

## **Creating a Positive Organisation – Need of the Hour**

Despite the declarations in many CEO speeches that “our people are the most important asset,” both strategic and everyday decisions in organizations are purely based on risk-return financial assessments.

Even though employees largely contribute towards a sustainable and competitive edge in any organization, they continue to be given lip service, partially due to the perceived difficulties of quantifying their impact on the bottom-line. Therefore the advocacy to transform Human Resources Management into ‘positive people relationship’ is gaining momentum. This occurs through three dimensions, – Human Capital, Social Capital and Positive Psychological Capital.

Top-performing HR organizations strive to optimize both efficiency and effectiveness by minimizing transactional costs. ‘Social Capital’ includes communities of practice, knowledge exchanges, information flows, interest groups, social networks and other emergent connections between employees, suppliers, regulators, partners and customers. ‘Positive Psychology Capital’ concerns with what is ‘right’ with people and building on it instead of trying to just fix what is ‘wrong’ with people and trying to correct it.

Positive psychology has spurred two related movements. The first is positive organizational behavior (POB), which applies positively-oriented human capital strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed and managed for performance improvements. These include variables like optimism, resilience, interpersonal relations and positive leadership that can be objectively assessed. The second is the positive organizational scholarship (POS) movement which emphasizes positive organizational characteristics. It encompasses attention to the enablers (eg, processes, capabilities, structures, methods), the motivations (eg unselfishness, altruism, contribution without regard to self), and the outcomes or effects (eg vitality, meaningfulness, exhilaration, high-quality relationships) associated with positive phenomena.

Positive refers to an affirmative bias, an examination of phenomena that represent a value orientation toward abundance, elevation and virtuousness. Four positive strategies that tend to produce flourishing outcomes: positive climate, positive relationships, positive communication and positive meaning. The fostering of compassion, gratitude, and forgiveness among employees is important in enabling a positive workplace. Leaders should focus on diagnosing the ‘positive

energy networks'; rewarding employees who are positive energizers; and mentoring the negative energizers. Positive communication takes place when “affirmative and supportive language replaces negative and critical language.” Those employees who view their work as a calling or career and completely adopt the organization’s goals tend to produce more positively deviant performance. Leaders can enable meaningfulness in work by “reinforcing the benefits produced for others; associating work outcomes with the core values of employees; identifying the long-term impact of the work; and emphasizing contribution goals over achievement goals.”

Positivity in organizations has a threefold effects; It encourages an amplifying effect whereby there is a tendency to repeat and reinforce similar virtuous actions by various individuals, once a positive tone is set within the organizational culture. Positivity also induces a buffering effect which enhances the ability of organizations to be resilient during traumatic and challenging times. If an organizational trauma is well managed, it is possible to transform the crisis into a healing opportunity, a growth experience that leaves the system stronger than before. All living systems have a tendency to radiate towards that which is life-giving – towards positive energy rather than negative energy. Likewise strategies that capitalize on the positive tend to produce life-giving, flourishing outcomes in individuals and organizations. This heliotropic effect results in great places to work for, thereby attracting and retaining the best talent.

According to Robert Levering, Co-Founder, Great Place to Work, “A great place to work is one in which you trust the people you work for, have pride in what you do, and enjoy the people you work with.” Evidence exists that positive practices (eg, respectful treatment, personal development) produce positive affect in employees (eg, satisfaction, well-being), which produces positive individual behavior (eg, retention, engagement) which, in turn, produces organizational effectiveness (eg, profitability, productivity).

In conclusion, “Positivity in organizations may not lead to absence of problems, but it will enhance the organizational ability to face challenges with a sound mind and a compassionate heart.”