

Joe Milton Leadership Challenges at Wanilla Wholesale Distributors Case Study

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Introduction

In the contemporary and ever-evolving business environment, the adoption of effective leadership across all companies is vital, as it serves as a crucial catalyst for the success and longevity of a corporation. The case study provided for this assignment focuses on Joe Milton, a senior-level Regional Manager of Wanilla Wholesale Distributors (WWD), a large wholesale food distributor headquartered in Hong Kong. During Joe Milton's tenure as regional manager, the company has encountered several challenges, including the imperative to minimize expenses, alongside the task of effectively overseeing a diverse team within the organizational structure. This highlights the formidable obstacles that leaders encounter in the course of managing organizations. The case study would thus provide a foundation for enhancing comprehension of the intricacies of leadership. This would be achieved through the utilization of five assumptions derived from the problem statement. The study would delve into the exploration of strategies that Joe and his team can employ to surmount these challenges such as embracing adaptive leadership, ethical leadership, leadership and culture.

Assumptions

The following assumptions shed light on the underlying factors influencing Joe's leadership style and the dynamics of the organization.

Lack Of Good Communication Techniques

In any business context, communication plays a significant role in enhancing the organization's success. However, failure to embrace effective organizational communication is the beginning of failure. Based on the problem statement, we can assume that Joe Milton's lack of effective communication techniques is sizable as it sheds light on a critical issue of his management style. Joe Milton has been unable to embrace frequent communication between him and his team but prefers advert-hoc conversations where he contacts the team members when needed. The ad-hoc communication technique is subject to demerits, such as a lack of formal structure, which results in confusion and misunderstanding within the organization. Additionally, Joe's mode of communication is spontaneous; thus, there is no consistency in information delivery, which may result in overlooking important information. Moreover, it could create uncertainty and tension amongst Joe's direct

reviews, as they will not be privy to the general strategic path or the evolving demanding situations in the commercial enterprise panorama.

From the problem statement, the assumption would be true as the regional manager tends to leave the managers to work based on their priorities. While granting autonomy to managers is essential for fostering a sense of ownership and accountability, an overreliance on this approach, without adequate communication and guidance, can lead to misalignment of efforts and missed opportunities. Effective communication becomes even more critical in the face of increasing competition and the need for cost-cutting measures. Joe's communication style may hinder the timely dissemination vital information about market changes, competitor actions, or evolving customer demands.

Resistance to change

In the current dynamic trading world, change is inevitable for any organization; thus, it is essential for leaders to always be at the frontline in accommodating change. Even though change is inevitable, most team members in an organization always resist it due to fear of their job security and a desire to remain in the status quo. As the manager, Joe has been an exemption as he has resisted change, as depicted in the problem statement. For instance, from the problem statement, Joe has been reluctant to advance their supply chain techniques, thus indicating his unwillingness to embrace change. Even though supply chain techniques are deeply rooted in organizational culture, it is the role to bring a change to the supply chain; hence, his hesitation to challenge the current supply chain techniques suggests his level of resistance to change.

Joe's focus on cost-cutting may be myopic.

The assumption that Joe's focus on cost-cutting may be myopic is substantiated by his recent demand for a 20 percent reduction in operating costs, as mentioned in the problem statement. While cost reduction is a crucial issue of organizational performance, Joe's fixation on it appears to overshadow the wider strategic dimensions of the business, including addressing aggressive marketplace pressures and fostering lengthy-term growth. His response to competition exemplifies this myopic technique' moves, his tendency to call for reports on cost variances, and his willingness to reduce corners with providers, doubtlessly sacrificing long-term supplier relationships for brief-time period price discounts.

Ethical considerations may not be a top priority for Joe.

The idea that ethical concerns may not be a pinnacle of precedence for Joe is supported by his willingness to compromise on ethical practices, as evidenced by way of reducing corners with

suppliers and the moving allegiances of long-term companions. Hence this indicates an ability gap in Joe's moral leadership, highlighting the imperative for him to place a greater emphasis on moral values, integrity, and moral decision-making to keep trust with stakeholders and uphold the organization's reputation.

Joe's leadership style may foster a culture of favoritism.

