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## Cultural Context of Workforce Commitment

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*There would hardly be few to deny the fact that empowerment still appears a dream and almost non-existent. Managers preach empowerment but practise alienation and direction. They talk of involvement but walk the opposite. We praise it in public. This is perhaps the reason why transformation of the workplace is still eluding us. This paper is an attempt to understand the needs of employees as well as what the organization needs from them. It is a major step in creating the conditions under which employees and in turn, the organizations thrive. The paper looks at ways an organization's leaders can create a culture that nourishes and supports the growth and commitment of its employees.*

Productivity is output divided by persons giving that out put. The organization that manages its people effectively will benefit from their productivity. JRD Tata said that lots of success stories shall revolve round this very key. Further, the ability of an organization to reach its goals depends to a large extent on the talent and efforts of its workforce. The work attitudes of personnel can have considerable influence on their behaviour in organizations and this could have far reaching implications for organizational capabilities. (Kotter, 1988). Attitudes in the context of work are collections of feelings, beliefs and thoughts about how to behave. Attitudes include behavioural and also effective and cognitive components. They are important indicators of employee involvement and participation.

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If we attend any Annual General Meeting of a corporate, the public pronouncement is that employees are our most valuable asset. But what is practised is downsizing, restructuring and a fashionable world called right sizing. What does actually this mean? Converse with HR Executives and they admit they want Retrenchment, Lay Offs and want to reduce costs. This is quite capable of creating chaos and upset the faithful and loyal employees. This raises two issues -

1. What do employers desire from employees?
2. What are employees' requirements from employers?

#### **EMPLOYERS' REQUIREMENTS :**

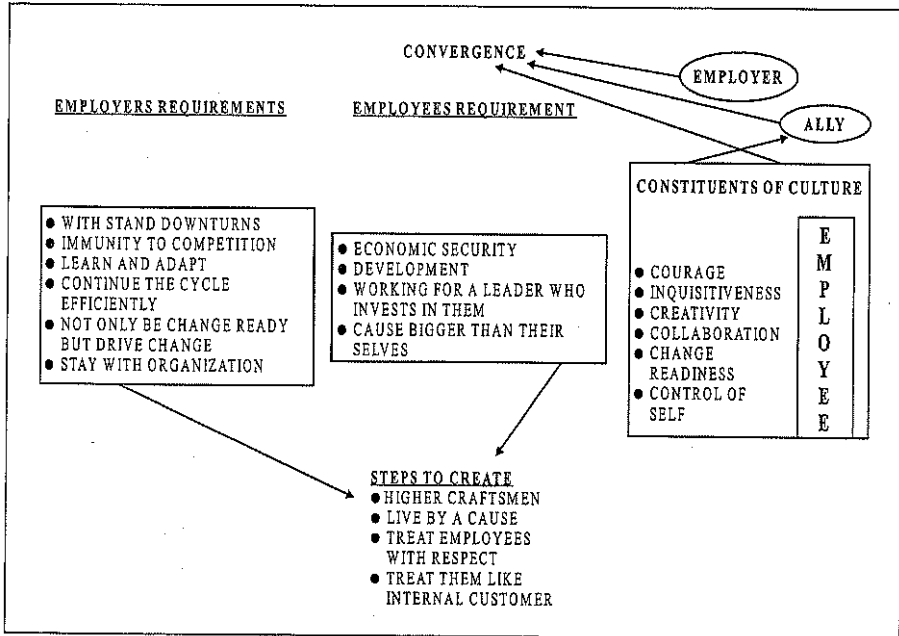
What is that a CEO desires ? Quite frankly, not a fly by night operation and short term profits but a sustainable high performing organization. Sustainable organization is one which can withstand slowdown, be immune to fierce competition and be a fulfilling place to work for over a longer period of time.

For most organizations, it is a question of survival and maintaining their status quo and not of thriving. Darwinian principle of survival of the fittest garnishes this temper. An intensely competitive environment favours those who can continually learn and adapt and learn and adapt again. Organizations that fail to innovate and adapt have lost the battle and would lose the battle.

Organizations never learn and adapt and innovate and adapt, but it is the people who do it. It has to be individual who must create.

#### **EMPLOYEES' REQUIREMENT : (FIGURE 1)**

What do employees need to work at their peak levels of creativity, courage, collaboration and commitment? The most typical answer that we get is money and more money. The evidence is available that it is not money alone. Over-emphasis on monetary compensation is so lopsided that we lose correct perspective and employees quit when factors other than money good to keep individuals highly committed to an organization are not thought of. If you plan to hire and retain some of the brightest by paying more money in the same autocratic and creativity-starved culture, you obviously need even more money. Some one someday somewhere will be willing to outbid you. When you are asking employees to be committed, innovative, thinking, you must find additional way to hire and retain the best available.



### COMMITMENT :

- Can be brought about by :
- Understanding the reason why employees work
- Creating a culture
- Hiring leaders and not managers
- Identifying and creating a cause and living by that
- Treating employees as internal customer and not a hired commodity.
- Why do individuals work ?
- Economic security (Maslow's Pyramid)
- Employees do work for someone who expects and helps them develop their personal best.
- Effective commitment grows when they work for a cause bigger than themselves
- Cause, Inducement, Commitment, Produce revolutionaries, continuously reinventing future.

**CULTURE :**

Employees need a leverageable and powerful ally to help (Culture). Like IT industry, it is 24x7x52 programme. It permeates all facets of organization. Various surveys conducted to know the drivers of culture and workforce commitment reveal that there could exist a culture which brings out the best in people.

**CONSTITUENTS OF DESIRABLE CULTURE : (FIGURE 1)**

**Courage :** To tread on a path which is uncomfortable comfortably. Willingness to take risks in the face of unknown future.

**Inquisitiveness :** Ability to learn how to learn.

**Creativity :** Out of the box thinking to see things from different frame of references.

**Collaboration :** Moving from me to us, Not letting our egos dominate our decisions.

**Service Behaviour :** Why do we exist ? To serve our customers.

**Change readiness :** Taking change as an opportunity and friend and not an enemy or threat.

**Commitment :** I shall do whatever it takes to realize the vision and objectives of the organization.

**Team :** I must do it. I can not do it alone. None of us is as good as all of us.

**Self behaviour :** Behaving ourselves and not focusing on others. This is the key to making everything else actually work.

**JOURNEY NEXT**

The next travel begins to take steps to create these foreplays when we have known the various requirements of important stakeholders i.e. employees, employers and the ally (Culture)

**ACTIONS :**

1. Hire the craftsmen and not the artist (God lives in details). Hire leaders and not the managers. Managers are only interested in maintaining status quo. Craftsmen are those who develop people as their primary cause.
2. Find, create and live by a cause. When we start believing that we are making different and making impacts we work intelligently and harder.
3. Treat individuals with respect. Human beings must be treated well. They are worthy of every one's respect. We respect some employees more than others. Treat people like adults and respect them like adults and they would deliver like adults.

4. Treat your employees like internal customers and not like hired commodities. Communicate with them like external customers what they want and how they want. Do not control them, rather influence them. The belief that you can control them will boomerang. Sell them work and control your head hunting costs and switching costs. Try to know the impediments that are coming in their way to accomplish the work. Give them freedom to fail.

**Conclusion :** I shall collaborate with you if you treat me right and help me grow the organization.

NOT BECAUSE I HAVE TO BUT BECAUSE I WANT TO.