

Inclusive Organisational Culture – A Competing Strategy for Business Success



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Abstract: *In today's global competitive arena, every business entity urges for creating core competencies to withstand in the competition. Most of the flourishing companies capitalize diversity and inclusion as a source of competitive advantage. Creating and regulating an inclusive work culture is more complex and challenging. Far from being a challenge, it can create competitive advantage by increasing innovation, flexibility and problem-solving capacity. Organisations' with inclusive culture seems to meet its target far better than planned and expected. Yet many organisations are aspiring to cultivate an inclusive culture. This article spreads light over the components and benefits of inclusive work culture, strategies to create and regulate the inclusive culture and the success stories of organisations with inclusive work culture.*

Keywords: *core competencies; competitive advantage; innovation; flexibility; problem-solving capacity; inclusive work culture.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Organisations tend to frame new strategies and policies to gain competitive advantage. Nowadays they are bringing in innovative practices and new policies in recruitment to meet the competition. Many organisations begin to succeed in their business after implementing the concept of inclusive work culture. The inclusive organisation culture will engross ideals and respects the entire workforce which enables them to achieve their entire potential while sustaining effective business achievements. The inclusive organisation culture includes the whole and successful integration of diverse set of people in every work environment. Recruiting the diverse workforce includes the diversity in a range of ages, ethnicities, religions and worldviews. Identifying and hiring the workforce with such diverse background and characteristics is considered to be an achievement that reflects every organization's success with pride.

Despite the very fact that inclusive organisation culture definitely encompasses the commitment of an organisation to

diversity and it's not restricted merely to basic depiction; it will surely inculcates a climate within which respect, equity, and the positive impacts of differences are all cultivated. Despite the fact that building an inclusive organisation is advantageous for the organisation, it is also considered as the prime factor for success of every organisation in the modern business landscape. Organisations that seek, implement, celebrate, and embrace diversity will have several and very factual advantages over their competitors. It is clearly understood that inclusive organisation is not just about building a diverse workforce; the organisations have to provide such a work environment which is comfortable for the diverse workforce.

Usually the employees who are different from their colleagues and have uniqueness are allowed to flourish and inturn the organisation benefits from their ideas, skills and engagement. The retention rate of those employees also rises to the par as they get proper recognition.

In order to get benefit out of the advantages of diversity and inclusion, the organisation needs to embrace the inclusive behaviours honestly, and if the organisations are successful in implementing and retaining it, the organisation can grow up to a greater extent.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

We are living in the competitive environment, where we have to face challenges in every aspect and in every field. The business organisations have taken various measures to overcome these challenges and they research for effective solutions. This conceptual article mainly analyses a solution for the problem faced by the business organisation. The results and discussion of this study will surely provide a methodology for overcoming the business challenges.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study involves descriptive research where the facts and concepts related to inclusive work culture was explored and the necessary components for building an inclusive culture were gathered.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To provide a conceptual overview on the concept of inclusive work culture and its adoption in industries.
2. To create awareness on the importance of adopting inclusiveness and benefits for the organisation.

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3. To identify the essential components for adopting inclusive culture.

V. COMPONENT OF INCLUSION

There are certain necessary elements for building an inclusive organisation. It includes

Fairness and transparency

Fairness and transparency are considered as the prime factors of the inclusive culture and it have to reinforce the organisational and workplace culture. Unbiased environment for anytime access to resources, opportunities, networks, and decision-making processes are some other essential components in developing an inclusive workplace.

Priority for workforce development

The importance of workforce development implies that in every workplace there must be awareness and a spotlight for cultivating a learning-centric culture, in which all the employees are inspired to develop themselves in order to achieve the organisational goals. Having access to the technological advancements, the employees can update themselves to work with inclusive work culture which will lead to individual and organisation's success. Training plays a major role in creation of inclusive culture. Every organisation has to make consideration to ensure that all the employees have equitable opportunities for training. In addition, the organisation has to find whether the training of managers, in particular the middle level management, and human resources employees, are accepting and working effectively with different diverse set of people.

Incorporating diverse population and perspectives in business strategy

The business organisations' which has incorporated with inclusive work culture will definitely incorporates the desires, resources, and perspectives of their diverse set of communities into the inclusive framework and the implementation of their planning, strategy and action plans.

