

SCRIPTS – PEOPLE MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Cover Page – Slide 1

I welcome you all to this exciting session on People Management – An Overview.

Learning Outcomes – Slide 2

At the end of this session, it is my belief that we would have achieved the following Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the major elements of People Management Skills.
- Describe the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of People Management Skills.
- Highlight challenges facing People Management Dynamism, and,
- Identify tips and techniques to entrenching People Management Skills in their workplaces.

Introduction to People Management – Slide 3

People management happens in workplaces all the time so much as to be taken for granted. It is evidence that Human resource management is alive and well in the organisation.

People Management is seen as a set of practices that encompass the end-to-end processes of talent acquisition, talent optimization, and talent retention while providing continued support for the business and guidance for the employees of an organisation. (Ghosh,2019)

The canopy of people management is a key sub-set of human resource management, which covers all aspects of *how people work, behave, engage, and grow at work*. Many systems have sprung up to manage people and they often affect the total workings of the organisation and thus need to be adhered to as dynamic individual puzzle pieces without losing sight of the bigger picture, because even in well-run, stable organisations, people can be misaligned, too broadly focused, and working at cross-purposes (Bregman,2017).

People management is a broad topic that covers what it means to develop, organize, problem-solve for, and grow the employee side of the business.

These skills range from being able to mediate a personality clash between team members to building an effective human resources system for a business. (Team, 2019).

So, during this session, we would be looking at an overview of people management skills managers and leaders must possess as second nature, by tracing its origins from Human capital theory; connecting leadership to people management; and recommending what individuals can do on their own as people managers who demonstrate soft skills to help their organisations execute their missions.

Importance of People Management – Slide 4

The following are the importance of People Management:

1. People Management helps in managing people in better ways

People management strategies can make all the difference between bad, mediocre, good, and great employee experience. New upgrades in the functioning of HR systems and processes have altered the nature, extent, and scope of people management. That said, at the pivotal idea and aim remains to manage people better in ways that make work easier, enabled, and impactful.

2. Greater financial outcomes and other indirect benefits.

In 2012, Jiang et al confirmed in their study that both skill-enhancing, motivation-enhancing and opportunity-enhancing HRM practices all contribute directly and indirectly to financial outcomes, for organisations that take people management seriously. Significant mediating variables are human capital and employee motivation, which impact on employee behaviours (voluntary turnover and operational outcomes). These results point towards the importance of people management, as this is pivotal in achieving performance.

3. Promotes the role of front-line managers

As Currie and Procter (2001) point out, 'HR strategy may best be composed of broad themes which can be contextualized at local level. This encourages middle managers to elaborate on these broad themes, considering specific operational contexts, and to determine how best those themes are realized.' People management promotes the role of front-line managers as "strategic partners" (Armstrong, 2008)

4. Cuts down talent evaporation

With effective talent management, a part of people management skills, we may prevent human capital (HC) from walking "out of the door". The inherent problem with Human Capital, as Coff and Raffie (2015) observe, is that, unlike organisational capital that the organisations own (that is: patents, databases, and so on), Human Capital can simply walk out the door and never return.

Human Capital Theory – Slide 5

Human capital, can be argued, represents the foundational level of Intellectual Capital. ***Human Capital not only plays a vital role in developing and creating new ideas and knowledge; it also facilitates social capital and the sharing of knowledge and ideas through internal relationships (Han et al 2014).***

It can be argued that recruiting and retaining the best employees becomes a key goal of Human Capital management. However, talent management is only part of the equation. The organisation also has to leverage the skills and capabilities of employees by encouraging individual and organisational learning as well as providing a supportive environment where knowledge can be created, shared and applied.

The term human capital can trace its roots to the early 1960s, when Schultz (1961: 140) proposed that Human Capital consisted of the '*knowledge, skills and abilities of the people employed in an organisation*'. While concise, Shultz's initial definition of Human Capital is somewhat limited in that it does not take into consideration the concept of 'value' and the importance of 'investment' in Human Capital.

The basic premise behind Human Capital theory is that people's learning capacities are of comparable value with other resources involved in the production of goods and services (Lucas 1990). Applied in the context of organisations, ***Human Capital theory suggests that individuals who invest in education and training will increase their skill level and be more productive than those less skilled, and so can justify higher earnings as a result of their investment in Human Capital.***

As Becker (1993:19) in CIPD,207 suggests, 'schooling raises earnings and productivity mainly by providing knowledge, skills and a way of analysing problems'.

