

Corporate Culture

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Abstract

In this paper, aspects of corporate culture as practised in Indian businesses are discussed. Corporate culture is an important element of any business. Business administration officials or supervisors often emphasize the elements of corporate culture their corporations believe in and want their employees to practice the same. Corporate culture is usually a practice not well defined in writing. Yet it is talked about and it is expected that the employees would follow and practice the same. The paper presents the four types of corporate culture presented in Quinn and Cameron (2005) and discuss their relevance in Indian businesses. Dress code and language use, etc. are pointed out.

Keywords: Corporate culture, India corporate culture, clan-oriented, adhocracy-oriented, Market-oriented, hierarchy-oriented, dress-code, language use.

Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is an important element of any business. Business administration officials or supervisors often emphasize the elements of corporate culture their corporations believe in and want their employees to practice the same. Generally speaking, corporate culture has two sides: behaviour and beliefs and goals of the corporation for practices within the corporations and the beliefs and behaviours that all employees follow when they deal with from outside in their transactions. Corporate culture is usually a practice not well defined in writing. Yet it is talked about and it is expected that the employees would follow and practice the same. While hiring a new employee, the officers who decide on the hiring usually consider the potential of the applicant to follow their corporate culture. Practices of senior employees who have been with the corporation for a long time could become an integral part of the corporate culture.

Four Types of Corporate Culture

Quinn and Cameron (2005) identify four types of corporate culture: Clan-oriented, Adhocracy-oriented, Market-oriented and Hierarchy-oriented. (Robert E. Quinn and Kim S.

Cameron Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework. Publisher Jossey-Bass, 2005. San Francisco, CA.)

In **clan-oriented corporate culture**, the relationship between members of the business corporation or business under-taking is family-like. In such companies, shops and stores and other types of business, in India we notice that employees address one another using kinship terms. Elder brother, elder sister, younger brother, younger sister, or cousin, uncle, aunty, grandpa, grandma, etc. become prominent terms of address. Small shops and small stores often come under this category.

Quinn and Cameron (2005) describe **adhocracy-oriented corporate culture** as focusing on entrepreneurship. Getting things done first becomes an important feature. This culture embraces risk-taking and innovation. Tesla Corporation may be considered as an example for this corporate culture (www.tesla.com). With great leadership and initiative Indian software companies brought in prosperity to the owners and shareholders as well as the country (India). The greatest achievement of these companies from a social point of view is to offer employment to all communities and religions without focusing on the members of the company owners as done in the previous generation. And yet these new innovative companies were not really oriented to risk-taking in any significant amount.

Market-oriented corporate culture focuses on competition. Since it is competition-oriented, getting the work done on time and before scheduled time, selling goods in quick and efficient manner, focusing on customer satisfaction, etc. Language used is a language of self-confidence, with some pride about the product promoted.

The last one Quinn and Cameron (2005) identify is **hierarchy-oriented corporate culture**. Even though each position within the hierarchy may have its own decision-making powers, a person in higher position may have the power to change and alter or even cancel the decision of the person below. This is a very common feature in Indian corporations. Our traditional business models in India seem to have emphasized hierarchy. From small street corner shops/stores to medium and large-sized stores in the bazaars of a town clearly demand/demanded hierarchy and discipline and obedience. Creativity and innovation were or are not expected from those in the lower category in the hierarchy. Financial responsibility is assigned to the higher order, but direct contact with the customer is and was still the responsibility of the persons occupying the lower position. Polite language and quick, smart and positive response are expected. Persons demonstrating these features in every day transactions have some powers added to their position in due course.

Dress Code

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Corporate culture could also include dress code. These days business corporations, especially software companies, do not seem to prescribe dress code. Dictionary.com www.dictionary.com defines *dress code* as “a set of rules specifying the garb or type of clothing to be worn by a group or by people under specific circumstances: a military dress code” (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/dress-code>). Dress code is important in many offices and public places such as restaurant. It is different from uniform. Although many workplaces may not insist on dress code that is similar to wearing uniforms, etc., yet companies do not encourage lewd dress, dress that shows violent scenes, mocking at racial minorities and so on. In general, normal garments may be most welcome even when there is no dress code. Corporate culture demands that workers should be accepted readily by the customers and for this common garments with less sex/gender parts exposure are encouraged.

Language Use

Corporate culture also encourages appropriate language use. Most Indian languages honorific terms and verb inflections showing honour to the person addressed or referred to. While most of us acquire such conventions from our childhood in our mother tongues, expressing honour to the person addressed or referred in another language requires some conscious learning of the language conventions of that language and mastering the cultural constraints of that language. With employees in corporations coming from different regions of the country and with different mother tongue background, it becomes the duty of the newcomer to learn the conventions of shown honour to the person address or referred to.

To Conclude

This field of business administration requires close observation and data collection. Descriptive analysis of the situations and the processes adopted in individual corporations will be useful to all the business administration processes in corporation. Such studies are usually sociological, anthropological and sociolinguistic studies. However, such studies will depend on the closer understanding. Observation and description of administrative structure, power and authority and communication processes.

References

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