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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging: Who's Holding Whom Accountable?

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Attributes of work environments that have the greatest influence in determining whether an environment becomes hostile or not is why an organization should start implementing the **5 Cs of Awareness** (color, culture, class, character, and context) and the **5 Cs of Change** (confidence, courage, commitment, conflict, and community) (DeRosa & Johnson, 2002). Regarding challenges to collaborative work experiences, Cascio and Aguinis (2011) indicate many organizations fail because of poor leadership and communication. As a result, any individual in a leadership role is significant in inspiring others to maintain appropriate behavior and effective working environments.

In regard to how organizational policies enhance or inhibit culture, organizational policies should encourage and inspire employees to treat others with respect. Discrimination and violence inhibit the work environment (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011). Hostility can be averted when managers and employees are well versed in a no tolerance organizational culture. The most challenging work experience relating to hostile work environments is the lack of access to an equitable workplace. Additionally, the social, emotional, psychological, and physiological impact on

individuals continues to be a challenge in the work environment. With limitations to work access, people inevitably experience lower salaries. Moreover, women and minorities continue to experience marginalization in the workforce (Combs et al., 2019). To mitigate incidences of inequity, we should dedicate more commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), which can reduce hostility in the work environment (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011). Additionally, even with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, organizational professionals must demonstrate strategic management within organizations, strengthen the supply chain, convey project plans, and report performance.

The changing nature of work environments in the 21st century

Applying appropriate industrial organizational and psychological (I/O Psychology) management frameworks are key when working with organizational stakeholders. As a result, emotionally intelligent organizational professionals can turn negative situations into positive outcomes—for this, employees need both hard and soft skills. Deliberations about the changing nature of work is critical as organizations continue to cope with the COVID-19 crisis. Organizational professionals must address negative situations the moment they occur and need to understand the risk of sending mixed messages. Thus, transparent, consistent, respectful, and authoritative communication can mitigate concerns before they occur. For instance, relaying necessary information but focusing on solutions is key. Moreover, miscommunication should not be a surprise during situational, environmental, or interpersonal crises. Finally, organizational professionals achieve better outcomes by setting the tone at the beginning of a crisis by developing a comprehensive plan, this includes the scope of work for strategic planning and providing elevated communication methods.

How does HR hold organizational stakeholders accountable?

Human Resource Managers (HRMs) are responsible for the planning, examining, and controlling of people-centered organizational processes (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011). Likewise, HRMs must consider the financial and social aspects of the employee's lifecycle. Additionally, HRMs are concerned with the organization's assets, processes, expectations, and mission. The work environment has been affected by the changing nature of work in the 21st century because of the need to fully understand stakeholders (Silvius & Schipper, 2019). In this manner, organizational development is based upon the triple bottom line, lifecycle, stakeholder management, and transparency. Further, the constructs of personnel management regarding planning, training, retention, succession, and retirement of employees have all been impacted by 21st century movements (Papke-Shields et al., 2017).

Disarming microaggressions

Microaggression is a term utilized for ordinary everyday verbal, social, or natural affronts, regardless of whether purposeful or unexpected, that convey unfriendly, unfavorable, or negative perspectives of stigmatized or culturally marginalized groups (Campbell & Manning, 2014). Setting the tone and being equally concerned about "stray remarks" is critical to ensuring safe working environments devoid of hostility. Employees do not go to work to endure violence. Employees are assets who bring their skills, education, and passion into an organization. As a result, from a psychological mental health and safety sense, employers must hold in high esteem "employee presence." Further, employers can demonstrate respect and civility by codifying policies and coaching, or following up with reprimands or dismissal, if necessary (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011).

Moreover, "stray remarks" can be defined as microaggressions. They are brief, subtle slights or indignities—whether intentional or unintentional—that marginalize others and create a hostile work environment (Overland et al., 2019). Employers must first recruit, onboard, train, and remind employees of their responsibility to the company to refrain from microaggressions as they are known to cause psychological, physical, economic, and social distress for individuals and organizational performance (Sue et al., 2019).

Micro intervention strategies for targets, allies, and bystanders

Leading others is more than a notion. In a position of human resource management, it is a vital responsibility to protect internal and external stakeholders from hostile environments (Daft, 2018). Stakeholders are distinguished as employees, representatives, customers, investors, government officials, and suppliers who are progressively noteworthy in the current business environment. The capacity of HRMs is to assess their leadership and relational capabilities to team members' advances in productivity and the transformation of an organization (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011). The ability of HRMs to drive a respectful organizational culture provides the impetus for less hostile work environments. Leadership and HRMs must focus on how toxic culture affects organizational stakeholders.

Notwithstanding, strategic organizational decision-making improves in a state of innovation (Rajesh, 2018). Effective accountability increases employee engagement, morale, and retention. The role of an effective leader in change management is to create and implement a culture of support at all levels of the organization (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011). Further, leadership provides direction on change management initiatives, leadership development (facilitating, assessment, and evaluation of

programs), performance improvements (performance management, program planning, professional development of non-managerial as well as managerial staff, employee engagement, team effectiveness, and development processes), and cultural change. The prime objective is to provide opportunities for all employees and ensure equitable hiring, promotions, compensation, psychological health benefits, and safety for all employees.

Dr. Abeni El-Amin, PhD, EdD, LSSMBB, has nearly two decades of experience and education in business administration, political science, and industrial and organizational psychology as an educator and practitioner. Further, as a global higher education professor, she has designed and developed curriculum and training programs in business administration, educational leadership, legal studies, political science, and health sciences. She has managed large corporate and government budgets; managed staff and developed sustainable programs. She is the author of, In Search of Servant Leadership.

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