ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN BALKAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract: Currently, the organizational culture in the Balkan Countries stands very low. One reason for this is the lack of an appropriate set of values in employees. Socialism made all citizens equal. Of course, this is not at all true. Market liberalization was the first to confirm this. The wide-open iron gates made the much criticized 'equalitarianism' disappear. This calls for increased employee awareness, a concept possible only through cultivating appropriate organizational culture. A new era of assertion, work dedication, and fair reward and motivation systems is coming. All these require much effort and a change in mentality. A brand new organizational culture.

Keywords: change, organizational culture, values, attitudes.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to make an analysis of thinking and share the author's rich managerial experience. The reasons behind the collapse of the big concerns in the Balkan are not just lost markets or poor quality products, but also what the competition requires – a completely new approach to management. The new management requires innovative ideas, dedication, hard work, job satisfaction, high quality of life for employees, good working conditions, trust, respect, proper remuneration and no nepotism.

MANAGERS FROM THE BALKAN REGION

Managers from the Balkan region consider that everything belongs to them and that they can buy even employees' dignity with a salary of only 200 euro. Of course, the employee can respond with disobedience, barrenness and fluctuation. Therefore, changes in management are necessary. The time for governance by whip and chair is over.

Currently, the organizational culture in the Balkan Countries stands very low.

In almost all countries large companies turned private in an inadequate way. Privatization models included allowing packets of shares to be controlled by the managerial teams, buying shares at extremely convenient prices, as well as voucher systems. There was misuse in nearly all cases. The main reason for this is treating each individual as equal and powerful. This, on the other hand, comes from each individual's own set of values. Families were shaped in the patriarchate model, the father being the head in the family (which still is the case) and the only one who has a say. The mother, in the attempt to protect her children, treats them as princes and princesses. In the same time, the perception of the value of someone else's labor was distorted. If I am not the creator of this, no one is! Even if someone achieved something, very often those who know him/her wouldn't believe it, or would say that someone else, someone more successful, is responsible for that triumph.

Envy became the dominant sentiment. The wide open iron gates made the much criticized 'equalitarianism' disappear. A new era of assertion, work dedication, and fair reward and motivation systems is coming. All these require much effort and a change in mentality. A brand new organizational culture.

Changes must come in place, and they do, however slow this process may be. For more than twenty years sensible managers struggle to create and respect true values within the company, to stimulate and reward, and most of all, to trigger changes in the behavior of employees, in the organizational culture by employing appropriate organizational design, and finally, in the individual's social culture.

Such changes will set off greater creativity and innovation in employees, which in its turn will increase productivity and efficacy of the organization.

The changes will bring greater creativity and innovation of employees, which will increase productivity and effectiveness of the organization.

Oligarchs, who now manage most of the land in the Balkan countries, have quickly gained their capital. Anyone who had a good entrepreneurial idea and could bring a new product to the market got rich. Also, many large companies were improperly privatized in almost every country, and huge numbers of companies were abused, with the property usurped. The owners of new businesses didn't have the time needed to transform their social culture, which presented the basis for new relations that were to be created in new firms.

In the initial stage of formation of companies, the founder is the one who creates the organizational culture, depending on its values and norms. The reason for this is that in the foundation phases the owner is absolutely committed to working round the clock, sacrifices his/her private life, and his/her ideas are fuel that keeps the company going. But as the company grows, the entrepreneurial idea is not sufficient for its survival and thus it moves on to another phase in which a new management with procedures of behavior is needed.

Now, the manager does not have the basic role as in the beginning. But he struggles as he wants to preserve the primacy. Usually he makes this in the wrong way, utilizing some old-fashioned autocratic management.

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

The organizational culture stands for the way employees think and act in the organization[1]. It expresses the values, attitudes, written and unwritten rules and the relationship between them. By means of an organizational culture the organization can form the norms of behavior of employees.

Values are found on a deeper level - they are durable convictions that determine people's behavior. Example of organizational values are: customer care, team work, propensity to take risks, trust and support among members of an organization, job security, creativity, responsibility, reward according to results and more[2]. Apart from organizational values, employees' individual values also affect cultural values - personal responsibility, work excellence and other. The values of individuals are very important for the relationships within the organization and their performance. These two categories of people create a predisposition for behavior in a certain direction. They represent the subconscious character of people and are very important components for employees' behavior.

Values are beliefs or concepts that drive people to make certain decisions. Most values are formed in the early childhood years under the influence of parents, teachers, friends, as well as the personality type and its scripts and other factors.

In the Balkan countries the transition was marked by patriarchy ruled families, the father being the head of the family and the only one with a say, while the mother wanting to protect her children treated them like princes and princesses. Unfortunately, that was not motivating when it came to work.

