

teaching note

The Case of the Country Club Organizational Culture and Employee Turnover

Summary

The case study explores the reasons for employee turnover in a private country club organization in the southwestern region of the United States. The study relates high turnover rate factors at a private country club and asks for possible solutions to reduce turnover as part of an overall human resource strategy. The case presents various organizational cultures and the process to appraise organizational culture. The case prompts the reader to examine the effect of a single owner's vision in a family business on a club's organizational culture. The case study explores the significance of past work experiences on future job success.

Learning Outcomes

The case study explores the opportunity for a newly hired GM of a private country club. The GM was successful in a nearby club before accepting the job. The GM began working for a developer whose organization was unsuccessful in retaining a GM and most of the staff. The GM should develop a plan to change the negative organizational culture through strategic human resource practices. The GM should reduce the problematic employee turnover and increase member satisfaction. The GM should define the existing organizational culture, investigate other cultures existing in the organization, and decide on an employee recruitment and selection strategy. The case study is appropriate for any employee or manager starting a new job to grasp the concept of organizational culture. The case study is designed for junior or senior college students studying human resources within a hospitality or business management curriculum.

At the end of the case study, the students will be able to:

- Measure employee turnover and its cost (see Appendix C). Analyze and measure the organizational culture of a successful service organization through the Hospitality Culture Scale (see Appendix D).
- Define strategies for understanding the culture in a new job and how it relates to job retention (Chacko et al., 2012; Clay & Graff, 2011; Cichy, Cha, & Kim, 2009).
- Assess the significance of the owner's perspective of culture and the effect that the vision has on the culture of the organization (Andersson et al., 2002).
- Propose strategies to increase employee retention and reduce employee turnover (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008; O'Neill, 2012).
- Analyze the culture of a family-owned business and the challenges unique to a family-owned business (Ward, 1997).
- Develop a human resource strategy (Roehling & Wright, 2006).

Before Class

The students will be asked to read the case study. The students will also be asked to read about private clubs and the challenges of employee retention in the hospitality business.

Conceptual learning concepts from the following reading assignments.

Country club business: Read Chapter 1 of Joe Perdue's (2013) book.

Emotional Intelligence: Read Goleman's (2004) article.

Organizational Culture: Read Hinkin and Tracey (2010) article on great companies.

Strategic Human Resources: Use the article by Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, and Buyruk (2010) as a baseline to strategic human resources. The article represents an overview on the concepts of strategic human resource management for the hospitality business.

Selection and Retention: Read the Clay and Graff (2011) article on GM turnover.

Discussion Questions and Answers

What should be the GM's priorities when starting this new job?

The GM's primary focus when beginning the new job should be on the developer's vision, because she owns the club. The GM should use the weekly meeting with the developer to document the vision and put it in writing. The vision should be used with a written mission statement to guide organizational decisions. Understanding and implementing the vision of the developer is paramount to GMs retaining their jobs. Additionally, meeting with the CEO, Tom Juzwiak, is a priority because of Tom being the highest ranked non-family member in the organization. He is a trusted advisor to the developer. The GM should hold private meetings with the department managers to understand their concerns and to communicate the developer's vision. A focus group of members should be organized for them to understand areas important for membership satisfaction. The primary cultures to define are the developer's, the CEO's, the employees', and the member's.

What was causing the turnover of the GM position? The employee turnover was being caused by the inability to translate the developer's vision into a written business plan. The success of the GM at RCC depends on creating an organizational culture based upon the vision of the developer. The GM should take the vision and create with her team of managers and employees 11 different business plans, one for each department in the club. Such plans should dovetail into one

strategic plan that is created by the GM, which will aid the implementation of vital business goals.

Additionally, past GMs did not have the business experience to operate a large organization (see Appendix B). The previous GM had food service experience at a beach club but did not have any prior golf experience. The former GM did not have any club finance expertise. RCC is a residential golf club with five golf courses. The golf courses are critical to the culture of the community. The leader of the organization must have golf expertise in addition to the other areas: financial, restaurants, tennis, fitness, building maintenance, and human resources. The selection criteria for the GM position must include expertise and specific skill sets in the various divisions of the club. Job skill is fundamental to reducing employee turnover in any organization (Perdue et al., 2001).

