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Employee-organisation value fit essential for business success

Values are something which are intrinsic to how human beings are developed in a society. Art and history illustrate the values of various civilizations.

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Every person who joins a new organisation brings with them his/her own set of personal values. It is of paramount importance that the organisation's values – what it stands for, what is the definition of success for it, what means it considers acceptable to achieve that success – resonate with the individual's values. If this integration would happen for every member of the organisation, its outcomes would be magical. The individual would exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour, he/she will be emotionally invested in the fate of the company and would display unwavering commitment to achieve the collective vision. Hence, the person-organisation fit in terms of values is extremely crucial for the success of any organisation. We all have heard this oft-told tale:

During a visit to the NASA space centre in 1962, President John F. Kennedy noticed a janitor carrying a broom. He interrupted his tour, walked over to the man and said, "Hi, I'm Jack Kennedy. What are you doing?"

"Well, Mr. President," the janitor responded, "I'm helping put a man on the moon."

Clearly, this janitor could not have been so inspired and motivated, had his own personal values not matched with what NASA stood for.

The reverse is also true. A person who finds that his organisation doesn't care for its purported values, which he/she imagined was true initially, would soon become completely disengaged and worse still, disruptive. Remember, Harry Potter books? Regulus Black becomes so disenchanted with Voldemort once he realises the gnawing gap between his personal values and the ones which his leader stood for, that he goes to the extent of destroying his horcrux to take revenge.

People talk about organisations in a few adjectives, not entire sentences. For e.g. You think about the Tata Group and the first word that comes to your mind is 'Trust' - the enduring Tata Promise. You think about Google and a few adjectives that come to your mind are 'Open', 'Innovative', 'Employee-Friendly'. As you notice, all these adjectives are nothing but manifestations of the values that these organisations want to stand for and because we all, as complete outsiders, associate the brand with these values, they have been successful in achieving that objective.

When an organisation makes the decision of what it wants to stand for, clarity of context is very important. What may mean 'Open Culture' to one organisation may not mean the same to another. The rigour of how open the culture must be will differ. It therefore become imperative for an organisation to communicate clearly and reiterate the meaning of the stated values to its employees. The leaders must walk the talk and be the brand ambassadors to inculcate the

same values across the organization at all levels. At Future Generali, one of our values is 'Be Open'. One of the examples by which this gets reflected in our culture is by the initiative 'Let's Get It Done'. Using this platform, we empower our employees at all levels to escalate issues directly to the top leaders in case they are facing any bottlenecks at work. Similarly, Tune-in Tuesday is an online forum where heads of various functions are available to video chat with our employees for a candid Q&A session.. Platforms like these empower employees to raise issues and share feedback/suggestions. It creates a culture of responsible behavior and accountability. It makes people realize that they need to work as a cohesive unit to achieve business success. All this in turn helps achieve the organization's financial goals.

This real yet, at times, complex to fathom relationship between values and financial success of an organization is what every leader needs to understand if they want to be successful and live up to the expectations of their stakeholders. It is time to make these values a part of our DNA and live this culture every day. Acceptance of these values will be the cornerstone of success for every individual both professionally as well as personally.