Values are usually given in written form: Statements of the company's mission and goals. Literature on the subject defines terminal and instrumental values according to Milton Rokeach and moral values, according to Kent Hodgson[3]:

Terminal values	Instrumental values
Comfortable life	Ambition (hardwork)
Exciting life	Open-mindedness
Feeling of achievement	Capability (competence)
World peace (no wars and conflicts)	Mood (serenity)
True friendship	Responsibility (security, confidentiality)
Salvation	Love

Ethical values

Ethics is the science of moral values or rules that shape behavior and inform people whether they are acting rightly or wrongly.

Kent Hodgson defined seven major moral values that every individual should follow in order to make a moral decision behavior:
- Dignified life
- Independence
- Honesty
- Loyalty
- Openness
- Humanity
- Common well-being

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[1] Maierhofer, N. I., Griffin, M. A, & Sheehan, M. Linking management values and behavior with employee values and behavior: A study of values and safety in hairdressing industry. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology.

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[3] Hofstede, G. Attitudes, Values and Organizational Culture: Disentangling the Concepts. Organization Studies, 19/3: (1998), pp. 477-492.

Transition threw out of balance the first ethical value - decent life. People found themselves stranded on the street, jobless and without basic sources for a normal life. If one lacks these basic sources, one can never be entirely independent; therefore, the common well-being is disrupted.

Tough times, indeed. One of the manager's most difficult tasks was to fire people, a concept named by the Western countries as surplus labor management, which was actually managing other people's destinies. Whom to sack, and whom to make redundant?

Maybe George Clooney played his role perfectly in the movie „Up in the Air", but in life, such roles were difficult to play. There were no programs that would help redundant workers cope with life[4].

Sadness and uncertainty appeared in the organizations. Who could be so creative to fight against fear and uncertainty? Who could talk about organizational culture?

Moral values depend on national culture

The nineties wars, poor privatization of companies, poor quality and design of products, and breach of delivery deadlines led to the dismantling of companies. Then there were strikes, existential problems, destroying the authority of the now jobless father, changing drastically old moral values created by the tradition.

Many researches have proven that if the organization has many employees with the right set of values (according to Kent Hodgson), then the organization is very successful[5]. There is also a view that if the employees have different values from those prevailing in the organization, then they usually leave.

Values can also be generational. There are four types of generations: **Aged, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Ne (x) t**. They all have their own characteristic values: the first respect authorities, order and obedience, the second are open-minded and creative and the first to bring about changes in management. While they demonstrate lack of respect for the authorities, they are intensely inspired by a variety of motivational techniques. Generation X prefers a warm home and to them career does not come first. They imposed the flexible working hours and the quality of life for employees[6]. The Ne (x) t - generation, network or generation Y. These are young people born between 1977 and 1997. This generation grew up with the Internet, mobile phones, text messages. They pertain to a curious, flexible generation, open to cooperation and hold high criteria for themselves. They are team players, optimistic, respectful of the general order, and have true humane values. They cannot find a place for them in the Balkan region. These capable young people continue to seek better life in the developed civilizations.

Although generations in the Balkan countries cannot be divided in this exact manner, we can still say that the basic characteristics of the generations here are common with those from the eastern and western countries. Of course, the influence came from the Western countries.

However new companies have modern organizational cultures that stimulate employees, raise their values, define the patterns of compensation benefits, and reinforce participatory management, with the human being in the center. Recession started playing around again, but difficult times have brought along more courage and wisdom in management.

Still, changes have to be made, however slow this process may be. For twenty years conscious managers are struggling to create and respect true values in the company, to stimulate and reward employees, mostly through changes in employee behavior and organizational culture, using appropriate organizational design and changing the social culture of the individual.

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Organizational culture

The organizational culture deals with the behavior of individual, groups and organizations at the work place[7]. On an individual level, one has to consider the values, attitudes, emotions, personality characteristics, temperament, character, intelligence, needs, perception, attribution, decision-making, motivation. As for the behavior of groups and teams, it is important how they are formed and operate under the guidance of leaders, their power, synergy, and conflicts. At the organizational level, effective operation of organizations depends on the established organizational structure, organizational design, communications in organizations, as well as organizational culture and climate.

Organizational culture – the most delicate part of organizational behavior

Organizational culture is represented by the distinctive spirit and belief of an organization demonstrated through its norms and values usually respected by its people. It also demonstrates how they should treat each other, what type of work relationships should be developed and how to modify certain attitudes[8].

Henry Mintzberg defines the organizational culture as the life-giving soul of the organization.

Employees learn the culture of the organization through **stories**[9] that are associated with the founder and his successes, failings, experiences, mistakes, promotions, which remained in the memory of employees. Stories create the present with the help of the past.

Rituals are also elements of culture and they are repetitive actions that express the underlying value of the company, which objectives are important, and which people are or aren't important. Examples of the most corporate rituals are Zepter's annual meetings organized in large halls in front of large audience. Sellers who have exceeded the quota of sales are rewarded with various gifts, gold or financial rewards. This show is a technique for motivating sales. But it is also one of the main rituals of the company, which employees await for the whole year.