The previous GM of RCC was from the northeastern region of the United States. West Coast people are known for being informal and casual. Northeasterners are generally recognized as being formal and assertive. The club has an organizational culture that is based on membership geographical origination. Palm Springs, California is a seasonal locale. Because members are snowbirds, they tend to bring their northern culture with them to Palm Springs. Members join clubs to be around people of similar backgrounds. Private members usually hire GMs with similar demographic and psychographic backgrounds, or social orientations of their members.

What was causing the employee turnover? Was the employee and GM turnover related? The high employee turnover was related to the GM turnover. When the leader of any organization changes, the employees typically start concerning themselves with job security. The GM turnover leads to additional employee turnover in some cases, and companies need to be aware of the employee's intention to stay in a job (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2010). The leader of the organization provides stability. A constant change of the GM results in a higher turnover rate for the employees as the result of creating a negative employee culture.

What strategy should be used to reduce staff turnover? In addition to the GM turnover, the high employee turnover was related to the generational differences among workers who were not communicating effectively. The Baby Boomer manager has a different set of expectations than do younger workers. The Baby Boomers expect to work hard and long hours. The Baby Boomers are loyal to the organization and generally will have fewer jobs in their lifetime. In today's world, Generation Y will be more technology adept and will change jobs more than Baby Boomers. It will be very important for the GM to train his Baby Boomer managers to appropriately communicate with the younger generation to reduce staff turnover rates (Chacko et al., 2012).

The GM should develop a human resource strategy to reduce turnover. Employees stay in their jobs for many reasons and it is im-

portant for the management team to understand the reasons that the staff not only leaves but also decide to stay in their jobs (Cho, Johanson, & Guchait, 2009). Restaurant employees have a high turnover rate, especially servers, so developing a retention strategy is important. *Read Hinkin and Tracey (2010) to understand the common denominators of great companies. Pay attention to Wegmans, the New York grocery store chain that is family owned to understand the advantages of family businesses.*

How can country club culture be defined? Discuss organizational culture with the students (see Appendix D). Every organization has a culture. Most organizations do not formally define the culture. Therefore, it is up to the employees to interpret the organizational culture through observation. For example, some organizations distribute new multiple-page policies to help define and solve problems. Policies are indicative of a particular organization's values. Answering the following questions assists in understanding organizational culture: How do people dress? How do they talk? What time do they show up for work? How often are they late for work or meetings? What time do they leave? Do they socialize with each other after work? In what condition do employees leave their workstations at the end of the day? Are employee meals served? What are the employee benefits and perquisites? Does the organization offer educational perquisites? Is there an employee manual? How large is the employee manual and what is included or not included in the manual? Where is the garbage dumpster located in proximity to the employee entrance? The answers to these questions help define an organizational culture regardless if it is in writing. The answers can also effectively indicate morale and predict employee turnover rates.

How should the club culture be evaluated? Dawson et al., (2011) developed a hospitality culture scale (see Appendix D) to appraise organizational culture. The scale defined the major areas of culture as management principles, customer relationships, job variety, job satisfaction, principles, propitiousness, leadership, risk taker, accuracy, and composure. The first four variables are organizational attributes and the last six are personal attributes. The club culture can be defined by ranking survey responses. *Use the article with the students to define their current jobs and, more importantly, to raise the awareness of defining and evaluating culture in an organization. Use Appendix D to begin to define organizational culture.*

How many cultures exist in the club? The organizational culture of the developer's family-owned business is very important to the club and sets the standard for the organization. Additionally, the RDC has a culture that the CEO, Mr. Juzwiak, has defined. The CEO is an accountant by profession (and education). Therefore, the financial culture of

the company is essential. The members have an organizational culture partially defined by their respective places of origin and by their personal life experiences. The employees have a culture that should be investigated and described by the new GM in a report form. The GM has a distinct perspective on organizational culture. The perspective represents the collection of norms that she has developed throughout her professional career and affects her decision-making processes. It will be important that the GM understands each culture, defines each culture, and works to blend each culture in a way that is appropriate to the club. *List as many organizational cultures as possible with the students during this exercise.*

