



Influence of Gandhi's Principles on Corporate Culture and Management - A New Perspective

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Abstract: *In the view of corporate culture in the management, we can see the characteristics of a great CEO in Mahatma Gandhi. He has a multi-dimensional personality characteristic. The management principles of his life reflects, are inherent part of modern management practices. The name, Mahatma Gandhi evokes the image of truth personified, who has been revered by masses and classes equally. Gandhi, Who is known to be thinker, philosopher, leader, politician, saint and many more roles for which he donned the caps simultaneously. His principles have become even more relevant in modern world. They are timeless wisdom which will enlighten till eternity. He lived the principles, followed by actions; and his fraternity had 350 million Indians in 1940s. Corporate culture is implied, not expressly defined, and develops organically over time from the cumulative traits of the people the company hires. A company's culture will be reflected business hours, office setup, employee benefits, turnover, hiring decision, and treatment of clients, client satisfaction and every other aspect of operations. This paper presents the principles and characteristics of Gandhi which are closely related to corporate culture and management. Nowadays how everybody can follow those principles to the effective management of corporate culture in the organisations to achieve good results with rich culture.*

Key words: *Corporate Culture - Gandhi, Culture, Gandhi's principles, Effective management*

Introduction

The name, Mahatma Gandhi evokes the image of truth personified, who has been revered by masses and classes equally. Who is known to be thinker, philosopher, leader, politician, saint and many more roles for which he donned the caps simultaneously. His principles have become even more relevant in modern world. The corporate culture is the set of beliefs that an organization holds and it influences every area of a business. If you are starting a business or running an existing one, the culture that it has is essential to the overall success of your company. Several elements contribute to

a strong corporate culture. Corporate culture refers to the beliefs and behaviors that determine how a company's employees and management interact and handle outside business transactions. Often, corporate culture is implied, not expressly defined, and develops organically over time from the cumulative traits of the people the company hires. A company's culture will be reflected in its dress code, business hours, office setup, employee benefits, turnover, hiring decisions, treatment of clients, client satisfaction and every other aspect of operations.



Every business has a corporate culture. Whether a Fortune 100 mega company or the smallest, sole proprietorship, every business entity has more than a public identity, a set of policies and procedures, or a brand. It also has a corporate culture that must be managed to achieve maximum operational efficiency. Understanding what it is and how it relates to your business can equate to the difference between success and mediocrity for your company.

Inception of 'Corporate Culture

While awareness of corporate or organizational culture in businesses and other organizations such as universities emerged in the 1960s, the term "corporate culture" was developed in the early 1980s and widely known by the 1990s. Corporate culture was used at this time by managers, sociologists and other academics to describe the character of a company, not only through generalized beliefs and behaviors, but also through company-wide value systems, management strategies, employee communication and relations, work environment, attitude, and even company origin myths via charismatic CEOs, as well as visual symbols such as logos and trademarks.

By 2016, corporate culture was not only created by the founders, management and employees of a company, but also influenced by national cultures and traditions, economic trends, international trade, company size and products produced. A well-cited historical example of distinctions between corporate cultures is the traditional business practices of the Japanese, and the American individualistic and entrepreneurial corporate culture of the 1960s.

There are a variety of terms that relate to companies affected by multiple cultures, especially in the wake of globalization and the increased international interaction of today's business environment. As such, cross culture refers to "the interaction of people from different backgrounds in the business world"; culture shock refers to the confusion or anxiety people experience when conducting business in a society other than their own; and reverse culture shock is often experienced by people who spend lengthy times abroad for business and have difficulty readjusting upon their return. To create positive cross-culture experiences and facilitate a more cohesive and productive corporate culture, companies often devote in-depth resources to combating the occurrence of the above, including specialized training that improves cross-culture business interactions.

Characteristics of a Good Corporate Culture

Corporate cultures, whether shaped intentionally or grown organically, reach to the core of a company's ideology and practice, as well as affect every aspect of business from each employee to customer to public image. The current awareness of corporate culture is more acute than ever. The Harvard Business Review identifies six important characteristics of successful corporate cultures in 2015. First and foremost is "vision": from a simple mission statement to a corporate manifesto, a company's vision is a powerful tool. For example, Google's modern and infamous slogan: "Don't Be Evil" is a compelling corporate vision. Secondly, "values," while a broad concept, embody the mentalities and perspectives necessary to achieve a company's vision.



