Managerial Communication

Angel (First M. Last)

School or Institution Name (University at Place or Town, State)

**Organizational Culture and Communication at Walmart**

Organizational culture includes the beliefs, expectations and the values of an organization. In recent years, the significance of organizational culture has been considered and emphasized more frequently. Culture is an essential factor in understanding the environment of an organization. Every organization has its own culture which determines its beliefs and behaviors. This paper seeks to discuss and analyze the organizational culture of one of the biggest and most famous corporations that are Walmart. The aim of this paper to analyze the organizational culture of Walmart and study the ways in which internal and external communication reflects on organizational culture. Besides, it will also discuss the role of power and status in an organization.

Walmart is an American multinational retail organization. The chain of hypermarkets, departmental stores, and grocery stores are spread in about 27 countries all over the world, and it is headquartered in Bentonville, Arkansas. It is considered as one of the largest company by revenues and sales, having a majority of its sales from the United States. The growth of the company is highly dependent on the culture and beliefs that were set by the founders and the beliefs and values of its employees. There are several reasons to select the company for the purpose of this assignment. I have worked in one of the retail stores of Walmart, and I can reflect on the organizational culture I observed, in addition, Walmart is the famous organization whose organizational culture has been studied several times, and it is easy to assess the cultural values for more in-depth analysis to fulfill the purpose of this project.

The success and failure of an organization depend on the organizational culture. An organizational culture comprises of organizational mission, vision, and values. The culture of an organization is aware of its goals and objectives. To state simply, it is the way things are done in an organization. It is easy to understand that the culture plays a vital role in the workplace and guides the behavior of employees in the organization and it has a direct association with leadership in an organization (Schein, 2010). It directly impacts the way the people of an organization interact with each other and the external stakeholders by defining the appropriate behavior. Walmart is one of the most successful organizations, and its success is also based on its values, mission, vision and the strong organizational culture shared by its employees. Walmart is the best-suited example of the company having a healthy organizational culture; therefore it is selected to accomplish this project.

Walmart being the world largest retailer is cultural phenomena. The company started with the simple philosophy of its founder Sam Walton, which is based on low prices for its shoppers. The culture of Walmart is the key driver of its growth. The vision of the founder was to keep the prices as low as possible. Walmart has a simple philosophy of offering value of money to its customers. Sam Walton set an example for the other players, due to him Walmart took baby steps towards the success. As the leader, Walton was clear about his priorities related to its people and customers.

Walmart's culture has the spirit of innovation and involvement, and it is created by giving responsibility to people. At Walmart employees are empowered and trusted, and their performance is continuously monitored. The culture of minimum cost remained at the heart of the company and contributed towards its growth. One of the secrets of Walmart's customer service is the ten-foot attitude, which emphasizes maintaining eye contact with constant and greeting him. Walmart follows the “Sundown Rule” which states that every customer request will be fulfilled the same day. Walmart also replaced its previous slogan with the new one, “Save money, Live Better” which projects its mission to make everyday life of its people better. The penny wise culture introduced by the founder of Walmart played a vital role in its success. This culture prevails in headquarter of the company as well. The low price culture also impacts the suppliers to reduce their prices.

Walmart has a unique corporate culture characterized by the diversity of employees. The business at the company is based on values and morals. Walmart has the rules and customs which are based on the value of respect for its suppliers, customers, and associates that make it the most admirable company. The company also aims at serving the community. Overall several components of culture have been identified at Walmart. The culture of the company is market with service for its customers by offering them the least possible prices, respect for its people, striving for excellence and action with integrity.

The customer needs fulfillment the critical factor for the success of the company. The internal communication at the retails stores of Walmart reflects on its culture. The open door policy allows open communication, and it is the critical part of the company's culture. The internal communication is essential for the success of the company. Effective internal communication results in the employee motivation, cooperation, collaboration and teamwork and so on (Mishra, 2014). Effective internal communication has numerous benefits, and it reflects on the culture of an organization. Same goes with Walmart, the flow of information between the employees and departments shows the way the company shares the common vision, goals, and strategies.