What department managers and staff should be involved in the formulation of a human resource strategy? The club has a large organizational structure, as defined in Appendix B. The club has a human resource department led by a human resource director. The GM should develop an overall organizational strategy with the human resource director. Each department of the club should have an individual plan for recruitment, retention, and orientation. Food service within clubs is known to have a high employee turnover rate. *The managers of all departments listed in Appendix B should be involved in the strategic plan.*

What steps should the new GM take to understand the club's generational issues? The club has three main groups of employees: Baby Boomers (i.e., Boomers), Generation X (i.e., Xers), and Millennials (i.e., Gen Y). The Boomers are mostly the department managers. Few Xers are department managers. The GM must engage her Boomers to understand the difference in culture between their views and those of Gen Y. Gen Ys are holding hourly jobs in the restaurants and the golf courses. A training program needs to be developed for the Boomer managers to understand how to engage the Gen Y and to provide an atmosphere of motivation (Gursoy et al., 2008).

How should the GM increase membership satisfaction of the club? The GM should be visible to the club members. Each member is an owner of the club and expects personal service from the GM, which is why many successful GMs prefer an intermittent over a set work schedule. A useful strategy to increase club membership would be to use focus groups or customer satisfaction surveys. The resultant information will likely be important for the GM and for the organization to develop plans to increase satisfaction. The GM should measure customer satisfaction through a survey with both a qualitative and quantitative appraisals. *Use the Lee, Kim, Ko, and Sagas (2011) article for an example of a customer satisfaction survey from a golf club.*

Why is customer satisfaction important for a club or any service organization? Clubs or service organizations are often dependent upon

customer satisfaction because the customer has joined the organization by choice. The members of a club pay to use the club. Club membership is declining in the United States (Ferreira & Gustafson, 2006). Customer satisfaction is paramount to loyalty. A loyal club member stays in the organization and spends money utilizing the amenity package and providing revenue for the organization. Additionally, satisfied members or customers utilize word of mouth advertising to help the developer sell real estate or memberships in the club. Review the Caruana (2002) article on the relationship between loyalty and satisfaction.

How is working for a private family business different from working for a public company? Family businesses are often different from publicly traded companies because the family and not a Board of Directors determine the primary business intent. Family businesses exist for a variety of reasons. Corporations primarily exist to create wealth for the stockholders. Family businesses are generally more concerned about their reputations, as the family name is at stake. Family operations usually provide additional opportunities for the family members compared to other employees. Family members generally have a faster promotion track. In family businesses, family members in subordinate jobs are not necessarily subordinates but owners (Ward, 1997; Koutroumanis, Watson, & Dastoor, 2012).

Class Instruction (100 minutes)

Start the class by reviewing how many jobs the students expect to have during their careers (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Lead a class discussion on the strategies that students currently use in a new job to understand the organizational culture. (30 minutes)

Divide the students into five groups and ask them to discuss the following terms (20 minutes):

- Turnover rate - How is the turnover rate measured? (see Appendix C).
- Retention of employees - What is retention? How do you retain employees? What type of employees should be retained?
- The culture of an organization - What is the culture of an organization? How many cultures exist in an organization? How do you define and understand culture?
- Owner's vision - What is the owner's vision? How do you discover it? What should you do with the owner's vision?
- Generational issues of the workforce - How many generations are working in a typical hospitality operation? What are the challenges? How do you define generational characteristics?

Ask each group to present to the class and discuss specific examples – 10 minutes each. (50 minutes).

Give the students a final paper writing assignment. What should the RCC GM do? Have the students defend their choice and submit a three page, double-spaced document in relation to their lessons learned.