The assumption that Joe's leadership fashion may also foster a way of life of favoritism is clear from his implementation of the "regional variance file," which singles out underperforming managers, at the same time as better achievers appear to benefit his belief. Therefore, this belief of favoritism among team members highlights the significance of Joe addressing management and way of life troubles within the business enterprise to promote a greater inclusive and equitable running environment.

Potential Actions and Theoretical Ideas Towards the Assumptions

The leadership issues described in the problem statement could potentially lead to a loss of trust from external stakeholders, such as suppliers which in turn, could disrupt relationships and impair the company's brand. Moreover, the presence of favoritism within the organization can have detrimental effects on employee morale and productivity. Thus, this is due to the preference for ad-hoc communication methods over embracing open communication, which can ultimately lead to decreased employee morale and, subsequently, lower productivity levels. Furthermore, WWD has been unable to formulate effective tactics that would enable them to attain a competitive advantage over their competitors, thereby resulting in a decrease in their market share. As a result, the corporation must take action to overcome these obstacles if it wants to thrive and fulfill its objectives.

To effectively and efficiently address the prevailing problems within Wanilla Wholesale Distributors, Joe, being the regional manager, should consider embracing the following leadership styles.

Adaptive leadership style

According to Ali et al. (2020. p.412), adaptive leadership style is a form of leadership style that entails mobilizing team members within the organization and working together to handle an existing problem and be triumphant at the end. Currently, Wanilla Wholesale Distributors have been facing stiff competition that calls for a more proactive and agile technique to aid in coping with the competition and gaining a competitive edge. By embracing an adaptive form of leadership, Joe would be able to

foster open communication within the company. As a result of the free flow of ideas and information that is fostered by an environment of open communication, Joe is better able to inspire innovation and creativity among his team members as depicted by Ali et al. (2020. p.418) in his article. By embracing a culture of collective problem-solving and open dialogues with the team members, Joe would be able to respond to issues as they arise quickly, and he could share important information promptly and transparently.

Additionally, through an adaptive leadership style, Joe would be able to help the team members navigate through market changes, as this form of leadership is characterized by readiness to adapt to new changing situations (Wang Huang,2018. p.2192). By actively embracing frequent open communication forums for his team, Joe would be able to enhance information flow, thus contributing to easy access to prevailing market changes and emerging opportunities that would be beneficial to the organization. As a result, Joe would be armed and equipped with sufficient information that would help him to make sound decisions. Bagwell (2020.p.33), argues that adaptive leadership would help Joe to proactively shape and put the company in a strong position during the turbulent business climate.

Jugdev (2022.p.62), objects that the realm of enhancing ethical sustainability with a business adaptive leadership style would be of great impact as it advocates for ethical considerations within the business. Thus, embracing this form of leadership would help Joe to gain techniques on how he would navigate through ethical dilemmas whenever they arise. As the manager of the company, Joe should consider prioritizing the paramount essence of embracing ethical values whenever he is making decisions for the company. For instance, while considering techniques to embrace so as to cut costs, Joe should transcend the company's financial performance to determine theory ethical ramifications (Jugdev,2022. p.64). Through evaluating the possible impact of the current financial performance of the company and enhancing ethical standards, Joe would be able to foster an organizational culture that is deeply rooted in integrity and trust.

Furthermore, adaptive leadership would help in cultivating resilience in the organization, thus helping the company to bounce back strong even after facing setbacks (Wang Huang,2018.p.2194). The industry context that Wanilla Wholesalers Distributors operates in is dynamic, thus calling for resilience for it to thrive. Thus, Joe should consider instilling a positive attitude in his team members and encourage them to always learn from setbacks and be ready to bounce back.

Ethical leadership

Bazerman (2020.p.92) argues that the term “ethical leadership” refers to the simple act of individuals acting in accordance with a set of principles and values that are generally accepted as providing a solid foundation for the common good and goals. Thus, based on the given problem statement, Joe needs to embrace an ethical leadership style so as to cultivate an organizational culture that is grounded on trust from both internal and external stakeholders, thus being able to address the

prevailing challenges within the organization. Joe would achieve this through developing an ethical code of conduct for the organization, which would mainly focus on and emphasize organizational values such as trust, integrity, and honesty. Bavik et al. (2018.p.325), asserts that the ethical code of conduct should also provide clear and definite guidelines on how employees should conduct themselves. For instance, the ethical code of conduct would provide guidelines on how organizational conflicts would be managed and the punishment that would be accorded to any person who acts in an unethical manner in the context of role execution. Thus, through formalizing these guidelines, Joe would set definite ethical standards for the organization.