Tangible symbols such as the building's facade, technical equipment, size and arrangement of offices, colors, images, cars, are part of the elements that create the organizational culture and show what is most valuable for the firm. These tangible symbols demonstrate to the staff who is important, the degree of equal treatment established by top management and the types of behavior (risk-taking, conservative, authoritative, consistent, individual, social), as well as the behaviors appropriate for the company. Yet, in many renowned companies, the luxurious premises are not an image of the owner – employee relationship. The luxury serves simply to demonstrate their wealth and power. Demonstrating power through material symbols is very typical for businessmen and oligarchs from the Balkan region.

The language and the lingo used by employees to communicate with each other is part of the culture. The Balkan culture allows only formal communication with the client.

The ethical climate and organizational code are very important for the organizational culture. High ethical behavior with a clear vision and respect for customers and employees by the management team, create high organizational culture and sense of belonging.

The organizational design defines the firm's organizational structure is the means by which the organizational culture is composed. The most recommended one is flat structure, or organic structure, as opposed to a mechanical one, where every employee has the right to communicate with his supervisor, and decisions are made by consensus. In the participatory management each employee can participate in making decisions and everyone's opinion matters;

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these are the management tools for establishing a healthy organizational climate and culture[10]. Here too the design does not allow autonomy. The one who has the power is the one who knows everything. The opinions of employees are important only when the company is in crisis.

The reward system is one of the most important features of a healthy organizational culture, because no one can intervene with the employee's perception and attribution. Even the secrecy of **remuneration** will find cracks to inform the employee who is unfairly awarded[11]. Then he becomes disappointed and certainly cannot fit into the false culture. So, **the respect of employees' emotions and empathy** which helps understand the behavior of employees, evolves in modern organizations as a new model, which is not dealt with by deeply rational historical organizations. However, modern management respects these principles by which people develop and achieve their full potential. Thus, it is easier to meet and evaluate people, because they are accepted for who they are.

Function of organizational culture

The function of organizational culture can be: internal and external[12].
Internal integration affects:
• The attitude of employees towards the organization and the reasons for its existence
• Creates a sense of belonging in the employees
• Increases employees' commitment
• Directs and controls employees' behavior
• Improves collaboration
• Streamlines the process of decision making
• Provides predictability in the behavior of individuals
External adaptation:
• It affects the achievement of the objectives of organization and behavior toward external entities
• Affects how external stakeholders see organization
• Directs and controls the behavior of external entities
• It affects the expectations of entities outside the organization

Types of organizational culture

In the relevant literature[13] we can identify four different types of organizational culture with reference to the concepts: sociability and solidarity: **network culture**, where employees are families and friends who unselfishly help each other and possess information. **Merger culture** - These organizations are focused on the goal. People work hard to reach the goal. They work fast and have a strong sense of purpose. This culture is not just to win but to destruct the enemy too. They focus on the goal and have a small degree of politics. This culture even has inhuman treatment for people with bad performance. **Fragmented culture** reigns in organizations composed of individualists. An example: university professors or lawyers. A **communal culture** which values friendship and performance. People have a feeling of belonging.

The most important issue for the organizational culture is whether it is constructive or destructive. Does it fulfill the basic purpose - to help the firm represent itself better than the competitors? With a good organizational culture human resources become the firm's wealth and not its' cost, which means that the company objectives are realized through people, and not beyond them.

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[10] Robbins, S. Organizational behavior. 9th Edition, Upper Saddle, River, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2003.
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The constructive culture exists when values, attitudes, expectations, and beliefs of the staff help in the achieving of the objectives of the organization[14].

The characteristics and effects of constructive organizational culture are[15]: better communication among members of the organization and spontaneous default behavior between them. It supports social stability of the organization, employees feel part of the whole, and it increases teamwork and achieving goals.

Destructive culture

Even if it is not destructive, the organizational culture that has no features of a constructive one, at its best has static design for the organization. It does not help the organization move forward. This happens when the manager lacks willpower and resources to change the culture in a positive direction and to use its effects. In the Balkans this is the most common type of organizational culture.

CONCLUSION

Organizational culture is an important element of organizational efficiency. Therefore, managers must be aware of what organizational culture is, of its characteristics, and how to cultivate and develop it. One of the most verified ways of changing organizational culture is the system of remuneration[16]. Also, high organizational culture is stimulated through teamwork, democracy, discipline, decentralization, cooperation, avoidance of nepotism, management of knowledge, independence from the state, client relationship, job security, product quality, standardization, good friendly relations between employees, external locus of control, promotion based on performance, diversification, owner - manager, benefits.

In fact, to achieve a high organizational culture it is necessary to apply the principles of human resources starting from workplace analysis, recruitment, selection, training, career monitoring, assessment, compensation, promotion, and communication. The organizational structure, design, and leadership are also important factors that define organizational culture.

Healthy cultures attract productive employees, and productive people build profitable companies.

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