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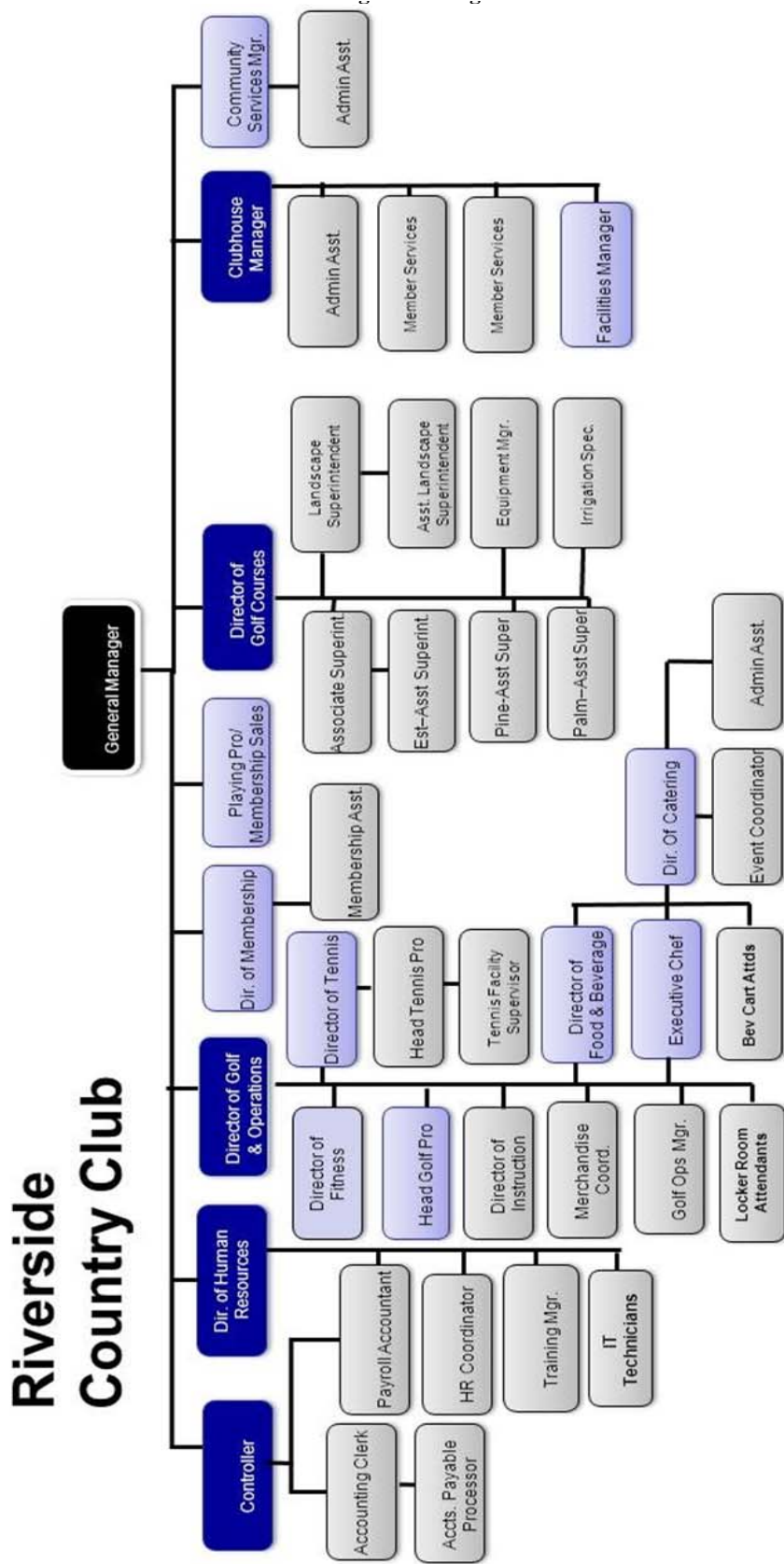
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Some Underlying Dimensions of Organizational Culture

Dimension	Questions to be answered
1. The organization's relationship to its environment	Does the organization perceive itself to be dominant, submissive, harmonizing, searching out a niche?
2. The nature of human activity	Is the "correct" way for humans to behave to be dominant/pro-active, harmonizing, or passive/fatalistic?
3. The nature of reality and truth	How do we define what is true and what is not true; and how is truth ultimately determined both in the physical and social world? By pragmatic test, reliance on wisdom, or social consensus?
4. The nature of time	What is our basic orientation in terms of past, present, and future, and what kinds of time units are most relevant for the conduct of daily affairs?
5. The nature of human nature	Are humans basically good, neutral, or evil, and is human nature perfectible or fixed?
6. The nature of human relationships	What is the "correct" way for people to relate to each other, to distribute power and affection? Is life competitive or cooperative? Is the best way to organize society on the basis of individualism or groupism? Is the best authority system autocratic/paternalistic or collegial/participative?
7. Homogeneity vs. diversity	Is the group best off if it is highly diverse or if it is highly homogeneous, and should individuals in a group be encouraged to innovate or conform?

