

Solaris: Communication

Functional Theories Approach

- Organisations are rational information processing systems
 - o No distortion if managers put and transfer message in right way
 - o Distortion can be identified and eliminated by correctly identifying these 5 components

1) Functions of Comm.

- o **Relationship**
 - interpersonal r/s between employees – sense of belonging in Solaris.
 - Solaris has a nominally flat org structure – team leaders and workers interact w each other plus its decentralized structure encourage for “SMTs and empower them”
 - Relationship and comm. w org goals matches w Solaris having the lower employee turnover and best employer.
 - Company “Fun Day” and sing song brings employee tgt where they will participate tgt. (Eg: Kris will bring Tom and sway to the songs. Shows that they relate to the org and their compatibility is high.
- o **Change**
 - altering the existing procedures, adapting to new env/rules.
 - Needed when the takeover of Supernova occurs. The 2 very diff cultures of Solaris and Supernova require efficient comm. to comm. change in order to integrate 2 companies tgt.
 - Help new employees to adapt to Solaris values: Excitement, Attitude, Achievement
- o **Organizing**
 - Kimberly intend to build a culture of fun and excitement and believe will spill over to clients
 - Help employees to work more optimistically: “It is helpful for dealing with disgruntled customers because the team culture makes you feel that you are not alone.”
 - First person to communicate messages to establish fun an exciting form of relationship
 - Physical environment embedded with messages conveying friendly, fun, and excitement
 - establish rules for a new env. The joined culture of the companies requires a new manual in which maps out the directions, guidance and culture of the new company to direct org goals.

2) Networks

- o **Formal**
 - Solaris: authority at the higher level communicate/organizes the roles & responsibilities. E.g: team leaders of the mgmt team will comm. w e/ees.
 - Solaris: Values of firm passed down by James Carr (CEO) and Kimberly Bell (team leader of the Human Resource Department)
 - Recruitment interview: very clear that “They wanted me to say it’s the people, it’s the people’, so I did. They wanted me to say, ‘it’s all about attitude, attitude”
 - But overall less formal bc values autonomy

Solaris: Power and Politics

Power – a capacity to influence outcomes

Politics – the exercise of power

- Unitary Theories
 - o Top down power grid
 - o Rational behaviour
 - o Focuses on effective communication
- Pluralist Theories
 - o Different people possess different kinds of power (e.g. expertise power) that the authority doesn't necessarily have

Solaris

1st: First dimension: Resource Management

The first dimension of power revolves around the **mobilization of resources** to influence the outcome of decision- making processes and/or to get someone to do something they otherwise would not do (to **defeat** conflict)

Carr engages in some unorthodox management practices in order to motivate employees and create a customer-friendly environment

- Authority power
 - o Kimberly and James have power over employees - able to tell employees what to do
 - o Because Pauly is dependent on Solaris for a Job, Solaris can exert power over him.
 - o Carr (CEO) able to deliver his values through everything in the office (able to do that bc position)
 - make sure company slogans are printed everywhere and everyone has to attend the company 'Fun Day'
 - Use authority to ensure "The Solaris Way" is recognized and observed in all parts of the firm
 - "They wanted me to say "it's the people, it's the people" so I did. I said whatever they wanted to hear"
- Reward power
 - o To make work more fun and exciting, the management of Solaris gives employees reward (spot prizes) with gifts like: wines and phones to represent tangible ways to reward employees.
 - o Encourage employees to give gifts to each other: family (value)
- Referent Power
 - o employees identify with Carr and values
 - o "each team has a leader who is invested with the authority to monitor and discipline their fellow team members"
- Information power
 - o E.g: Kimberly Bell, Team leader of the HR department uses information power from books stacked in her office bookshelf to give her ideas on making her employees work with more fun and excitement
- Equipment support
 - o Walls painted purple, vivid pink pillars
 - o Carpets are fluorescent yellow
 - o These are all things that further support the managements influence over its employees behaviour
- Group Support
 - o It can be seen that some of the employees have taken the behaviour and culture of Solaris very seriously to the extent that they support it and tries to motivate others. E.g: Kris

2nd: Second dimension: Process Management

- “every call was subject to a series of detailed measurements that had to correspond to the specifications laid down in the contracts with each of its customers”
- sideline people who does not comply
- Group pressure, league table, team performance
- Excluded from decision making processes about what constitutes a fair assessment of call tasks
 - o Operations manager has control over decision making
- Appraised quite harshly : not uncommon for all teams to fail to meet required standard
- Top down management
 - o Rules of the game, agenda, processes, performance measurements were all decided by top management
 - o All designed to improve productivity by encouraging competition
- Outcome : Employees forced to achieve unrealistic targets
 - o Breeds tensions and pressure
- Limitations : Results in high employee turnover and increased cost for Supernova

3rd: Third dimension: Meaning Management

- not much used
- Lack of use of third dimension of power
 - o Everything was very first and second dimension

Recommendation

First Dimension

- Reward power: Provide bonus for employees who outperform and embrace the culture
 - o appraisal and evaluation changed from one that is punitive (threaten bonus if didn't meet expectation) to supportive (provide extra bonus if meets expectation),
- Information power: Utilize information about usefulness of lively culture
- Since Solaris is acquiring Supernova, Jim Carr as the acting CEO and the management can mobilise reward power to directly influence the employees at Supernova.
 - o E.g: provide additional rewards and packages for Supernova to encourage them to conform to the behaviours sort after by Solaris.
- Group support – the existing staffs of Solaris who truly believe in the culture can reinforce Solaris’s cause by motivating staffs at supernova and supporting the culture of Solaris.
- Equipment support-Paint and refurbish SuperNova’s office to generate a more conducive environment for the acceptance of the culture.
- Coercive power – threaten to relieve existing SuperNova staffs who do not conform or pose a significant resistance to the culture at Solaris.
- Authority power – Jim Carr should exercise his authority as CEO to lay down rules that Supernova has to abide by.

Second Dimension

- With the rules and regulations implemented collectively by Jim Carr and the management at