Providing the employees with the equality and diversity training

The concepts of diversity and inclusiveness are interconnected. But the organisation with a diverse workforce doesn't guarantee the achieving of inclusive work culture. It is important that all employees working in the organisation must have an understanding of equality and diversity. So this can be incorporated through providing proper training in these areas. Training the employees and unconscious bias in practicing the inclusive culture are the key factors to build an inclusive organisation.

Remembering the 4 Rs

Inclusive organisations are likely to be inhabited with the diverse set of people; however this cannot be simply window dressing. It must lead to:

- i) **Representation of diverse workforce:** The top management must ensure the existence of diversified

culture across the range of employees' job roles, responsibilities and authority. Employees are considered as the major focal point in the organisation's commitment to diversity, equality and collaborative working.

- ii) **Respect:** It is must to understand that diversified setup can be a positive force and that will never be disadvantageous to organisational success in any way. The organisation has to align individual distinctive features with organisations's identity which portrays that the employees are integral to the organisation and are considered as the success determining factors of the organisation.

- iii) **Recognition:** In addition the management has to truly value and listen the ideas, perspectives and contributions of all people. The effective feedback processes and communication from employees of all level will support the recognition.

- iv) **Reward:** It is the most important fact that the individuals' efforts are met with proper recognition and appropriate remuneration.

VI. BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE WORK CULTURE

Capacity of employees

Each employee is to be considered as valuable asset for the organisation as they bring a set of skills to the organisation. By means of its temperament, a diverse workforce within the organisation provides a diverse set of competencies and capability. The wide range of skills and perspectives of an inclusive work team will provide a greater probability in achieving the breakthroughs like innovative products and services, concentrate on new markets, or new approaches to existing markets.

Culture in workplace

The organisations tend to follow a popular strategy "Hiring for cultural fit", but in some cases there's a point at which it becomes a barrier to diversity and growth.

A completely honest diverse organisation will develop an inclusive work culture which provides a strong and robust foundation as the basis for thriving within an ever-evolving business landscape.

Perspective

The ever greatest benefit of a diverse work culture is that it provides the host of perspectives. It is well known that there are always innumerable alternatives available to solve a problem. But most of those solutions aren't always obvious or even visible as they don't have varied perspectives. Availability of more diverse perspectives which can be focused on overcoming a particular challenge will more likely pave way to reach on a brilliant, creative and appropriate solution.

Candidates with potential

The huge advantage of inclusive work culture is hiring of diverse talented candidates. This is considered as one of the prime easy, but overlooked benefits of diversity in the workplace. As the organisation hires diverse candidates, it has its pick from a much larger pool of highly talented individuals than an organisation has with itself.

Loyalty of employees

The organisations that ensure with the environment that is in favour of diversity and cultivate inclusion in all aspects of their functional system will create efficient, engaged and productive employees. Employees who are confident that they are included in the system and valued, will show greater commitment and motivation, which inturn leads to increased productivity, and further it minimizes the employee turnover, absenteeism, grievances and complaints.

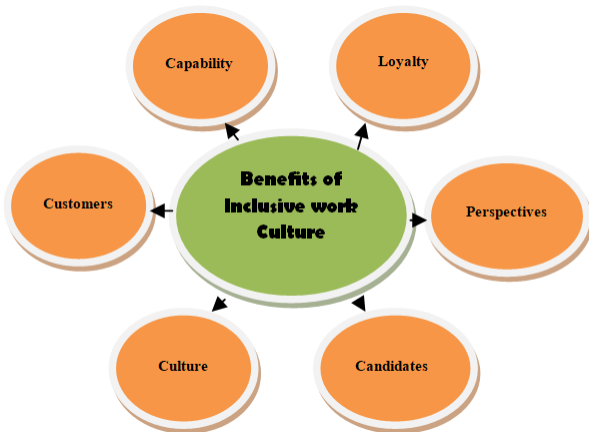


Fig.1 Benefits of inclusive work culture

Customer relationship

The organisations’ with a diverse set of people will gain a huge advantage in sustaining the market and retaining its customers. The major element of effectively addressing a market is building a strong relationship with the stakeholders particularly their current and potential customers. The business organisations have to better understand their customers to better meet the needs and wants of them. In addition they have to adapt the better products and services to meet the customer expectations. By practising this, the organisation can easily expand its potential customer base exponentially.

