

A Study of Cross Cultural Communication Strategy: Case of Marriott Hotels & Resorts

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Abstract

As time goes by, the importance of internationalization and globalization has increased at a faster rate where very few companies have successfully survived and maintained its position by understanding the cross cultural management. Even if organizations or businesses are working within the country with culturally diverse workforce, it is a challenge for them to identify growth opportunities by working collaboratively. This is because working with diverse cultural workforce increases work exposure as new methods that are used in other cultures to do the same task is introduced. Moreover, by working in a cross-cultural surroundings, it is important for the business organizations to aware themselves of how different culture and people from that culture influences the organization. In addition, the organizations must pursue effective leadership approach to motivate employees. The organizations as leaders must have ability to understand the actual definition of diversified cultural coworkers so that they could practically implement it well. This paper discusses Marriott Hotels & Resorts' cross cultural management as it is an international organization and deals with people across cultures on a routine basis. The paper initially provides an overview of the Marriott Hotels & Resorts. Then the paper discusses leadership, motivation and management at Marriott Hotels & Resorts. Finally, the paper concludes and proposes few recommendations.

Keywords: Company, Motivation, Marriott Hotels & Resorts, leadership, Service quality

Introduction

Marriott Hotels & Resorts is one of the leading chains in hospitality industry globally. The Marriott Hotels & Resorts operates in more than 500 locations globally and serves its customers with excellent quality services. Marriott Hotels and Resorts serves culturally diverse customers by its culturally diverse workforce. The company is based in Washington D.C. Marriott Hotels & Resorts is continuously selected in the Forbes Best Companies to Work. Moreover, in 2009, The Times has also nominated as the 4th best corporation to work in UK.

Leadership at Marriott Hotels & Resorts:

Basically, motivation can be described as an action of encouragement to make individuals achieve an act, which the individuals would not have executed normally. Considering Marriott Hotels & Resorts, it is a perfect organization where every single objective is accomplished and both the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are considered as highly significant (Hill, Jones & Schilling 2014).

Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" and Marriott:

Abraham Maslow is regarded as one of the most established theorists in terms of employee motivation. Maslow has founded his supposition on the needs founded motivation approach. When a lower level need of an employee is being satisfied, he seeks to satisfy his next top level need and ultimately the employee reaches to the self-actualization level. The Maslow's supposition consists of five different levels (Gary 2011):

(a) *Physiological*

At Marriott Hotels & Resorts, the physical needs of all the employees are considered as highly important and the management tries its best to provide shelter, money, food and several other benefits like life insurance, health benefits and retirement plans to its employees.

(b) *Safety*

This is a general assumption at the Marriott Hotels & Resorts is that the only way to make a worker more productive for an organization is by providing him job security and Marriott Hotels & Resorts also by makes it sure that several other workers as well as the workplace follow secure enactments while on the work site.

(c) *Social*

Interpersonal relationships are highly valued and encouraged at the Marriott Hotels & Resorts. Effectual interpersonal associations are considered as really essential by the management and here, the managers form an

environment where cooperation among the staff members is being highly rewarded. The most encouraging point is that, at Marriott Hotels & Resorts; continuous managerial communication regarding operational issues is an essential component of satisfying a worker's social needs.

(d) Self Esteem

It is a basic need of an employee to be able to learn several other duties and tasks and expand his tasks in some way or the other. The Marriott Hotels & Resorts management uses some popular techniques like job enrichment, cross training and special assignments for making duties more rewarding. Here, the employees are also allowed to take part in the organization's decision making processes.

(e) Self-Actualization

A worker will show much more interest in personal development and growth with the self-actualization. Marriott authorities are completely aware of the fact that all of its employees want a really demanding job, a chance to finish their education and autonomy to explain their personal processes for accomplishing organizational goals. The managers at Marriott Hotels & Resorts totally focus upon encouraging a work environment where a worker can easily meet his personal needs of self-actualization.

Douglas McGregor and Marriott:

Theory X supposes that every worker is lazy and will avoid working if provided with an opportunity. Generally most of the managers across the world subscribe to this concept. On the other hand Theory Y supposes that employees want to perform an excellent job and will perform their duties in an extremely good manner, if managers allow them to do so. Relatively a smaller number of managers agree with this supposition and even a smaller number of jobs are suitable for its execution (Miroshnik 2013).

Now considering the work environment of Marriott Hotels & Resorts, its managers across the globe execute both the theory X and Y according to the culture of the country in which they are operating. Like a manager working in an Asian environment will probably make use of Theory X, in order to maintain the reputation of his organization (Kumar 2010). This is because there is a high likelihood that Asian people tend to avoid their duties and liabilities, so the manager thinks that his job is to vitalize the employees and to organize the work. The manager of Asian environment believes that the mere purpose of the worker's interest in the duty is money. Here, one drawback is that the manager will probably blame the individual in first, without interrogating the fact that whether the fault may be due to the policy, lack of employees' training or system that deserves the criticism.