Wal-Mart’s Grass Roots Process which is the formal way of obtaining the feedback from associates reflects on the company's culture of employee feedback and the importance of employee opinions. It reflects the company’s philosophy of respect and excellence. The company respects the contribution that each employee makes to the success of the company. In this way, the company promotes excellence among the workers, teams and in the whole organization. The internal communication of the company is based on fairness, honesty, and impartiality in organizational decision making which is another factor which reflects its culture.

The company has developed a website ‘Walmartone.com,' or it can be considered as a platform which connects all of its associates and keeps them informed of the useful information. The culture of continuous improvement is reflected in the fact that they believe in employee communication. That is why they have created a platform to act as the single best place for employee communication and to develop a community. It is the step to create value for the associates. The customer value and the goal of low price and better value for customers are communicated to all the employees in a company which is the key to the company's culture of Walmart. Teamwork is also promoted in the company which is the key to organizational excellence.

The external communication is the transmission of information to the external parties of the company. The people in the external environment of the company involve the customers, potential customers, suppliers, shareholders, investors and the society at large. External communication is also the key to organizational success, and it makes a reflection on the company's culture. Sundown rule by Walmart shows external communication excellence. It reflects that the company aims at providing the service to its customers as it ensures that it responds to customer request in the best possible way. 10 Foot Rule also shows the company's excellence in its customer service.

Walmart promotes the idea of servant leadership and encourages the leaders to leave their desks and listen to employees, customers and other external partners of the company. The company also promotes the idea of teamwork and to involve the external partners of the company. Walmart is known for its effective brand storytelling techniques to tell the massive thought and idea behind this bigger brand (Elmer, 2011). Walmart’s corporate global website uses the effective content marketing system to communicate with its potential customers. This reflects the Walmart’s philosophy of striving towards excellence by engaging external stakeholders. 2012, the company took the decision to share its corporate story and convey the passion for its environment, associates and the communities. The company also uses its corporate blog to share the information and attaches human stories to Walmart's news. By sharing information with the external stakeholder's company reflects on its culture of integrity as it shares all the necessary information that could help investors and potential customers. It allows investors to better guide in decision-making.

It is a common fact that both internal and external communication plays a vital role in organizational success (Berger, 2008). Internal communication is important because it keeps employees informed of whatever happens in organizations and they get aware of their organizational goals, mission, and values. External communication allows sharing the necessary information with the external stakeholders of the company to increase the investors and customers of the company. Internal and external communication is influenced by the power and status of the organization. Cross-Cultural communication is an organization that is often determined by power and authority.

The role of power comes because it decides who should be involved in the communication. The power and authority in an organization sometimes do not involve everyone in the communication. Perceptions about power differences also create a barrier in effective communication in an organization. Organization culture is determined by the philosophy often higher management, and it is the power and status of higher management that encourages or hinders the communication. As the leadership at Walmart promotes effective communication between employees and with the external stakeholder, barriers to effective communication are low. On the other hand, organizations in which higher management doesn't have the philosophy of communication and information, they are less likely to have effective and goal oriented communication. Power not only comes from the higher authorities but it is also the perception of power. Power relationships are also crucial in communication when employees feel less powerful then the authorities, it creates a barrier in effective communication. Successful organizations give the power to their employees and encourage them to provide feedback and participate in decision making. Besides, they respect their words and then such employees contribute to the success of the organization.

Overall, Walmart is an example of the most successful organization. Since its beginning, Walmart has stayed true to its values and purpose of providing quality and value to the customers at a low price. To keep itself at the heart of its customers, Walmart has developed a culture which comprises of value and service to customers, integrity, respect for its people, and motivation towards excellence. The strong values and standards instilled in the culture of the organization has carved the path of success for it and has made it one of the largest retail chain. The internal and external communication at the company reflects on its culture of integrity, service to customers and excellence. Walmart’s effective internal and external communication also plays a key role in its achievement. Power and authority also influence organizational culture and communication, and Walmart is an example of how power and authority can result in effective communication.

# References

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