HR MANAGER AS THE CHIEF CATALYST IN OFFERING ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the role of the HR Manager as a chief catalyst in offering organizational resilience in times like Corona. The study is based on a review of existing literature on organizational resilience and an evaluation of the possibilities for the HR Manager to play a role in preparing the organization to offer resilience.HR Managers can play the role of a chief catalyst in offering resilience as they understand the requirements of the management and the employees. They can create an atmosphere of team spirit and foster cooperation and solidarity.Research outcomes are expected to benefit academia and HR professionals and the industry in general.

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Keywords: Organizational Resilience, HR Manager, Catalyst, Corona

Introduction

With a major shrinkage in economic activity in the year 2020 due to the Corona pandemic, the work ecosystem underwent a catastrophic change. Job cuts, pay cuts, lay-offs, reductions, and cuts in perquisites were amongst a series of negative outcomes for millions of employees, given the major economic melt-down due to Corona. Several organizations found them struggling to survive as the pandemic started to extend into multiple cycles, the uncertainty increased further. Strategic repertoires were searched, and one strategy that many organizations took recourse to was organizational resilience. Today's highly uncertain and chaotic business environments call for organizations to be more resilient (Kantur and Iseri-Say 2012). Louisot (2015) considers resilience a principal issue in risk management, and Jackson et al. (2007) see resilience as another perspective about uncertainty. As systems and associations can't be intended to expect every single imaginable danger (Fiksel, 2003), we need versatile associations to manage occasions that will have genuine results, in any event, when they have a low likelihood of an event (Ambulkar et al. 2015; Dalziell and Mcmanus 2004). We likewise need to examine when arrangements, techniques, practices, and instruments fizzle during an emergency response (Kendra and Wachtendorf, 2003).

A reasonable organizational response in the situation of high risks and uncertainty is organizational resilience. In the backdrop of a major event like Corona, we in this article evaluate the role of the HR Manager in offering organizational resilience. This we do by reviewing the literature to find out what makes an organization offer resilience and how the HR Manager can play a part in offering the same.

Literature Review

The most cited attributes or elements of a resilient organization include building situation awareness (Afgan, 2010), managing organization's vulnerabilities (McManus et al., 2008), having resources (Orchiston et al., 2016), improvisation capacity (Weick, 1993), ability to anticipate events (Wright et al., 2012), agility (Thomas et al., 2016), learning capacity (Zhang & Van Luttervelt, 2011), collaboration (Winston, 2014), the resiliency of individuals (Riolli & Savicki, 2003), flexibility (Proper & Pienaar, 2011), and robustness (Jackson, 2007).

Evaluation

We explore and evaluate the role of the HR Manager in building these attributes. This we do in two ways. First, we identify the common threads in the different attributes where the HR Manager has a prominent role. Then we evaluate each of them individually.

All the eleven attributes of organizational resilience are embedded with a fine thread connecting the human capital with the

organization. For instance, the employees have to become aware of the situation and its dynamics. They are the ones who need to understand their organizational vulnerabilities. They have to provide for the human resources to the organization. Without exception, each of the attributes calls for an empathic role of the human resource, and it is here where the HR Manager has a substantial role to liaison the organization and employees. The HR Manager has to create an overall environment of team spirit, positivity, and cooperation for developing the attributes. This does not happen overnight but is a matter of a sustained organizational climate and culture that has to be catalyzed chiefly by the HR Manager.

The role envisaged for the HR manager in dealing with the specifics is briefly explained:

1. Building situation awareness through meetings, special training, and orientation programs.
2. Managing the organization's vulnerabilities by making employees aware of those and acquainting them of the actions to combat them.
3. Having resources by not including tapping the human resources but making the employees come out with other resource garnering measures.
4. Improvisation capacity of the human resources and also motivating them to improvise other organizational capacities.
5. Ability to anticipate events by providing special training to improve the organization's predictive capabilities.

6. Agility through the use of formal and informal channels of communication.
7. Learning capacity enhancement through the creation of special talent pools.
8. Collaboration at all levels possible, including monetary wherein the salary cuts can be considered as a capital contribution by the employees.
9. The resiliency of individuals through personal counseling of employees.
10. Flexibility through schemes like work from home.
11. Robustness by connecting all the dots and offering a holistic and systemic approach.

Conclusion

We firmly believe that the HR Manager is the most suited person to prepare the organization to offer resilience when it comes to facing situations like Corona. Because she is the one who knows the pulse of both the organization and the employees, she is the most trustworthy negotiation agent to forge a common understanding between the management and the employees. Her knowledge about the market, economic and commercial dimensions of the organization in a crisis, and the experience and awareness of the individual employee's concerns, apprehensions, and fears put the HR Manager in a highly advantageous position to develop and enhance organizational resilience.

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