

INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR

5. Theme Successful adaptation in a new work place

Exercise no. 10. Quiz “Understanding and Adapting to a New Organisational Culture”

Based on: Anita Attridge - a Career Coach at the Five O’Clock Club, a national outplacement and career counselling network <http://www.anitaattridge.com/>; source: www.amanet.org

Aim of the exercise

- To help mentee to understand what organisational culture is, and why it is important.

Description

Simply defined, organisational culture is “the set of written and unwritten rules by which people function to get their work done.” This exercise provides some background information on what to look for in relation to organisational culture and sets out a series of questions to help mentees to understand the culture of new workplace.

Expected duration: 30 min.

Steps for performing the exercise:

1. Mentor introduces the theme to the mentees.
2. Mentor explains the aim of the exercise and how to perform an exercise.
3. Mentor handles the handouts to the mentees.
4. Mentees perform an exercise individually.
5. Mentor interprets the results of the exercise to the mentees: he/she explains which answers are correct or incorrect.
6. Each mentee comments her/his results.
7. Common discussion in the group is held on these questions:
 - What organisational culture is?
 - Why organisational culture is important?
 - What to look for in relation to organisational culture during adaptation period?
 - What is recommended to do and what behaviour would be a mistake during adaptation period?

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HANDOUTS FOR MENTEES

Task for mentee:

There are some statements below. You should read each statement and sign if you agree with it or not.

1. What makes you successful in one company may not make you successful in another company. If your new employer expects people to work in a way that is different from that of your previous Organisation, you will be expected to adapt to the new culture.

 a) Answer YES
 b) Answer NO

 2. Organisational Culture Isn't Right or Wrong: It Just Is.

 a) Answer YES
 b) Answer NO

 3. I think this is important to find out about the leaders of organization in order to adapt there successfully. Who succeeded to the leadership roles, who failed, and why? It is important to find out how has the company culture evolved over the years.

 a) Answer YES
 b) Answer NO

 4. I think it is not important to pay attention not only to what needs to be done but how it should be done in the new job if I want to adapt to the new workplace successfully.

 a) Answer YES
 b) Answer NO
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Results:

Task for mentor:

Below you will find explanation of the results: which answers are correct and which are not.

Also there are interpretations of the answers below. Please explain the results to the mentees.

1. Correct answer: YES

Explanation:

If you choose to ignore organisational culture, you do so at your own peril.

Joining a new company can be like moving to a foreign country. You will encounter new customs, dress, language, ideas, and rules, and you will need to learn about all of these in order to do well.

- You will be expected to work and interact effectively in the Organisation.
- You will be accepted and you will fit into the Organisation—or not!
- You will be assessed for recognition, compensation, rewards and promotion, depending on how well you perform in the new—and perhaps very different—culture.

Ask yourself - what kind of environment are you accustomed to? If your new employer expects people to work in a way that is different from that of your previous Organisation, you will be expected to adapt to the new culture.

2. Correct answer: YES

Explanation:

The unspoken rules, based on shared values and beliefs, become the reality of how the Organisation gets work done. Those who join the Organisation are expected to adapt and accomplish their work in accordance with the culture.

Here’s a checklist of questions to ask:

- What it’s really like to work here? What are the realities of working “our way”? What behaviours and attitudes are expected?
 - How are co-workers expected to communicate and deal with each other?
 - How are decisions made and problems solved?
 - How are employees and customers expected to be treated?
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3. Correct answer: YES

Explanation:

The culture of an Organisation is commonly determined by the founders. It may evolve over time, but the processes and ways of working together become deeply embedded. These people exert an extraordinary influence on the company culture. It's their company and they determine:

- The beliefs and values of the workplace
- The company's focus of attention
- The decision-making and problem resolution processes
- Conduct and achievements that will be rewarded

If the Founder is no longer with the company, find out about the leaders who replaced those who were present at the beginning. Who succeeded to the leadership roles, who failed, and why? How has the company culture evolved over the years?

4. Correct answer: YES

Explanation:

Pay attention not only to what needs to be done but how it should be done. Every new employee knows he or she must figure out what must be done, but you may not achieve desired results if you don't also figure out how it needs to be done.

“What” needs to be done includes:

- The objectives or goals I need to accomplish
- My work priorities
- Technologies and systems used
- The information I need to accomplish my job
- The resources available to me

“How” the job needs to be done relates to the culture:

- How do people work: independently or collaboratively?
- How are decisions made?
- Who needs to be included in the decision-making process?
- What is important to senior management?

Observe:

- Who talks to whom?
- What language do people use when talking about their work?
- What is the preferred means of communication?
- What is the style of written communication, via memos and e-mail messages?
- How are meetings conducted?