People Management Philosophy – Slide 6

The HR Management Philosophy from which People Management is derived according to 2021 HRM handbook, is not mainly about Human Resources Function. It is more about the leadership style of the top management, the current corporate culture and values. It is about the vision of the leader of the organisation.

The modern leader usually requires a modern HR Management approach and builds the environment suitable for the evolution of the modern HR Management. This is the HR Management Philosophy behind the scenes, the soft skills side.

The development of the HR Management Philosophy is a long-term process. The philosophy is usually informal and respects values and opinions of the main stakeholders. The leaders of the organisation have a significant influence on the HR Philosophy. The HR Leaders are the next ones influencing the philosophy significantly.

The main factors influencing the HR philosophy in the organisation are:

- ***Leadership Style***
- ***Corporate Culture***
- ***Corporate Values***
- ***Market Competition***

The leadership style is extremely important. The leaders of the organisation are the role models for managers and employees. The manager always tries to act as the leader does. The behaviour is observed and spread across the entire organization. The leader sets the basic expectations from all employees and managers. They adjust their behaviour to be fully compliant with the leader's expectations.

Leadership and People Management – Slide 7

People management is the process of training, motivating, and directing employees to optimize workplace productivity and promote professional growth as captured in Human Capital theory.

Workplace leaders, such as team leads, managers and department heads use people management to oversee workflow and boost employee performance every day (Armstrong, 2008) As pointed out by Purcell *et al* (2008), high levels of organizational performance are not achieved simply by having a range of well-conceived HR policies and practices in place. What makes the difference is how these policies and practices are implemented. That is where the role of line managers (leaders in their own right) in people management is crucial: 'The way line managers implement and enact policies, show leadership in dealing with employees and in exercising control come through as a major issue.' Purcell *et al* (2008) noted that dealing with people is perhaps the aspect of their work in which line managers can exercise the greatest amount of discretion. Popularly called Emotional Intelligence (EI), they can do this as they:

- Build trust, have integrity and demonstrate competence
- Engage all stakeholders in setting ambitious goals
- Manage with empathy and accountability
- Position each team member to be successful
- Create a positive and encouraging environment
- Treat each individual with respect and humility
- Commit to growing the skill set of every team member

People management is useful in many workplace situations, such as for:

1. Handling interpersonal conflicts

Managers and employees in leadership positions have an important role in resolving conflicts. Effective people management can help in mediating conflicts between employees in a way that promotes collaboration and respect.

2. Leading employee training

As a workplace leader, one may be responsible for onboarding/inducting new employees and coaching current employees on updated processes. Such leaders can use the elements of people management to provide constructive feedback and mentor employees so they can succeed in their positions.

3. Managing deadlines

Directing employees includes assigning tasks and establishing achievable goals. Effective people management can help line managers in particular evaluate their team resources and set realistic deadlines that encourage progress.

4. Building/strengthening organisational culture

A leadership position may allow one to positively influence the work environment. By deploying people management responsibilities to build rapport with employees, leaders can also ask people or teams for feedback on their perspective of the organisation, and then turn that feedback into actionable changes to an organisational culture that every employee can help develop.

Essential People Management Skills – Slide 8

People management requires several soft skills, including those that can lead to open and honest communication as well as improved employee experience. Each of these skills can better help leaders interact with their employees and perform organisational tasks.

1. Empowering employees

Empowering employees helps them develop new skills and be more productive. This is HC investment playing out. It is important to train new employees well and give them the knowledge and resources they need to perform assigned tasks and continue learning on their own. Other important aspects of empowering employees include:

- Offering constructive feedback to encourage skill-building
- Being available for questions or additional training
- Allowing them to adjust workflow or standard processes if it improves their productivity
- Encouraging them to take additional skill-building courses and learning opportunities
- Supporting them on or manage challenging projects

2. Active listening

Active listening is the practice of listening to the speaker to fully understand their perspective, question or concern before responding. Active listeners remove distractions, maintain eye contact and offer verbal or non-verbal cues to indicate their engagement and understanding. In short, active listening engages the heart and the head, also recognised in Emotional Intelligence. These active listening techniques lead to quality people management that promotes positive interactions in the workplace.

