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The Introduction and Analysis of Microsoft's Staff Training Practices

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Abstract: Microsoft's employee training practices have contributed significantly to its growth and are worthy of study by companies around the world. Before conducting employee training, Microsoft first investigates the specifics of the company and the actual problems that employees need to solve in their jobs. Microsoft uses the 70-20-10 principle and a new employee training program consisting of a television series and games. The paper also analyses the problem of knowledge concealment in the employee training process, particularly in the context of Microsoft's mentorship system. Microsoft's employee training system is in line with relevant theories and models, and these practices have contributed greatly to Microsoft's growth. However, with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing number of business activities requires fast and effective training methods. Microsoft needs to consider a training program with a short payback period and use digital technology to mimic real-life data in real-time. This article presents a selection of Microsoft's past employee training practices, analyses them by using relevant theory and makes recommendations for current and potential future issues.

Keywords: Microsoft, Employee training, Human resource management, Mentorship.

1. Introduction

Microsoft is an American multinational technology company that develops, manufactures, licenses, and provides various of computer software services. Microsoft is not only a pioneer in PC (personal computer) software development, but also the world's largest computer software provider. Microsoft's market capitalization exceeded US$2 trillion, making it the second US company to do so after Apple. The success of its human resource management has contributed significantly to its growth and is worthy of study by companies around the world.

This article will introduce the specific practices used by Microsoft in employee training. These practices include the preparatory work done by Microsoft before employee training, that is, the establishment of a human capital analysis team to develop different training programs for the different needs of different employees. What's more, the 70-20-10 principle and a new employee training program consisting of a television series and games are also included. It is also critically analyzed using employee behavior mode, social learning theory, and Alderfer's ERG theory. The paper also analyses the problem of knowledge concealment in the employee training process, particularly in the context of Microsoft's mentorship system, from which it is found that mentorship may make it easier to develop ethical leadership, reduce possible knowledge concealment and make employee training more effective. The purpose of this paper is to learn from Microsoft's experience in the area of employee training and to find new solutions to today's epidemic prevention and control situation.

This article finds that Microsoft's employee training system is in line with relevant theories and models, that Microsoft has proven its viability in practice, and that these practices have contributed greatly to Microsoft's growth. However, with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing number of business activities requires fast and effective training methods. Microsoft's employee training seems to take too much time, and the payback period is too long. Microsoft's employee training seems to take too much time, and the payback period is too long. In addition, new changes brought about by the technological revolution are prompting Microsoft to change the use of new mediums for employee training. In response to these two points, this article gives some suggestions to help Microsoft solve the problems it may be experiencing.

2. Employee Training Practices at Microsoft

Before conducting employee training, Microsoft first investigates the specifics of the company and the actual problems that employees need to solve in their jobs. To gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of the size and nature of the workforce within the organization, Microsoft set up a Human Capital Analysis team (HRBI). The team employs experts in various fields, including statistics, psychology, and financial management. The team of these experts will look at the specific needs of the employees themselves and use the expertise of each expert to investigate and analyze the career development needs of the employees and develop an appropriate employee training program for each employee [1].

After identifying the different training needs of different employees through assessments, Microsoft uses a variety of approaches to carry out its training tasks. Most notably, the 70-20-10 principle is used, whereby employees acquire 10% of their basic professional skills by attending a company-organized employee induction course. In addition, one-to-one coaching by a mentor helps employees to achieve 20% of their competencies. The remaining 70% of knowledge and skills need to be acquired through direct work experience and on-the-job training. Firstly, the first year a new employee joins Microsoft is a foundation learning period. Microsoft provides off-the-job training to these new employees, and this year, Microsoft focuses on training employees in the basic skills they will need in the workplace. They are helped to

translate what they have learned from university into workplace skills. Microsoft also trains employees for the specific contexts of the company so that they can better integrate into the company environment. Mentorship also plays a key role in Microsoft's talent development program. Each new employee is free to choose a preferred and qualified senior employee as their mentor. Mentors will provide one-on-one tutoring for new employees to teach them specific skills needed for the job, help them improve their professionalism, solve specific problems at work, and adapt to the company environment. In the process of working with the mentor, new employees can also learn from the specific behavior of the mentor to improve and prompt themselves. Microsoft also provides some on-the-job training to encourage employees to learn and master new techniques and methods on their jobs. Employees can develop their own hypotheses and work in cross-functional teams with other employees to conduct technical research through experiments and ultimately test the hypotheses based on the results.

In addition to this, Microsoft has undertaken a number of new types of employee training programs. Microsoft has delivered some of its employee training to employees in the form of a TV series, teaching employees how to be assertive about ethical challenges through a TV series centred on ethical decision-making - The Trust Code [2]. Games have also become a training tool for Microsoft's employees, and Microsoft has designed '42 Projects' consisting of three pillars: productivity games, trust, and management innovation. In "42 Projects", employees can use 15% or 20% of their time to experiment freely to better adapt their newly acquired skills. Employees can also participate in a simple voting game to choose behaviors that may affect trust, and the results of these choices will serve as an important reference for team members when modifying their collective behavior [3].

