

Chapter 52

Thinking Globally, Leading Locally: Defining Leadership in Diverse Workforce

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ABSTRACT

Global leadership effectiveness has become one of the major issues in human resource management. It is very important for cross-cultural managers to take into consideration the paradigm shift in the business world, keeping in mind the opportunity for organizational growth and individual development. The key issue that the present corporate leaders have to face is to formulate action plans to tackle diversity in the workforce covering the broader spectrum of dimensions, vis-à-vis, ethnicity, age, gender, educational background, economic status, marital status, and skill sets. Since the corporate environment is greatly accelerated by the globalization and advancements in technology, global leaders need to attain a set of competencies that would facilitate them to realize their vision and thus enhance their performance efficiency and competitiveness. The chapter deals with the specific paradigms of the leadership styles and the management of workforce diversity so as to establish the linkages between leadership style and diversity management.

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INTRODUCTION

There were never in the world two opinions alike; any more than two hairs or two grains. The most universal quality is diversity. (Michel de Montaigne)

In the recent times, a critical success factor of globalization depends on the potential of a leader who can manage diverse workforce along with solving complex business strategies. One of the mantras for global business success is how effectively a leader manages the diverse workforce. Leadership has become the principal component for all the organizations.

The increase in global market has generated need for international corporations. Global leadership effectiveness has become one of the major issues in human resource management. The discipline of human resource management is looking for an answer that how global leadership should be performed in an effective way in such a competitive tough global market in international business and workforce management.

Leadership is the heart and soul of all organizations but its role and capacity is getting more complex with the enhanced involvement with the technology and global environment. Technological advances have changed the way how organizations do business. It is very important for cross cultural managers to take into consideration the paradigm shift in business world keeping in mind opportunity for organizational growth and individual development. Moreover, international business should focus on the impact of demographics, work ethics, technological advancements, specific job skills to cope with the global changes.

For understanding how organizations are structured and how they are operating, the eco-system model has been applied to the human system. There are many challenges which organizations are facing like demographic changes in workforce combined with international competition both within and outside the organization. Many top brains of the world argue that for surviving in global environment necessitates the development of competitive advantage out of the diverse workplace (Soutar, 2004; Yang, 2005; Kreitz, 2007). But to do so, human resource managers and leaders should redefine management (Jones, 1989). There are many instances that single handed diversity solutions such as concentrating on recruitment or single approach management techniques vis-à-vis providing diversity training to the employees do not create lasting changes (Kossek and Lobel, 1996; McMohan, 2006; Thomas, 1990). Leadership requires commitment, strategy, concrete changes in organizational structure for handling diverse workforce for their growth and holistic development.

Now the question arises as to how HR managers and leaders can take optimum advantage of the diversity? What roles and responsibilities are to be fulfilled by the global leaders in creating and managing diverse organizations? Since diversity is a challenging phenomenon to govern in any organization, it has been extensively researched upon now-a-days. It deals with the issues like being alike and different, religion and culture, justice and tolerance etc. all the nations across the globe are impacted by the opportunities and challenges in the diversity. The present chapter deals with the specific paradigms of the leadership styles and the management of workforce diversity so as to establish the linkages between the leadership style and diversity management.

The proposed chapter envisages addressing comprehensively issues related to leadership in diverse workforce. The chapter would address on the one hand current and urgent issues such as leadership style, cross cultural workforce, workforce conflicts, talent generation and leadership competitiveness such that the quality of leadership in global markets can be enhanced. On the other hand, it also envisages that

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