3. Conflict-resolution

Good conflict-resolution skills can help address interpersonal challenges. By analysis of the situation and identifying what the causes of the conflict might be, there may be a miscommunication or differing opinions, all of which can help in mediating between opposing parties and help them make a compromise or reach a collective understanding. After mediation, the situation must still be monitored to ensure the conflict is fully resolved and to prevent it from occurring again.

4. Flexibility

Another important people management essential is knowing when to be flexible and when to more firmly direct employees. One can demonstrate flexibility in one's management style by accommodating individual employee needs—such as adjustable schedules or remote work options—and allowing employees to adjust their individual workflow so they can be as productive as possible. One should be able to assess the results of the employee's process to ensure its efficiency and to help them revise the process if it can be optimized. It means accommodating some diversity in individual processes if service delivery is assured. If an employee seems to be struggling with personalizing their process, as an example they can be coached through the standard steps and helped to discover what works best for them.

5. Patience

Patience is an important people management skill that uses kindness, respect and empathy while helping others overcome obstacles. Everyone can use and needs patience when training new employees, teaching new processes, handling conflicts or solving problems. When employees can trust their managers to be patient, they are more likely to ask for clarification to ensure they understand directions and to increase the quality of their work. One way around this is to consider providing multiple examples that clarify and demonstrate same instructions, or combine typed instructions with visual diagrams, if possible, like most airlines always do before flight take off.

6. Clear communication

Communication is a necessary people management skill that enables team members to work together in solving problems, brainstorming new ideas and adapting to new changes. Leaders' ability to clearly communicate with co-workers helps everyone become better team members.

7. Trust

Trust means believing and relying on someone's abilities, assistance or advice when it is most needed. Building trust helps teams work together more efficiently and productively. Teams should be able to trust that their leader supports them and believes in their hard work. Leaders should be able to trust that their team can complete tasks correctly and on time.

8. Organisation

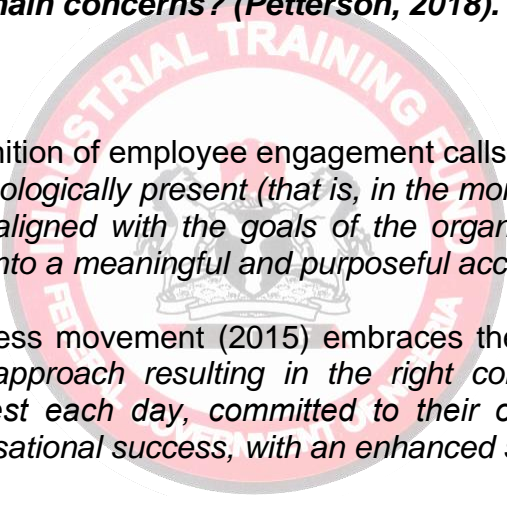
Managing a team involves handling several different ongoing tasks simultaneously. Organisation is an important people management skill that helps keep track and maintain the team's productivity. Signs of effective organisation include:

- Promptly responding to emails, approval requests and questions
- Keeping a calendar to actively track deadlines
- Running meetings that efficiently discuss information
- Properly assigning tasks to team members

Challenges Of People Management – Slide 9

Business leaders face unprecedented challenges especially with people management. They need to manage and adapt their organisations to prosper in an environment of flux and upheaval. With the COVID 19, things just got “better”. In this era of change that is both fast and unpredictable, what are their main concerns? (Petterson, 2018).

1. Employee Engagement-

Byrne (2015) in her unifying definition of employee engagement calls it: a '*moment to moment state of motivation, wherein one is psychologically present (that is, in the moment) and psycho-physiologically aroused, is focused on and is aligned with the goals of the organisation and channels his or her cognitive self to transform work into a meaningful and purposeful accomplishment*'. 

Moreover, the Engage for Success movement (2015) embraces the idea of well-being and defines engagement as '*a workplace approach resulting in the right conditions for all members of an organisation to give of their best each day, committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success, with an enhanced sense of their own well-being*'.

To engage employees, leaders may be tempted to simply 'sell' them reasons to be passionate about their role or encourage them to feel grateful for having a job with their company – the approach is insufficient. This does not engender authentic engagement. Leaders need to identify and employ strategies to bolster genuine employee commitment, influence expression and emotional engagement. This way, both employees and organisations can benefit; it is a win-win (Petterson, 2018)

2. Talent Management-

It is an important individual- and unit-level construct. Under the HC framework, talent management is predominantly focused on developing talent from within the organisation. Hence, there is a strong focus on employee development and the operation of a fair and equitable succession programme.