On the other hand, Marriott Hotels & Resorts operating in the Western environment will probably have theory Y in execution. This is due to the reason that Western people are believed to be enjoying their physical and mental work tasks. So the manager of a Marriott Hotels & Resorts operating in a Western culture assumes that workers are self-motivated and ambitious (Cameron & Quinn 2011). Western workers possess the capability of innovative problem solving. Hence, given appropriate circumstances; the manager of Theory Y believes that workers will learn to accept duties and they can execute self-direction and control in achieving the Marriott Hotels & Resorts's goals to which the workers are committed.

Motivation at Marriott Hotels & Resorts:

The style of leadership can be defined as process of interaction between the groups of individuals that consists of restructured or structured situation, perceptions and expectations of members (Flamholtz and Randle 2011). This can also be explained as the behavior pattern that leaders go along with during job with and via others, as they discern it.

The three essential factors that decide the kind of leadership style are characteristics of leaders, characteristics of subordinates and the environment of an organization. Therefore, the styles of leadership can be categorized in accordance with the power of the leader and his behavior as democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire; where leadership styles are differentiated by the impact of leaders upon their juniors. More distinctively, dictatorial or autocratic style of leadership is implanted in leaders possessing complete organizational control and decision making authority in their hands (Hartman and Werhane 2013). Normally such leaders do not share this kind of authority with their juniors, while participative or democratic style of leadership suggests that leaders dispense their workers' power of decision making and assign, and ultimately Laissez-faire style of leadership describes that leaders provide their workers with much power of decision making.

Effectual leadership is extremely important in present day's competitive trade circumstances and obviously hospitality business cannot be excluded from it. Instead the requirement for effectual leadership in this industry is even more significant, especially in the context of Marriott; which is a globally famous luxury hotel. Marriott provides its customers with the highest quality standards of service and customer care (Werner, Schuler and Jackson 2012). The managers at Marriott are recognized with distinctive professional and personal characteristics and charisma compulsory to be a productive hotel manager.

Globally, Marriott Hotels & Resorts managers have got the ability to head from the front by

establishing an example for their workers to follow. They have got the capability to push their employees towards the success and have the charisma to impact the staff in a creative and a positive way (Flamholtz and Randle 2011). Managers at Marriott clearly understand the requirements of the workers as well as of the customers and have got the capability to solve the different issues and motivate employees in some of the most challenging situations. Rage for success, intelligence, personality and resilience are some of their other important attributes.

The prosperous leadership manner implemented at the Marriott hotels is the perception provided by its originators who were born leaders (Meier & Liker 2005). Contemporary Marriott Hotels & Resorts depict the extensive journey of prosperity that its founders had got a vision, which was being interpreted into reality. Furthermore, the contemporary leadership of Marriott Hotels & Resorts has also nurtured itself in accordance with the similar values and vision laid by its originators.

It is an undeniable fact that in the past, hospitality industry have got few of the most dictator style leaders and most of the activities and decisions were conducted by a single individual, having complete emphasis upon the generation of profit by means of conventional norms of hospitality. But as time passes by, the hospitality industry has also seen a great deal of alterations and as an outcome of those changes; present day hospitality industry is much more autonomous and it reflects aspirations of the employees both in the worker welfare and services (Hartman and Werhane 2013).

At Marriott Hotels & Resorts, the management is indicated as a 'hands-on' style, which imparts intervention, stress and control of interactions and operations among the employees at all ranks in the hotels. This 'hands-on' or 'being there' style is regarded as a common style of leadership at the Marriott Hotels & Resorts, such style can be much more effectual than other types of leadership styles to acquire workers' job satisfaction; as the Marriott Hotels & Resorts administration work regularly with their workers and thus administration is showing more interest in the problems of the employees at work (Kumar 2010). But this cannot be considered as a preferred style of leadership at the Marriott Hotels & Resorts. In contrast, it appears difficult to embrace participative style of leadership. But this absolutely does not mean that convey that autocratic leadership style is better, but it is essential to be applied at the Marriott Hotels & Resorts.

Management Style at Marriott Hotels & Resorts:

Hay-McBer has defined six key management styles that includes coaching, pacesetting, participative, affiliative, authoritative and directive. The directive style is also referred to the Coercive as it has main objective that requires quick compliance from employees. This type of management style is effective when deviations are of risk or there is a crisis; whereas it is ineffective when the workers are highly skilled (as it makes them resentful and frustrated) and workers are underdeveloped (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson 2011). The second management style is authoritative which is also known as the visionary style. This management style's basic objective is to provide long term vision and direction to employees. Authoritative style is effective when the leader is credible and there are clear standards and directions to perform a particular task; whereas it is ineffective when leader is not credible (subordinates does not follow visions if they are not cleared with it or believe it) and workers are underdeveloped (subordinates needs guidance to proceed with the task). The third style of management is affiliative. The basic objective of this style is to create harmony between manager and employees and among employees. this style of management is effective when the leader or manager counsels, manages conflicts, tasks are of routine basis and performed adequately; whereas it is ineffective when there is a crisis and the employees need proper direction or when the overall performance is inadequate. The fourth style of management is participative or democratic (Werner, Schuler and Jackson 2012).