VII. STRATEGIES FOR CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Widen the company’s recruitment pool

Organisations with inclusive work culture will recruit and retain the best people with them without limiting themselves to restrictive human resource requirements. The intention of such organisations’ is mainly to replicate the demographic composition of the workforce, their geographical location and the markets they tap into. Usually the process of recruitment adopted by such organisations will be of clear, fair, transparent, and accessible and it will be in support of the business needs which will inturn emphasize the growth and sustainability of an inclusive culture.

Educate the middle level management

Leaders especially the middle level managers must be given with training on structuring the meetings, allocating the resources and using the language that promotes and supports inclusion. The leaders have to make the employees understand that inclusive behavior is a core competency. The training will be given for leaders from all levels in unconscious bias, and this occurs when the individuals perceive people based on their gender, race or other factors without realizing that they are doing it. There is no doubt that the training will assists the leaders to analyse this kind of bias and also drives home the importance of modeling inclusive behavior such as engaging in active listening and recognizing different points of view in meetings, performance reviews and other interactions.

Form an Inclusion committee

In organisations, an inclusion committee can be formed which comprises of the influential leaders and who may be in first or second levels below the Chief Executive Officer. Based on their passion and commitment towards inclusion, they can be selected for this committee. Ideally, the inclusion committee has to involve themselves in framing strategies for hiring, training, retaining and advancing a diverse workforce and in addressing any employee engagement problems among underrepresented employee groups. The committee should possibly include diverse set of people with the members representing not only from different ethnic group and genders but also from different business functions and geographic locations.

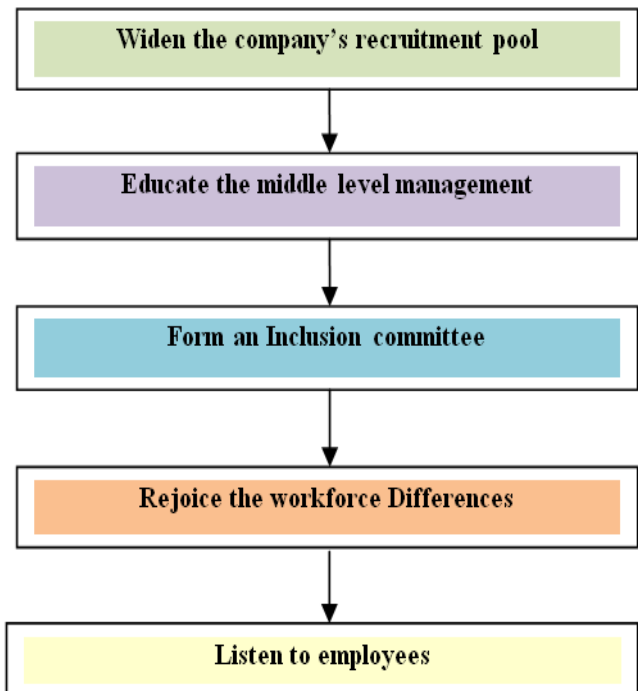


Fig. 2 Strategies for implementing inclusive work culture Rejoice the workforce Differences

One of the most important methods of exhibiting the employees that the organisation is respecting their backgrounds, customs and traditions is by providing an opportunity to the diverse workforce to present or share their personal life history and profile in the workplace.

It is a known fact that the diversified workforce will promote a better decision-making, greater innovation and ultimately higher returns. But inclusion is the binding factor that connects the people to the business, and it is the faith that it is one of the major reasons for them to stay within the business.

Listen to employees

The organisation can arrange for a comprehensive assessment which can be conducted as a brainstorming by gathering ideas from the employees about the demographical structure of the organization and different people processes to frame specific strategies in order to promote inclusive work culture.

VIII. ORGANISATIONS THAT SUCCEED IN INCLUSIVE WORK CULTURE

In the present scenario, most of the companies are doing recruitment from diversified set of culture. These organisations are really highlighted and focused by their competitors for recruiting diverse workforce.

Online shopping portal – Alibaba group

We are well known that Alibaba Group is the one of the world's well known biggest and popular e-commerce company. It serves around hundreds and millions of customers and acts as the platform for conducting trade for millions of merchants. In 2017, transactions made on the online sites of this group totaled \$248 billion, which is more than those of eBay and Amazon.com put together.