Similarly, "practices" are the tangible methods, guided by ethics, through which a company implements its values. "People" come next, with companies employing and recruiting in a way that reflects and enhances their overall culture. Lastly, "narrative" and "place" are perhaps the most modern characteristics of corporate culture. Having a powerful narrative or origin story, such as that of Steve Jobs and Apple, is important for growth and public image. The "place" of business, such as the city of choice and also office design and architecture, is also one of the most cutting-edge advents in contemporary corporate culture.

Why Corporate Culture?

Business managers and owners should accept that a corporate culture is unique to each company, eliminating a "one size fits all" management strategy. Corporate culture is often defined as the collection of shared values, visions, customs, traditions and internal goals that contribute to make every company unique. Consciously or unconsciously formed by business owners and/or founders, corporate culture issues can contribute to or impede the success of companies large and small by expanding or reducing team effort to reach company goals.

Gandhi – Corporate Culture and Management

We can observe "Gandhiji as CEO" by his principles. Gandhian Principles are timeless wisdom which will enlighten till eternity. He lived the principles, followed by actions; and his mass had 350 million Indians in 1940s. In the view of corporate culture in the management, we can see the characteristics of a great CEO in Mahatma. The management principles

that his life reflects, are inherent part of modern management practices.

1. Walk the talk: Mahatma Gandhi lived simple life. He believed in "do as you say". Practice and preach was not different for him. His life had been open book for anybody to read. Irrespective of the circumstances he always held up to his moral values that he used to preach to one and all. His "walk the talk" had many admirers in British camp, and many swear by his truthfulness.

In today's organizations, people honor and follow leaders whose words are no different than their actions. Companies, who have deep rooted culture of walk the talk, win over customers and prosper beyond expectations.

2. Lead by Example: Mahatma Gandhi has been a great leader who led by example. Be it smaller initiatives like living simple life, fight for untouchables; or bigger movements like non cooperation, salt march, quit India, he has led by example. He led from front. People believed him because he did himself what he expected from them to do.

We have faith and trust in leaders and managers who lead by example. Who tread the path themselves first on which they want other to follow. Faith is the fundamental requisite in the organizations and those who lead by example commands enough of it. Lead by example; command respect, do not demand respect.

3. Build impeccable and honest brand

The brand "Mahatma Gandhi" is one of the greatest brands which has been enlightening and moving people since decades together. This brand has been built on integrity, transparency, quality,



truthfulness and connectivity with every single person. It has emotional connect rather than rational connect with its audience.

Great brands commands emotional connect with its consumers. The great brands build on the impeccable platform of transparency and truthfulness. Even you are also a brand personified; the Brand You.

4. Strategize in line with available resources: The whole freedom movement of Mahatma was based on the principle of nonviolence. There was no other way he could grapple with the mighty British Empire. The biggest resource was empty handed, inspired masses. He utilized this resource in the most efficient way. He strategized every action on nonviolence and moved masses to fulfill the objectives.

Managing and excelling with available resources is the key to success for the organizations. Efficiency in every aspect of business and utilizing the available resources diligently is the hall mark of great management teams. Strategy must be made and implemented looking into the resources available.

5. Build great team and work for a common cause: Mahatma Gandhi had built a great team of leaders from diverse beliefs and principles. Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajgopalachari, Valabhbhai Patel, Jinnah and many others worked in tandem for a common cause; freedom of India. They complemented each other. The team also had a great bench strength.

Great leaders build great teams with members who complement each other. It has leadership at all levels. It has great bench strength which grabs the baton

and continue the race for common cause. Organizations with great teams have potent force to conquer the market.

6. Engage people

Mahatma Gandhi enthralled and engaged people like a magician. He was apt in the art of making people devote everything for the cause. In every single movement he led for India's freedom, he pulled the people together for a common mission. Every one of them was so engaged that they are ready to go to any extent to achieve the goal of India's freedom.

Gallup Inc., a research-based performance-management consulting company, has shown that engaged employees are more productive and more likely to stay with the organization. Engage them with common cause, a common goal, a common mission which must be lived every moment by them. Engaged employees are key to greatness for organizations. Mahatma Gandhi exhibited this lesson long ago. It is still as much relevant as was at that time.

Today's Corporate Culture - Gandhian Principles : There are many priceless gems in Mahatma Gandhi's life . His philosophy is applicable in every facet of life. We only require to get one step underneath and dig the gems out for you.

