The Issue of the Language Barrier Among Walmart Employees

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Introduction

Walmart is a retail company that believes in the rule of offering its various products to customers with low prices on a daily basis. The company embraces over 28 countries and has attained globalization over the years due to its diverse regional stores. Up to date, Walmart still upholds its values as well as virtues as set by Sam Walton – the founder of the company (Diermeier & Diermeier, 2017). The company has expanded regarding businesses as well as its various products over the last ten decades. Due to the quality customer service, the experience is worth attracting potential clients on a daily basis. Therefore, the company stocks various goods available for all customers despite the age or gender.

Problem statement

Despite Walmart being a reputable company, it has faced some challenges due to the different changing market dynamics. According to Diermeier and Diermeier (2017), Walmart is a global company providing service to millions of customers located in 28 countries. As mentioned earlier, the company aims at setting low prices for its prospective clients. However, the issue of language barrier has significantly affected its performance over the years. Different countries have various rules and regulations as well as different means and modes of communication. Walmart is becoming one of the world’s top retailers, creating the need for more employees in different parts of the world. In a bid to solve its current problem, Walmart ought to seek help from a business consultant. The consultant is in a position to recommend various remedies related to the current challenges.

Background

The problem of language barrier emerged as a result of globalization. Walmart is operating in 28 countries at the moment, and half of these countries are located outside America, consequently, the issue of language appears. As a result, its rapid growth calls for an increase in the number of employees. An increasing amount of staff will lead to outsourcing from various destinations. New retail offices will need a manager of American origin who, in turn, sees that the company’s virtues are being upheld. Due to the difference in cultures as well as background, communication between people of different nations is minimal. Consequently, this leads to misunderstanding and rigid flow of information among the employees (Tabari, Wilson & Ingram, 2016). The problem of language barrier might be dealt with the ways of training employees. Furthermore, Walmart can opt to employ people conversant with the culture of the host country as well as other options.

Project objectives

The project objectives help in solving the issues of the dealt language barrier, which is an advantage of Walmart Retail Company. The project aims at accomplishing various goals in the company:

Organization performance by creating dynamic language and communication channels.

Better employer-employee relationship. According to Dos Santos (2016), communication allows both parties to air out their grievances and arrive at a universal consensus.

Training employees presupposes equipping them with various skills such as communication and customer service.

Current process

Walmart involves its various employees in the process of decision-making. As the issues of a language barrier being a major hindrance to its performance, the company ought to convene a meeting to address the same. The current existing problem will affect the performance of employees as communication is one of the various dynamics that work towards an organizational performance. Information from the top level of management has to be passed down to different departments. Understanding the information without a universal way or language of communication will lead to misunderstanding. Consequently, employees are not in the position to deliver as well as attend to the assigned directives.

As per Kokemuller (2017), the language barrier leads to constant supervision by the subordinates as well as supervisors. Consequently, this leads to the lack of motivation among the employees and little performance at the workplace. In relation to Maslow’s theory explaining the hierarchy of needs, an employee should be provided with the various facilities such as a conducive working environment (Tanner, 2016). The language barrier hinders the conditions for a better workplace since there is no interaction. As a result, employees will in turn show the low level of performance.

The process of the breaking language barrier will affect all departments. Processes such as employee retention are bound to occur in various departments. Performing employees will be retained as the non-performing ones will be replaced by a lot of new employees who will either need training or work addressing previous experiences.

Requirements

Overcoming language barrier calls for some requirements. The problem is detrimental towards the performance of an organization and calls for various needs as explained below.

Decision-making process involving the best alternative to adopting in dealing with the language barrier.

Training/ employing new workers. Between the two processes, Walmart should choose depending on the budget. Training, though being expensive, saves time since no interviews are conducted. A particular group of employees will then be picked for a training program.

Evaluating the position of the company by incorporating five porters model may help in realizing other existing problems apart from language barriers.

Training, unlike employing new staff will take less than a month. In this case, the issue of the language barrier with the help of training may be overcome by translating all the relevant documents in the line of work for easier interpretation. Besides, Walmart can adopt an interpreter before the employees become accustomed to using the primary language and communicating in it.

Alternatives

Other than solving issues such as language barrier, Walmart can as well adopt methods such as visual methods of communication. Other than audio, visual images can be used to communicate. A good example involves how planes use motion pictures to illustrate various safety instructions. Repetition is also a good tip for successful communication. Replay the message all along as people rarely grasp information for the first time after hearing. Repetition in one way or another keeps the employee awake hence grasping the information really quickly and efficiently. Exhibiting allows an employee to showcase the different skills he has, hence able to gauge their performance in adopting a new language. Use of the simpler word is also a very assistive method, as the employees are bound to be notified of the standard terms used by customers such as greetings.

Compare alternatives

All options involve engaging the employee. However, each varies depending on the cost met in implementing. Training is time efficient since the current employees will only need preparation. In comparison with hiring the new staff, the process is time-consuming as announcements regarding the vacant posts will have to be made. Interviews will be conducted, consuming capital as well as the time needed to run other errands of the organization.

Additional consideration

 Besides training its employees, Walmart should adopt the idea of mergers as well as acquisitions (Galloway, 2017). For example, if Walmart has a retail outlet in China, they should target China’s finest or middle brand and sell its products like their own. After enforcing their positions in the market, Walmart can split and end the deal. As a result, getting employees of the same culture will not be hard as the brand will have existed in the foreign land for quite enough time, creating awareness.

Action plan

The action plan in solving the issue of language barrier will be systematic as well as sensitive to time.

1-3 months

Requirements for the employers:

Attend compulsory training sessions.

Be gauged in terms of employee satisfaction.

Performance will be assessed by way of punctuality at work and customer ratings.

By this time an employee should be in a position to attend to various simple needs of the customer such as showing them around.

3-6 months

In the event the steps involved during the first three months the following will take place;

Walmart should look for a merger in the foreign country to gain ground.

All products, as well information, will be branded under the mergers name.

After gaining strong grounds, Walmart should end the deal and acquire a new store in the region without altering its prices. Performance will be gauged on the prosecution of the new business.

Conclusion

The language barrier, as explained in the paper, has affected the performance of Walmart stores. Some suggestions have been provided in the paper on how to deal with the problem. As a consultant, Walmart can train its employees as well as get new ones conversant with the culture and location of their outlet. However, the best decision involves forming a merger with a company of the same products in any given country. For instance, Walmart is opening a store in Germany. The management should look at potential partner stores such as Tengelmann. The two should join under the term “sofa merger”, helping Walmart gain ground. The issue of language barrier will be dealt with as Walmart will not have to hire its natives to work in Germany where they barely understand the language.

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