

f 10 Pillars Of Good Management In A Relationship Culture

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The need to build and develop relationships, known as "relatedness", is universal. It's one of the enabling factors of self-motivation, alongside seeking competence and autonomy.

Several scientific studies have demonstrated the primordial role these enabling factors play in people's motivations. In all types of environments, the relationships that matter have a massive impact on how we live, protect and develop ourselves.

In the corporate world, we are also affected by these needs. Very often, corporate environments transform employees and managers into "social predators" while at work as this behavior is perceived to be essential to flourish, prevent risks, and succeed in influencing people's interests, decisions, and projects.

Although this is universal, there is variability in the degree of importance accorded to relationships, which depends on the cultures within which organizations operate. In the Middle East, managers and businesses are particularly geared towards cultivating relationships, and collaboration is built through the discovery of individuals through family and social networks and interactions.

Based on the research findings of Erin Meyer, author of "The Culture Map," in cultures where relationships are valued less, trust in individuals is more dependent on their ability to prove their agility, their competence and their effectiveness in performing the tasks and missions entrusted to them. This is the case for countries such as the US and the Netherlands.

In contrast, the countries that most value relationships and build trust through mutual knowledge are found in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. In such environments, trust is promoted through the ups and downs of relationships and long-term interactions, and “relatedness” is built-up spontaneously. This doesn’t guarantee employee engagement. Management actions and postures are key to strengthen employee engagement and motivation based on relatedness.

According to data from the Based Gallup Institute, employee engagement rates in MENA hardly exceeded 14% between 2014 and 2016. And, of the 86% who were disengaged, 22% were “actively disengaged”—in other words, they were not neutral in their jobs; they actively sought to undermine corporate efforts and ambitions.

Corporations need talented and motivated individuals who can, beyond simply executing managerial decisions, harness their proactivity and their capacity to better serve customers in a landscape becoming disrupted by digital innovation and technology. But, in the absence of strong management capabilities, employees will not participate when asked to engage in projects and ambitious initiatives.

Managers are key to the internal alignment of practices in mobilizing and engaging employees sustainably and efficiently. This requires building on good practices, such as the following 10 pillars:

1. Build an environment where employees trust each other.
2. Promote a common-interest mindset throughout the organization.
3. Ensure consistency of management communication and daily actions.
4. Recognize the merit of employee contributions, and give them attention and empathy.
5. Opt for equity when allocating benefits and rewards.
6. Leverage on diversity, and create synergy within and between teams.
7. Promote a common and consistent vision.
8. Promote objectives as they are related to daily activities.
9. Keep employees focused on the tasks that matter most.
10. Promote role-modeling through change champions.

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