The Alibaba group has taken the goal of inclusive culture through gender equality to a greater importance and consideration. From the words of Jack Ma, the Chairman of Alibaba group, "the women are the 'secret sauce' behind Alibaba's dominance in the online shopping industry". Among the founders of Alibaba Group more than one third were women, and the same scenario is in higher-order executive roles. Ma had a great faith in women and from his words "women's perseverance and attention to details will outperform men in the age of robotics and machine learning."

Alibaba strategies for diversity seem to be an excellent example to follow for the organisations that decides to create programmes to maximize the revenue potential inherent to gender diversity.

Accenture

Accenture, the global consulting and professional services firm has been serving clients in more than some 40 industries and across 120 countries with diversity in language, culture and tradition. Managing such a diverse set of people across the globe is the achievement of the IT giant in diversity.

Accenture is well known for its innovation, creativity, quality and competitive advantage which is greatly achieved through embracing diversity. Accenture is considered as the first IT based company which has specific internal diversity goals and it shares its workforce demographics and progress

towards it. This holds the company accountable in a very public way. The most recent available data of Accenture divulges that the company is ahead of other IT giants on its way to achieve an environment with dynamic workforce which is of highly inclusive with various racial and ethnic backgrounds as well as veterans, military spouses, and persons with disabilities.

L'Oréal

L'Oréal is a well identified Forbes Top Multinational Performer, and this beauty cosmetics company is located in 130 countries on five continents. The company is known for its multicultural diversity and it is the major factor for the company's success.

The company is also involved in social responsibility. It provides sponsorship for various disability awareness campaigns and programmes across India, pairing the employees with multicultural students from Netherlands. The company also offers training for the young adults in susceptible Pakistan communities.

This is just a few from its many global initiatives.

Across the globe, L'Oréal is also well known for offering a vigorous portfolio of diversity awareness and the company also provides inclusion training for the employees at all levels across the world. L'Oréal is also well known and stands in the top for gender equality principle. The strength of women employees at L'Oréal account for 69 percent of the total workforce and out of which 53 percent of key positions. While we talk about the multicultural workplace, L'Oréal offers multitude best practices to sustain multiculturalism.

Lenovo

Lenovo is a reputed IT giant constitutes about more than 57,000 employees in over 60 countries which is also manufacturing few electronics and is considered as the world's largest vendor of Personal Computers which has a strong base for its success on a well-built foundation of diversity and inclusion. Not just by the counts the company has scored a perfect 100 percent on the Corporate Index for LGBTQ equality but they are practising it every day in their system. The Lenovo's tagline, "different is better," encapsulates the essentials of two-dimensional diversity at its finest. From the words of Yolanda Conyers, the company's Chief Diversity Officer, "Serving a global customer base requires more than out-of-the-box thinking, because it's not just one box. Its a hundred different boxes. A million different boxes. It takes every dimension of our diversity.

The diverse mindsets, skills, and cultural backgrounds are to deliver such a wide array of technology."

The company mainly focuses on framing and developing programs and softwares that implant diversity and inclusion into the company's DNA. The company is vigorously and continually coming up with new ideas and systems that are remarkable in their field.

IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study mainly focuses on analysing the conceptual part of inclusive culture.

1. It assists the organisations' in adopting inclusive work culture to succeed in their business. The organisations' can also implement the inclusiveness by benchmarking them with the other organisations which are successful in the inclusiveness.
2. The management in all levels has to support and guide the employees in adopting and working with diverse workforce.
3. The requirement for implementing inclusiveness varies with the organisations but major components remains the same. The organisations have to consider the major components and efforts can be taken to implement as it provides competitive edge.
4. The organisation can also build a pool of talents through the inclusive culture as they have a diversified set of population within the organisation.

X. CONCLUSION

Inclusive work culture seems to be the core competency for the business organisations in the current scenario. The list of companies quoted above is a far from comprehensive. It is a great start for anyone who is in need of inspiration. They serve as a best bench marker and are paving the way for an exhilarating future for the other organisations and where the employees are able to engage themselves with a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives. It has a greater scope towards research. Research works can be done in analysing the effectiveness of inclusive work culture in organisations, impact of inclusive work culture on organisational performance, etc.

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