Note. Adapted from *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (p. 86) by E. H. Schein, 1985, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Copyright 1985 by Jossey-Bass. Adapted by permission.

Large Club Organizational Chart



Turnover Cost Evaluator

Turnover Cost Evaluator | [Log Out](#)

Property Information	Select a Position	Overall Summary	Help
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Current Position: Food and Beverage Department - Food Server (Line)

Costs of People	Pre-Departure Costs	Recruiting	Selection	Orientation	Productivity
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Productivity Costs When an employee decides he or she is going to leave a firm there may be a loss in productivity for a short period of time. Similarly, in many situations the new employee will need a certain amount of time on the job to reach a level of competency comparable to that of the person he or she replaced. There may also be a certain amount of disruption that occurs when a new employee joins an organization that keeps peers from completing their normal duties in a timely manner. On this screen, enter your costs related to productivity and disruption.

Productivity of the Departing Employee Estimate the productivity of the departing employee (e.g., some percentage less than 100%), and how many days the employee's productivity is less than 100%. For example, suppose a sales manager secures five group functions per week (on average). If a departing sales manager secures four group functions per week (on average), then the departing employee's productivity is four divided by five, or 80%.

Note. Cornell Hospitality Calculator. This is an example of the calculator and shows the additional areas of employee costs associated with turnover. Retrieved from <http://www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/research/chr/pubs/tools/turnover/tool.html>

Appendix D

Hospitality Culture Fit Scale: Organizational and Personal Factors

Organizational Culture

Management Principles

- The organization is employee focused
- The organization supports, empowers and rewards their employees
- The organization practices the motto "Treat others as I wish to be treated"
- The organization has a focus on employee retention
- The organization constantly reinforces the company's culture
- Training is important within the organization
- The organization treats mistakes as opportunities to learn
- An organization where there is an entrepreneurial spirit among managers
- An organization where cultural diversity is a reality
- An organization where employees do more than is required of them
- An organization where there are many opportunities to relocate
- There is an entrepreneurial spirit among managers

Customer Relationships

- An organization that is in business of helping customers celebrate the milestones in their lives
- An organization that is in the business of creating memories for customers
- An organization that is a home away from home for its customers
- An organization that develops a relationship with its customers
- An organization that has a high percentage of repeat guests
- An organization that believes: To be of service is the most noble profession

Job Variety

- A job where every day is different
- A job that can be challenging at various times
- Job Satisfaction
- An organization that has high turnover
- An organization where burn out is a problem for management

Personal Attributes

Principles

- I am very trustworthy
- I am extremely honest
- I have a high degree of integrity
- I value truthfulness
- I am known for keeping promises
- I stand firm on by beliefs and principles
- Others describe me as loyal
- I try to lead by example
- I take pride of ownership
- Others say that I am dependable

Propitiousness

- Others describe me as friendly & warm
- I have a love of people
- Other people characterize me as cheerful
- I am known for being a sharing person
- I have a caring and empathetic attitude
- I am culturally aware of others
- I enjoy serving others
- I am more social than independent
- I trust others
- I am community focused
- I am a very positive person

Leadership

- Other people consider me to be a coach
- I am a natural leader
- Others consider me to be strategic in my thinking
- I can turn a loss leader into a profitable organization
- I have a good business sense

Risk Taker

- I am a risk taker
- I am adventurous
- I take calculated risks

Accuracy

- I am very detailed oriented
- I strive to be very precise

Composure

- I am a very calm person
- I have a low level of anxiety

Note: Dawson, M., Abbott, J., & Shoemaker, S. (2011). The hospitality culture scale: A measure organizational culture and personal attributes. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(2), 296.