Management Lessons from a KarmYogi's Life How Gandhiji's strategies can be applied to today's Corporate Culture and management in the following ways

Time Management: Learn to trust time rather than resent it. A delayed well thought out answer is any day better than a rapid poor solution. This instinct to respond urgently does not enable us to persuade, innovate or be creative. Also to be on toes for 24 X 7 results in stress, resentment to those whom are making



demands and fatigue. v We have become slave 24 X7 with smart phones and laptops. A instantaneous reflexive response without proper thought and reflection is a sure recipe of a mistake or mishap waiting to happen. v Business communication with the advent of technology—emails, video conferences, mobile forces us to take a decision instantly. Technology should be allowed to become the master..it should serve the humanity. It is currently used to set the pace. vMake time your ally “ I do not accept my views to be accepted all of a sudden”

To move people in a particular direction get their buy in and make them the stakeholders.v He rejected coercive change because the powerful motivation is not something external but internal. “If I cease stealing for fear of punishment” Gandhi reasoned, “ I would recommence the operation as soon as the fear is withdrawn from me”. Make your leadership organic “We have assumed that we can get men to do things by force and therefore we use force.

Human Resource Management

The people should be recruited based on the objectives and goals you want to achieve rather than on the basis of formal labels.v A good leader should recruit his team , not on the basis of who they are but on what results they can produce. Recruit people not result "...If any Englishman dedicated his life to securing the freedom of India, resisting the tyranny and serving the land, I should welcome that Englishman as an Indian”

Stress Management

Today’s managers should conduct laughing class for employees or gita path as stress busters. He read Bhagvad Gita

whenever felt disappointed. Gandhiji had a good sense of humour which he used to reduce stress.

Environment Conservation : Gandhiji believed that nature can fulfill our needs but not greed.

Decentralization: Gandhiji wanted to make villages self dependant. He developed local leaders at grassroots level.

Innovation : Gandhiji successfully used nonviolent methods like noncooperation,civil disobedience against oppressive rule in history of mankind.

Testing Ourselves: The impact of particular transaction or decision on a particular individual result in loss of support of numerous customers or followers albeit one at a time. Today “company policy” or government policy is used as an important refuge or excuse when responding to the customers or common man complaints. The litmus test of any proposed action was how it would affect the most vulnerable individual imaginable. The test was therefore human and not ideological or general. Put a face on policy “whenever you are in doubt....apply the following test”

Leadership: Today HR managers should have hands on experience of process followed in all departments before giving training to employees. Especially in sectors like retail , BPO Gandhiji always taught only those things which he himself practiced. Leadership By Example & Hospitality it is a must.

Gender Equality : Gandhi had an opinion that men & Women are partners rather than slave of men. Today companies have realized good qualities of female employees.vwomen have equal mental capacity.



Resource Management: Gandhiji knew importance of producing good results even from limited resources.

Emotional Intelligence : Gandhiji overcome fear , anger & panic. He once said " Patience & HR managers need to have patience, control anger while giving training, grievance handling,perseverance can overcome mountains".

Workforce Diversity : Gandhiji seek participation of people of all religion, caste & economic status in his movement.

Commitment : He always kept his commitments, and was workaholic too. Gandhiji used to work eighteen hours in a day whole week.

Conclusion : Mahatma Gandhi had multi-dimensional personality. He had good leadership skills, convincing skill, training & development skills. His teachings are still relevant in present time.... Along with managing operations, marketing and finance, small businesses must manage, direct, control, and maximize the positive components of their inherent corporate culture. Culture not only explains many organizational phenomena ... it is also something that leaders can manipulate to create a more effective organization. Managing corporate culture involves identification of internal and external business conditions affecting your business, while manipulating your company culture to become a more effective player in your market.

Although each company and its corporate culture are individual, three important components present in successful entities. First, the vision, mission and value definitions of the business owner are clear and concise, to achieve the

company goals and objectives, based on the leader's mission. Finally, companies should adopt attitudes that support and focus on the company's goals and strategies. The Organisations are now "out of alignment" with their goal of superior Corporate Culture. Once identified, companies should address and manage sub-cultures to keep them aligned or get them re-aligned with business objectives by following the great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. That will help or hinder your company's success depending on how we manage it. We can observe the perception of philosophical theories which can direct the focus on Management of Corporate Culture to achieve high performance and results.

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