager, or coach. At the beginning of the season, standards were not set and in turn, members took advantage of this lack of authority. The types of norms that would help to transform this culture would be to initially set individual and team goals and hold members accountable for putting in the effort to make the

results happen. It would also be recommended that coaches provide more mentorship in order to create a learning environment, which the organization has lacked.

For the Organizational Leadership category, it was once again clear that Clan Culture was the strongest. It should be noted that team leaders provided the facilitating they could, but ultimately the leadership of coaches has set the tone for the organization. This shows how important the guidance of the head leader is, as they are the individual who establishes the type of environment that will take place. The leadership style should have been more organized while also being results-oriented. The current leadership has failed in executing performance in consecutive years, but no changes have been made. To change this and create a stronger culture, it would be recommended that a more authoritative approach be made.

Next, the Management of Employees section scored a bit more evenly than the first two sections, but Clan Culture still prevailed. This showed that there was a good sense of teamwork, consensus, and participation. The areas that were not quite as strong included uniqueness, high demands, and conformity. It has been made clear throughout the last four years that demands were not high by management/coaches. Without high demands, there are no goals for the team to reach for. The organizational culture lacks a sense of motivation because there are no clear goals or accomplishments. Although there is a positive team environment, there is not a sense of unity in terms of striving to tackle team objectives. My suggestion would be to create an environment where the demands are taken seriously and risk-taking is more prevalent and accepted.

The fourth section, Organization Glue once again scored highest in Clan Culture. This means that the glue holding the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. While this is true, the organization lacks formal rules and policies. In addition, there is no emphasis on development or aggressiveness and winning. This is evident based on the results of the last four

seasons. With a largely losing record, it is clear that winning has not been an objective for the softball team here at Alliance. While winning is not everything, it is important in bringing confidence to players and the team as a whole. Striving for wins is important in holding members accountable and reflecting on what members can improve on. When the team constantly loses and no adjustments are made or recommended by leaders, it is difficult to ever reach success in an organization. It is difficult for an individual to make positive changes when they do not know what they are doing wrong. For this reason, I suggest that the team or the coaches watch film or host meetings where individuals can learn from their game performance to gauge what they are doing well in and what they need to improve on.

For the last two sections, Strategic Emphases and Criteria of Success scored highest in Clan Culture with a score of thirty. They had the most success with high trust, openness, commitment, and concern for people. These two categories had the most even scores in the remaining sections. This means that there was a fairly even number of opportunities, competitive actions, stability, innovation, competition, and smooth scheduling. It has been made clear that there is a high sense of trust within the team, but there is a disconnect between the team and management. Having this disconnect leads to an unhealthy organizational culture where members do not feel comfortable speaking up and expressing themselves. This leads to unproductive practices and leaves the team and coaches on separate pages in terms of expectations. It would be my recommendation to try and reestablish a relationship between players and coaches where speaking up is not only encouraged but accepted. Under no circumstances should a team member feel that they are fully responsible in coaching their teammate. The coach must provide feedback and create a learning environment.

The Alliance University Softball team certainly has concerns in terms of its organizational culture. Lacking a healthy organizational culture for the last four years has only worsened the issue of comfortability and reliability between the team and coaches. The team has developed trust for one another but there is a disconnect between team and management, which has led to differences of opinions and a lack of accountability. With no clear goals or expectations, it is difficult for any organization to succeed, let alone a collegiate softball team where competition is elite. With a new emphasis on relationship building, strategizing, organization, and goal orientation, it is possible that this organization could be turned around for the better and a winning mindset could be established.

Reference

gothamCulture. (2022, July 22). *What is Organizational Culture? | Complete Definition and Characteristics*. https://gothamculture.com/what-is-organizational-culture-definition/