The basic objective of this style is to create consensus and build commitment among employees. This style is effective when there is steady work environment, staff has credibility and experience and employees work together; whereas it is ineffective when employees have poor coordination, organization is facing crisis and there is a lack of competency. The fifth management style is pacesetting. The main objective of this style of management is to accomplish tasks at high standards to deliver excellent performance (Kodama 2009). This style is effective when experts are to be managed, little coordination or direction is required and the people are competent and highly motivated; whereas it is ineffective when there is much work load that requires help from others and coordination, coaching and developing is required. Last management style is coaching. The primary objective of this style of management is employee's long-term professional development. This style of management is effective when employees are motivated and want development, and the employees need to develop their skills; whereas it is ineffective when the organization is in crisis, the performance inconsistency is too great and the leader or organization lacks expertise (Hartman and Werhane 2013). Marriot Hotels and Resorts follow coaching and affiliative style of management in their organization that has enabled its employees to work in teams as their activities are monitored and they are guided by their managers. Moreover, the use of these two types of management styles helps to reduce conflicts among team members that ensure smooth flow of operations that delivers customer satisfaction.

Managing and Building Teams with a Culturally Diverse Workforce at Marriott Hotels & Resorts:

It is important for every organization to manage and build teams to collectively achieve the organizational targets and goals. Each member of the team, irrespective of the culture they belong, must contribute to the achievement of common goal. At Marriott Hotels & Resorts, team building and team working is highly encouraged and appreciated. The hotel itself also promotes team building at all its regions of operations (Bouchikhi & Kimberly 2008). Moreover, team building with culturally diverse people is also encouraged within an organization. Although it is difficult to manage teams at all levels, but as the company follows autocratic style of leadership easily manages and handles culturally diverse workforce teams at all its hotel locations.

Performance Management:

Performance management refers to the activities that help an organization to ensure that their objectives/ targets are consistently being met by the employees in an efficient and effective manner. Moreover, it also focuses on the performance of an employee, organization, department, or processes to create best service or product (Kumar 2010). As Marriott Hotels & Resorts is a service organization, therefore it continuously monitors performance of its team and individual employee by using various tools and methods of evaluation. This enables Marriott Hotels & Resorts to ensure that the team is delivering their best productivity to satisfy customers. However, Marriott Hotels & Resorts needs to monitor the team's performance more closely at all its locations.

Cross Cultural Training:

Cross cultural training means offering different training courses that aims to create awareness in team with culturally diverse cultures. Marriott Hotels & Resorts is good at team building as it offers different courses to its senior managers at all regions and middle and lower level managers in some regions where there is culturally diverse workforce within a particular hotel (Werner, Schuler and Jackson 2012). However, the organization needs to provide further trainings to its managers and employees such as cross cultural training for team building, management, negotiation, diversity and specific culture training.

Role of International Managers:

The international managers have high responsibility as they are the one to lead the particular hotel on behalf of the top or home country management (Bouchikhi & Kimberly 2008). Therefore, it is important for them to perform all the functions in the best way they can as they are accountable for this. Mainly, the international managers at Marriott Hotels & Resorts are responsible for planning regional expansion and hotel management, coordinating activities, controlling and monitoring activities, staffing right people for the right job, organizing routine activities, directing staff on regular basis, reporting to corporate head and many other similar activities (Werner, Schuler and Jackson 2012). Although the international managers are performing their roles well, but they need to be more accountable so that Marriott Hotels & Resorts could maintain its high standards internationally.

Employee Welfare and Benefit:

Employee welfare refers to the different facilities, benefits and services offered by the employers to the employees. It is not necessary that the employee welfare and benefits are in monetary form but it could be in any forms (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson 2011). The different welfare and benefits offers include transportation or house allowances, food and medical insurance, improving working conditions, employee safety etc. Marriott Hotels & Resorts believes that employee welfare is one of the most important factors to motivate employees as it develops a sense of belongingness in employees towards organization and also increases job satisfaction. Marriott Hotels & Resorts offers many benefits to its employees and teams on their superior performances. However, the hotel should focus more on non-monetary rewards as it increases employee and team productivity.