Additionally, Joe should consider implementing ethical decision-making training programs for himself and his team members. The implemented training programs should mainly focus on evaluating the prevailing ethical issues at Wanilla Wholesalers Distributors and techniques that would help in solving them. Providing the employees with ethical training programs would help them grasp knowledge and skills that would help them make ethical and sober decisions while executing their roles, thus reducing ethical issues within the organization (Ko et al.,2018. p.115). For example, the training session would entail how the manager and team members would uphold ethical values while evaluating cost reduction techniques and maintaining a good relationship with external stakeholders such as suppliers.

Joe should also set the bar high by being an exemplar of moral behavior in all of his interactions with others, both inside and outside of the company. Some of the ethical values that he would consider embracing include transparent and honest communication while making any decision without considering any personal benefits and upholding them as per the ethical code of conduct as stated by Bavik et al. (2018.p.330). By upholding ethical values, Joe would be able to help the team members understand the significance of ethical leadership. For instance, Joe could fix prior supplier cuts, admit to them, and reestablish confidence according to the problem description.

Leadership and Culture

Leadership and culture are fundamental factors of company dynamics, and by addressing issues related to leadership and culture, a firm would be able to foster and enhance a conducive working environment that is characterized by inclusivity and collaboration (Paais and Pattiruhu,2020. p.581). One of the techniques that Wanilla Wholesaler's Distributors would embrace to improve it is culture and leadership is embracing diversity and inclusion. Joe would foster a culture of inclusivity by recruiting employees from multicultural thus creating an enabling that values diversity. Thus, Men and Yue (2019), asserts that this would foster a workforce characterized by greater diversity and representation, facilitating the inclusion of a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas. For example, teams with diverse compositions may possess enhanced capabilities in responding to the dynamic market environment and generating novel approaches to address competitive issues, such as those presented by Costco, which pose disruptions to WWD's supply chains.

Additionally, Joe should consider implementing team-building activities within Wanilla Wholesalers Distributors as they would aid in improving employees' interpersonal relationships among themselves, thus helping in controlling the culture of favoritism. When employees engage in team-building activities, they are able to enhance mutual understanding and trust among themselves, thus promoting a sense of cohesion among themselves. As stated by Bhaduri (2019.p.561), team building activities help employees from different countries, cultures, and language interact, thus learning from each other, which help in fostering an organizational culture that is rooted in inclusivity.

Furthermore, embracing leadership development programs within the organization would aid in enhancing leadership skills for both leaders and team members, thus solving the issue of effective leadership as depicted in the problem statement. Joe possesses the capability to enhance the competencies of his team in order to effectively confront demanding leadership obstacles, enhance their communication aptitudes, and foster a sense of confidence by offering leadership training and counseling (Bhaduri,2019. p.565). Leadership development programs are designed to foster a culture of continuous improvement and learning, thereby demonstrating the organization's commitment to enhancing its talent pool.

Conclusion

The given case study about Wanilla Wholesaler-Distributors depicts the essence of embracing an effective form of leadership in the organization while navigating through the dynamic market environment. Thus, it is essential to address leadership and culture issues that arise in the organization for the sake of its success and development. By embracing an adaptive and ethical leadership style, Joe would be able to foster and enable an organizational culture that is characterized by open and free communication, innovation, multi-diverse interactions, and collaboration, which would, in return, help in creating an enabling working environment. By embracing an ethical form of leadership, Joe would be able to rebuild the broken trust with the external stakeholders. Moreover, by nurturing an environment that is rooted in inclusivity through embracing diversity and implementing inclusion initiatives such as team building, Joe would be able to foster an organization that values diversity, thus reducing favoritism and encouraging his team to work towards achieving the set goals and objectives. Therefore, through this, Joe would steer the company towards resilience and ethical excellence in the face of market dynamics and stiff competition.

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