Employee feedback drives growth strategy

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A manager in a meeting with his juniors. FILE PHOTO | NMG

Over the past four decades, social science research firmly established that internal workplace communication stands as a pillar of corporate success. Unfortunately, a disconnect exists between what science knows and what businesses actually do.

Multitudes of managers push their supervisory style of withholding information from employees and instead focusing communication outwards towards customers only. Informing employees about strategy, decisions, organisational chances, techniques, and advice all often fall as secondary or tertiary priorities for the modern busy executive.

However, information sharing by managers to their subordinates helps prevent workplace issues before they begin and substantially increase employee job satisfaction.
Employees work better when they understand what goes on within the firm and the organisation’s goals. Strategy involves “where” the entity desires to go then organisational development-enduced operating plans delineate “how” the strategy will get done. Employees should be involved in, contribute towards, and be informed about both strategy and organisational development.

The level of information shared with employees is directly proportional to the deep-rooted psychological concept of fairness that underpins employee attitudes that in turn impact their behaviour that could harm or help the firm. Continuing in the Business Talk series on workplace fairness, today we tackle informational justice that involves sharing relevant information with employees and not hiding it.

Social scientists Sania Usmani and Siraj Jamal’s research highlights organisational justice scales, including the below informational justice statements.

Please answer the following six statements to gauge the level of informational justice at your workplace. Rate your perception when you read each statement as either you 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) agree, or 5) strongly agree.

When decisions are made about your job, your manager deals with you in a truthful manner. Your manager offers adequate justification for decisions made about your job. Concerning decisions made about your job, your manager discusses with you the implications of the decisions.

When making decisions about your job, your manager offers explanations that make sense to you. Your manager explains very clearly any decisions made about your job. You have access to your organisation’s strategic plan and department plan.

Next, please total all the ratings you assigned for each statement and then divide by six. If your average rating score is higher than four, then you receive sufficient information about your job that allows you to understand your role, your position in the company, and the future of your department.

If you scored your average between three and four, then you proverbially swim up current gaining tidbits of information painting a reasonable yet incomplete informational picture about your department and job function.

However, if your average rating fell below three, then your employer does not feel that you knowing what goes on in the firm or about your own job makes much if any difference.

Lastly, if you derived an average rating under two, then your manager likely does not value you, your input, or your job satisfaction and you should consider an urgent job search for a new position.

In short, managers must not fear to share information with employees.
Make information sharing and explanations a priority and gain employee feedback in strategic planning exercises.

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