International Human Resource Development:

The functions of international human resource management are somewhat similar to local human resource management, however, international human resource management requires greater responsibility and accountability as they have to manage workforce across different culture. Therefore, it is important to focus on the development of international human resource. For this, effective training and development seminars must be arranged internationally so that all the employees grow and develop together (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson 2011). Although, Marriott Hotels & Resorts is so far successful in developing its human resource, but more effective training to perform local functions and activities must be provided to all the employees across the hotel's global chain.

Organizational Culture and Strategies for Change:

Culture refers to the essence that is present in the operating environment of an organization. It includes implicit

patterns of attitudes, activities and behavior that are shaped by the set of beliefs and values which shows the way the employee work together. The culture at Marriott Hotels & Resorts is aligned with the goals of the company (Kumar 2010). The cultural environment is friendly that enables all the employees to work collectively irrespective of the differences of their culture and values. Although the Marriott Hotels & Resorts does not need any major change for its organizational culture, but it is recommended that the company should train its employees to welcome people from different cultures and train their new and existing employees to work according to the single culture.

Cross Cultural Business Ethics and International Sustainability:

The Marriott Hotels & Resorts believes in practicing the cross cultural business ethics to ensure its successful operations globally. Moreover, the compliance of ethics in all regions it operations has also contributed to its international sustainability (Nelson & Quick 2012).

Meeting Different Needs and Expectations of Culturally Diverse Guests at Marriott Hotels & Resorts:

Being a service organization, Marriott Hotels & Resorts is responsible to deliver utmost satisfaction to its customers or guests that come to the hotel. Most of the guests arriving at the Marriott Hotels & Resorts belong to other culture as they visit different countries for business purposes (Bremer & McKibben 2010). Thus, the hotel manages its culturally diverse guests well that is evident from its standards and quality of services that is consistent at all Marriott Hotels & Resorts.

Host Guests Relationships:

Host guest relationships refer to the state where host serves their guests well or the company is successful in delivering customer satisfaction. As Marriott Hotels & Resorts is a service organization, it is important to maintain strong guests and host relationships. Marriott Hotels & Resorts maintains good relationships with its customers by delivering them superior quality services (Werner, Schuler and Jackson 2012). Moreover, the guests are welcomed to give their open comments and feedback on the services that has helped the hotel to improve. Moreover, to encourage its guests to visit the Marriott Hotels & Resorts repeatedly, the hotel also offers loyalty cards. This has enabled the guests to become lifetime customer of Marriott Hotels & Resorts. However, Marriott Hotels & Resorts need to take more effective measures to improve its host and guests relationships.

Managing Expectations:

Managing expectation refers to the state when a company meets the expectations of its stakeholders. It is important for Marriott Hotels & Resorts to manage expectations of all its customers or guests (Griffin & Moorhead 2009). Although Marriott Hotels & Resorts managing expectations in service delivery, but the company must ensure that the service expectations of guests must be met in all areas as their dissatisfaction will result in refund, loss of customer value and brand poor image.

Service Gaps:

The service gap helps to measure quality of services in five different ways. Firstly, it measures gap between management perception and consumer expectation. Secondly, it measures gap between service quality specification and management perception. Thirdly, it measures gap between service delivery and service quality specification (Gary 2011). Fourthly, it measures gap between external communication and service delivery. Lastly, it measures gap between experienced service and expected service. Marriott Hotels & Resorts regularly monitors all these services gaps so that they do not lag behind in any aspects in delivering high quality hotels and resorts services. However, it is recommended that the company must monitor these service gaps strictly at regular intervals.

Service Policies, Practices and Procedures and their Application:

Every organization has its own policies, practices and procedures that depend upon the type of organization and the industry it belongs. The service policies and practices Marriott Hotels & Resorts reflects that they give first priority to its guests or customers. Moreover, the hotel emphasize on a uniform procedure that is followed by all the employees throughout the organization to conduct any specific activity (Kumar 2010). Moreover, the application these procedures are also common at all the hotel and resort chains of Marriott hotel; however, this could be different on the basis of cultural and regional differences. Thus, it is recommended that Marriott Hotels & Resorts must encourage its employees to comply the service policies, practices and procedures in all regions.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, working with culturally diverse workforce benefits both company and its employees. Moreover, it

could also be concluded that cultural diversity affects cultural management and leadership in an organization, where cultural differences cannot be ignored. Therefore the Leaders of present organizations must have an ability to manage people belonging from different cultures. At Marriott Hotels and Resorts, both the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are considered as highly significant. Moreover, the managers at Marriott are recognized with distinctive professional and personal characteristics and charisma compulsory to be a productive hotel manager. The leadership approached adopted at Marriott Hotels and Resorts is autocratic. Moreover, Marriott Hotels and Resorts follow coaching and affiliative style of management in their organization. The company has effectively managed its team with a culturally diverse workforce. Moreover, Marriott Hotels and Resorts meet different needs and expectations of culturally diverse guests. Thus, the company must follow different recommendations proposed in the paper.

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