

BUSINESS AND WORK IN THE FUTURE

PRACTITIONERS' DAY, DECENT WORK AND BeyondEAWOP CONGRESS, 2011

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Abstract

This article was produced as a basis for further discussion from the German Contribution to the 2011 EAWOP conference - Practitioners' Day and including the results of the Future Workshop of the 7 (Congress for Business Psychology, 2008 of the German Association of Psychologists - Business Psychology Section). This paper examines: trends in work and the business world; resulting questions; required contributions and challenges for Work and Organizational Psychologists and is intended as a basis for further discussion (please contact the corresponding author*).

Introduction

The 15th EAWOP Conference in May 2011 was a great event for all European Work and Organizational Psychologists (WOP). Specifically for practitioners working in the field of WOP a Practitioners' Day programme was organised by NIP and NSvP (Dutch Foundation for Psychotechnique) which included contributions by the VO-CAP (Association of organisation, consumers and labour psychologists) from Belgium and the Sektion Wirtschaftspsychologie in the German Association of Psychologists (BDP). In this programme the German colleagues organised a world-café with four key topics for work and organizational psychologists in Europe: a) Demographic Change; b) Human Potential, c) Company Change and Devel-

opment, and d) Globalization and Intercultural Work. The Sektion Wirtschaftspsychologie and the Topic Hosts wanted to share the outcomes of the world-café with all interested colleagues.

The Topic Hosts were:

- **Prof. Jürgen Wegge**, TU Dresden: "Demographic Change". Wegge is a renowned professor of Work and Organizational Psychology as well as personnel psychology, specialising in motivation, leadership and performance excellence;
- **Rosemarie Bender**, Dipl.-Psych.: "Human Potential". Bender is consulting in the fields of human business, e.g., outsourcing, finding personal strengths and personal application strategies;
- **Dr. Kim-Oliver Tietze**, Dipl.-Psych.: "Company Change and Development". Tietze is an author and well-known expert in the practical implementation of Peer Group Supervision for change projects and team excellence;
- **Dr. Andreas Klug**, Dipl.-Psych.: "Globalization and Intercultural Work". Klug is primarily specialised in personnel development systems, potential assessment and international project consulting. He is an expert for psychological testing.

Demographic Change

We cannot allow the waste of human capital (young and old) to continue. Therefore we need:

- Personnel marketing and personnel selection instruments who target all potential available human resources;
- Resources and potentials – not deficits – should be the basis of all activities;
- Young unemployed should be cared for.

Work-Life balance has to be promoted continuously by organizations

- As WOPs we can and should support flexible working time, home office work, tele-working, dual career options and sabbaticals;
- We should promote the “right behaviour” of supervisors (sharing the lead); re-integration of young mothers, employees who care for family members (nursing) and support organizational offers regarding children’s care/ education that cover the complete working day.

Valuable expertise of older workers is an important resource that is often ignored> therefore we need:

- To integrate demographical issues into HRM strategies;
- Support and cooperation between young and old employees;
- Engage older employees as “senior coaches” / mentors for younger employees;
- Promotion of mutual respect and pre-

vention of discrimination

- To make a clear difference between knowledge and skills.

The development of a comprehensive strategy for demographic changes (fit for age). This requires:

- A general change in the perception and evaluation of older employees by supervisors with the goal that supervisors’ see age as a resource (older employees having knowledge, competence, and expertise; are mobile and know how to make things happen);
- A comprehensive assessment of the demographic situation within companies;
- Age-differentiated work design (based on the analyses of individual skills, knowledge and potential developments);
- Age-oriented (sensitive) leadership;
- Qualification (vocational training) for young, low performing employees in order to counteract the problem of missing expert workers;
- Insight that job knowledge (expertise) can be measured and managed (transferred to new job requirements);
- Insight that customers value up to date knowledge and expertise of employees;
- Clever use and management of age-mixed teams;
- Adjustments of training offerings for older employees.

The development of demographically oriented organization culture. To achieve this we need:

- A new “story” of age and aging (and senior customers);
- Better utilisation of human resources of the ageing work force;
- Business to care for the costs of keeping ageing workers fit (not the society);
- Comprehensive management systems to promote work ability (values, work, competences, functional capacities);
- Participation of older employees in all organizational planning/management activities;
- Active fathers and mothers in leadership positions;
- Reduction and reflection on stereotypes of age and gender;
- Equal pay for men and women;
- To update job descriptions and a modern personnel selection system;
- Employer branding that reflects a positive image across ages and gender with attractive working time offers;
- The development and use of professional and effective occupational health interventions.

Human Potential

Professional leadership practice is a clear factor of success. In the future, enthusiasm for the company and personality will become more important.

This leads to a change in suitable diag-

nostic instruments. Precision in recruiting will become a matter of personal competence. We have identified the following critical behaviours in the development of human potential.

Leading roles and behaviour have to realign. In order to do this we need:

- The combined engagement of managers;
- Centering of the fact that job satisfaction and good behaviour are coherent;
- Emphatic and authentic managers as sources of the enterprise culture and with that drivers of motivation and competitiveness;
- Managers who think change management but not without considering the demands on employees;
- A revaluation of team working that exerts more self control, continuous feedback possibilities and appreciation to allow top performance.

Soft facts” become “hard facts” and with it decisive success factors

- The acknowledgement that the most important competitive factor for successful enterprises is engagement of employees;
- A stronger consideration of “soft facts” in case of enterprise assessments and in case of the assessment of the attraction of (potential) employers
- A stronger consideration of “soft facts” enabling productivity and profit margins to increase.