According to Dowell (2010) '*talent management is an integrated set of processes, programmes and cultural norms in an organisation, designed to attract, develop and deploy and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs*'

Talent management is rapidly increasing in complexity with new technology, worldwide skill shortages and evolving candidate preferences. Talent acquisition leaders are facing tremendous pressure to align talent and business priorities, manage a changing workforce and help their organisations change and grow (Cielo, 2018).

3. Effective Strategy Execution-

Bregman (2017) calls it a people problem because while strategy development and communication are about *knowing* something, strategy execution is about *doing* something. And the gap between what employees know and what they do is often huge. Add in the necessity of having everyone acting in alignment with each other, and it gets even worse.

4. Driving work across Organisational Boundaries-

Like alluded to earlier, People problems show up in managing teams who may in turn involve handling several different ongoing tasks simultaneously, possibly in and outside the organisation. Driving work across Organisational boundaries is an important people management skill in great demand.

5. Collaborative Working Across Teams-

Managing people processes better involves acknowledging that work cannot happen in silos – even for single-team-member endeavours. Success is a team-function – and so is failure. With the wide array of collaboration tools available in the market today, organisations and managers can ensure that sharing and delegation lead to the best results.

To add value to the process of work and to the lives of employees while also multiplying the effectiveness of the team, individuals need to be assigned responsibilities that they can step up to and achieve with effective team collaboration.

Together, these make up the top five challenges facing today's business and organisational leaders. Petterson (2018) believes the challenges are all intertwined and demonstrate that people management skills, and in particular employee engagement, have never been more important. What is more, disengaged employees are unable to put strategy into place effectively and as a result, an organisation will be unable to thrive. This is particularly pertinent today given the growth in the service economy: people really are an organisation's most important asset.

Navigating People Management Problems – Slide 10

People management starts with listening and listening starts before even a conversation starts. Keys to listening well include keeping an open mind and not jumping to conclusions before or during conversations,

1. **Learning to separate personal problems from organizational problems.** Personal problems might be:
 - an employee's individual workload
 - an employee's problem with their process
 - an employee's dissatisfaction with their team members or performance
 - an employee's unhappiness with work due to a desire to change projects

The listed problems, when they occur with one (or a few) employees, can be corrected with great people management skills and no significant reorganisation. Organisational problems might be:

- teams unable to cope with demands of workload collectively
- workflow problems frequently resulting in errors or delays company- or team-wide
- infighting or hostility between team members because of overall poor performance
- many employees feeling disempowered to take control of their work projects and career paths

These issues stem from inherent problems in the organisation of the company. Managers need to use their people management skills to comprehend the organizational problem behind the above problems, while still people-managing to keep employees' heads above water until the problem is truly fixed.

2. **Understand each employee's purpose.** -To communicate with employees and empathize with them, requires understanding what draws them to their role and what joy they derive from their work, i.e., their purpose. Purpose is a huge part of what keeps people satisfied at work and what drives them to succeed and push themselves professionally. Managers can steer employees to their purpose.

3. **Balance praise and criticism wisely.**

Employees need a balance of both praise and criticism in order to thrive. If praise is given only for good work, then Managers are like a straw man that frustrates employees because of inability to help them grow. And if only criticism is coming employee's way, they will be on-edge and demoralised.

4. **Ending meetings with asking open-ended question to employees.**

Whether it is a quarterly performance review or preps for a client meeting, one should always “end every important conversation with, *“Is there anything else?”*”, according to David Hauser, founder of Grasshopper, in his 2017 SaaS Fest talk. This way Whatever is top of mind — their biggest challenges — will come out first. It also keeps managers in the loop on their development and their work without them feeling like they are micromanaging

Conclusion – Slide 11

Hey, so in the past few minutes, we have been able to look at:

- Introduction to People Management.
- Importance of People Management.
- Human Capital Theory.
- People Management Philosophy.
- Leadership and People Management.
- Essential People Management Skills.
- Challenges Of People Management, and,
- Navigating People Management Problems.

In an environment as digitally charged as ours today, people management skills and techniques need to evolve as well to live up to employee expectations and to create an experience that employees want to continue with. People management should encompass the process of training, motivating, and directing employees to optimize workplace productivity and promote professional growth. Workplace leaders, such as team leads, managers and department heads must use people management skills to oversee workflow and boost employee engagement and performance every day to actualise the business objects.

Thank you and Stay Safe. Bye

