

THE ANT AND TERMITE STORY

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Abstract

Organization Culture is a result of amalgamation of the interactions between the policies, procedures and employee behaviour. Several researches have focused on how various leadership styles can shape employee performance, commitment and thereby organizational culture. This article tries to profile employees on the basis of their level of sincerity and commitment to the organization and the level of recognition received by them from the leaders. It thereby reiterates that the right leadership style can foster the right organizational culture and make the organization progressive.

Organization culture: The Catalyst

Culture is truly a catalyst and it will help in growth, maximization and multiplication. Culture can be nurturing, conducive if managed well and can be suffocating and toxic as well. Organisation culture is the environment created as a result of processes, policies or simply way of functioning of an organisation. Organisation culture acts like a catalyst which fastens the output of any process, but the bad part is it works both ways. Researches have focused upon and have proved relationship between organisation culture decision making, employee performance and productivity (Sheridan, 1992, Gamble & Gibson, 1999, Kopelman, Brief and Guzzo, 1990) Further, it can help in flourishing or floundering the organisation's fortune.





Employee performance and organisation culture is affected to a great extent by the leaders of the organisation, their conduct, their leadership style and their approach towards work and people. (Celluci, 1978, Fuad Mas'ud 2004) It is often seen that with same resources but with changed leadership how the performance changes and this is visible loud and clear in sports. With change in captains or management the team performance changes drastically and we have seen phoenix like rise with change at the helm.

The decision style of leaders, their response to various situations, how they treat their employees not only speaks a lot about them but also creates the daily work environment or culture as well. The behaviour of leaders, the way they treat their different employees, the praise and reprimand style all leads to formation of a culture.

Interplay of employees and organisation culture

Largely in any organisation there will be some employees who are very sincere and some who will be sycophants. Sincere employees will do the jobs assigned, will be proactive, problem solving and will always think in the best interest of organisation while the sycophants will devote a good time singing verses for their leaders, seeking opportunity to praise them irrespective of merit and will not leave any opportunity to eulogize the leaders. Both these categories of employees are found in all organisation and how any organisation treats them sets the fate of these employees as well as the organisation. The behaviour imparted to them will set the cultural tone of the organisation as well and will decide the future of organizations as well

The matrix below depicts different scenarios:

	Recognized	Not Recognized
Sincere Worker		
Sycophant		

The above matrix talks about 4 cultural style which may be a result of recognition or non-recognition of sincere and sycophant employees. Here in this matrix it is assumed that non-occurrence of one (recognition or non-recognition) should not be interpreted as occurrence of

other and further this occurrence and non- occurrence should be looked upon as majority or most of the time. The different style may be interpreted as follows:

a) The Ant Culture: The driving force of this culture will be recognition of sincere employee. It is often said that 'nothing succeed like success' the same holds true here as well, if sincere employees are recognized that sets the right example and tone for any organisation. Irrespective of any appraisal framework used in organizations, or despite any amount of transparency and secrecy maintained all employees know well who is doing what amongst his peers. So when sincere employees are recognized and rewarded it sets the jungle into fire, the employees are motivated, geared up and the output multiplies. Every employee becomes an ant and does things much beyond his/her potential. Team work will be exemplary and the organisation will be a cohesive unit like an ant's colony.

b) The Stray Dogs: The driving force of this culture will be non-recognition of sincere employee. There is no bigger heart break than the non-recognition of sincere efforts and hard work. It shatters them, breaks them from within and they become confused and lose focus. They are full of energy but have no direction and this adds to residual energy in the organisation. They may become stressed, get irritated easily and exhibit frequent bout of angers as well.

c) The Termite Culture: This will be characterized by recognition of sycophants in an organisation. Sycophants put the interest of leaders first followed by organizational interest which in long run might hamper the prospects of the organisation. Because of this wave of sycophancy a false assumption of "All is well" develops in the organization although the reality is these bunch of sycophants are eating away the meat of the organisation and are making it shallow and weaker from inside. The mistakes of sycophants will be ignored, complacency and casual attitude will become the norm and this culture like termite will slowly eat away the inner core of the organisation while the outside will remain attractive. No points for guessing what will be fate of such organizations in long run, off-course they will collapse in a matter of time.

d) The Crow Culture: This will be characterized by non-recognition of sycophants. In Indian families' caw cawing of a crow is not considered to be auspicious and we often shoo a crow away. The same happens when sycophants are not recognized, they will move from person to person and will try to best express their concern for organisation and will exhibit deep and false sense of ownership, but like crows nobody will entertain them and will shoo them away.

What do you see around yourself, what type of culture you are creating. We need to be cautious and keep in mind as every action matters.

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