The approach and the handling of apprentices and trainees have to change, and in order to do that we need to consider:

- The constitution of an appreciative culture;
- A positive perception of the trainees (achievement and social competence);
- Instructors that are prepared for the “new” generation of trainees (for example providing a feedback culture, appreciation, and support);
- Specific development of the potentials of the trainees.

In these situations the requirements of high quality diagnostics rise further needing:

- Objective procedures to measure and assess the personality of candidates and employees, to foster the importance of the level of personal competence and to control human potential;
- Establishment of international high-class standards in suitable diagnostics (e.g., DIN 33430, ISO);
- Integration and profound methodical education of professional groups;
- Interlocking of theory and practice;
- Consideration of the cultural context of diagnostics and their transferability to other cultures;
- Common understandable language;
- Stronger involvement of procedures to capture/ measure intelligence quotients;

- Stronger weighting of generalisable abilities (e.g., employees ability to change);
- Investigation of conditions for adoption of locally developed instruments and procedures in other cultures; or the requirement of amendment of current instruments to achieve recognised standards of good practice.

Organisational Development / Strategy Development

Protracted planning periods for change belong to the past. Intense competition calls for rapid and successful implementation of change requirements, including intense and efficient communication on all levels. WOPs offer support for organizations to shape adequate ways for change, to systematically implement strategic issues, and to reduce inadequate bureaucracy. With regard to issues such as mixed-age work teams, customer involvement, or employee participation, WOP facilitates the dialogue of diverse stakeholder perspectives, supports the design of suitable concepts, and provides accordant methodical support. In order to support these developments the following concepts are critical.

Entrepreneurial thinking and action can be learned and to encourage this we need:

- The application of psychological findings (e.g., on participation, or dialogue) to support the implementation of strategic issues rapidly and successfully;
- Training and development designed in order to impart evidence-based knowledge about entrepreneurial competencies (e.g. initiative, goal orientation, and self-efficacy).

Successful innovation management requires knowledge and experience of customers, employees, and WOP expertise. In order to promote this we need:

- Methods that are designed to enhance communication between those who are active in innovation processes, and methods that support idea development;
- Free space, suitable culture, and reduced bureaucracy, as well as appropriate incentives and feedback processes to unlock the potential of employees to innovate;
- Enduring, honest, and fair involvement of customers (e.g., attention to and incentives for customers' ideas).

In services societies, immaterial values also have to be considered when taking entrepreneurial decisions (e.g., regarding enterprise valuation or company transfer). In order to further this aim we need:

- Intellectual capital to be valued.
- Intellectual capital reporting.

Change management processes have to be designed according to relevant up-to-date scientific findings, and should be more sustainable. In order to achieve this we need:

- Systemic view of organizations in order to support service processes by adequate change interventions;
- Consideration of interdisciplinary cooperation in change management processes;
- Interventions which accelerate or

decelerate change according to the needs of learning and decision-making processes.

Individual and organisational learning processes have to be reconsidered by:

- Companies taking responsibility for education and lifelong learning of the younger generation;
- Clarification of guidelines and methods that suit best specific problem categories;
- Methods for assessment, feedback, training, and evaluation.

'Performance' within the public services has to be redefined and re-evaluated by:

- Employees being involved in the discussion process on performance;
- A wider discussion on objectives and success factors of non-profit organizations.

Science (theory) and practice need closer to collaboration. In order to achieve this we need employees as trainees in scientific organizations, and scientists to put models and constructs into practice.

Globalisation / Working Interculturally

It has become common to work in other countries and cultures and International production and trade increases. Many companies now set-up subsidiaries and joint ventures in foreign countries. So it is critical to be prepared for intercultural interaction. As WOPs we can support international assignments by:

- Research and transparency regarding the success factors of intercultural as-

signments of managers and staff;

- Preparing and to providing the preconditions for successful work in different countries and cultures;
- Presenting a realistic picture of the host country with the elimination of stereotypes and prejudices, knowledge about cultural differences as well as differences in leadership styles and leadership cultures;
- Appreciating that western leadership styles do not always work in other countries, and promoting adaptation to local requirements;
- Using the GLOBE leadership study (e.g., Waldman et al., 2006) as a benchmark/map of “good leadership”;
- Appreciating that work outside the host country will affect the whole family unit;
- Developing specific HR-tools such as selection methods and training programmes for expatriates and incoming workers of different cultures that reflect intercultural research results and international assignment success factors.

The development of intercultural competencies is essential. In order to develop these we need to:

- Generally increase the intercultural competence of leaders and managers;

Intercultural topics being part of leadership and management development programmes;

- Training and development should

be given before international assignments;

- Intercultural communication and conflict solving competencies require development through:
 - knowledge about cultural differences;
 - sensitising individuals to the reasons and escalation of intercultural conflicts;
 - questioning norms of the own and different cultures;
 - patience and modesty;
 - definition and training of rules for intercultural interactions.

Diversity becomes a strategic resource and a success factor and should be considered in the composition of teams and staff changes. We should consider:

- Target oriented, strategic management of diversity from a multi-level perspective (individuals, groups, organizations) in order to achieve benefit for the company and to minimise the negative effects of diversity;
- Acceptance of increasingly diverse life plans and cultural backgrounds of staff members;
- Consideration of versatile and diverse compositions of staff in selection and engagement decisions at a management level;
- Consideration of the growing requirements of international and intercultural cooperation.

Reference

Waldman, D.A., de Luque, M.S., Washburn, N, House, R.J., & Adetoun, B. et al. (2006). Cultural and leadership predictors of corporate social responsibility values of top management: a GLOBE study of 15 countries. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37, 823–837.