3. The Critical Analysis of Microsoft's Employee Training Practices

The following will analyze Microsoft's employee training practices based on the employee behavior model. Firstly, from the perspective of supervision, Microsoft provides on-the-job training for its employees and encourages them to learn and master new technologies on the job. In addition, "42Projects" encourages employees to use 15% or 20% of their time for free experimentation. This is a reflection of the fact that leaders delegate some of their authority to employees and encourage them to be creative. This demonstrates the outstanding level of leadership at Microsoft. Secondly, from an organizational point of view, Microsoft offers a variety of training options for employees. Employees are also encouraged to explore and invent. This shows that Microsoft strives to create an organizational culture that is relaxed and free, respects diversity, and encourages innovation. In addition, from the coworkers' perspective, Microsoft allows cross-functional work teams with other employees to work on technology through experimentation. In this process, employees can exercise teamwork skills and increase their trust in their colleagues. The above three points will foster motivation and enable employees to approach their work with a more positive attitude. As a result of this training, employees will improve their task performance, increase their loyalty to the organization and participate in subsequent work with more positive organizational citizenship behaviors. Ultimately, employees' individual and organizational output will increase.

According to social learning theory, employees learn about their workplace by observing other high-status or influential people around them. In working together with their mentors, trainees learn about information within the company by observing their mentor's behavior and by imitating and learning from their mentor's behavior to get the job done. In the process, employees can learn a lot about their work, which is an important purpose of Microsoft's employee training practices. In addition, from the perspective of knowledge hiding, Microsoft's mentorship system facilitates the formation of ethical leadership and reduces knowledge hiding among employees. Knowledge hiding occurs when individuals have deliberate attempts to retain and conceal knowledge in the face of requests for knowledge from colleagues. Microsoft's mentorship system uses one-on-one teaching between mentors and employees, in which employees and mentors are more likely to develop a more intimate relationship, which inadvertently puts ethical pressure on mentors to hide knowledge. As a result, the mentor is more likely to be an ethical leader who only targets his or her own mentees. At the same time, employees who reciprocate positively with their leaders show a higher level of organizational commitment, see themselves as one with their leaders and other members of the organization, and reduce knowledge hiding by being less concerned with personal self-interest when faced with requests for knowledge from colleagues in order to improve the performance of the organization as a whole [4].

Microsoft uses Alderfer's ERG theory in designing its employee training programs. The ERG model, first put forth by Clayton P. Alderfer in 1969, identifies three categories of needs that all workers, regardless of their profession, share: existence, which refers to the necessities of daily life; relevance, which refers to the need for social interaction; and growth, which refers to the more complex needs of creativity, self-worth, and fulfilling employment [5]. Microsoft has made a lot of efforts to meet the multi-level needs of its employees, which is well reflected in its employee training practices. Firstly, in order to meet the basic needs of employees to survive in the company, Microsoft provides off-the-job training for new employees, and new employees will enter the basic learning period in the first year of their employment at Microsoft to learn the basic skills of working in the company. After meeting employees' existence needs, Microsoft begins to address their relatedness needs through mentorship and on-the-job training that encourages teamwork and helps employees build relationships with mentors and other employees to meet their relatedness needs. Microsoft also attaches great importance to the growing needs of its employees, and through the Human Capital Analysis team's research and analysis of employees' career development needs, it develops appropriate learning and training plans and career development programs for employees to help them improve their personal capabilities and grow professionally.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Microsoft's employee training practices have been proven to work under a variety of theories, models, and conceptual reasoning. The mentorship system used by Microsoft provides employees with the opportunity to observe and learn from their predecessors, which is in line with social learning theory to a certain extent. In addition, on-the-job training and '42 Projects' encourage employees to explore and learn

knowledge, skills, and abilities on the job, which helps to improve individual performance, reflecting the employee behavior model from employee motivation, to competency development, to performance improvement. Microsoft also uses Alderfer's ERG theory to take measures to meet the needs of employees at three different levels: existence, relatedness, and growth. It is worth noting that Microsoft's mentorship helps new employees build a closer relationship with their mentors and increase mutual trust. It helps mentors to become ethical leaders, reduces knowledge hiding, and improves the quality of employee training activities. This system of employee training has made a significant contribution to the growth and development of Microsoft. Although Microsoft's training methods and human resource management system are quite mature, in the face of the specific requirements of today's epidemic prevention and control, and the new changes brought about by rapid technological development, Microsoft's original training methods may lag behind the trend of the times.

Firstly, the increasing business activity in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic requires the use of fast and effective training methods to enable employees to learn the required skills and implement them quickly [6]. As a result, Microsoft's one-year staff training course does not appear to be achieving rapid output. So Microsoft needs to consider a training program with a short payback period for this situation. Microsoft needs to ensure that the learning time is compressed as much as possible without compromising the effectiveness of the employee's learning. To save costs, Microsoft could place more interns or temporary workers in less important or non-core positions, or it could choose to outsource some services.

In addition, with the technological revolution, there is a shift in the way employees receive visuals from 2D to 3D. Previous media such as television, newspapers, and films are no longer popular. More three-dimensional representations such as metaverse and virtual reality technologies are becoming more and more popular. In addition, the evolution of WEB 3.0 is driving the transformation of the Internet from an interactive Internet to an Internet of value. Industry-leading organizations are already improving performance by mirroring the digital practice spaces of real-life workplaces [7]. As a result of this change, Microsoft has had to change its original medium of employee training. Microsoft should use digital technology to mimic real-life data in real-time, enabling a seamless transition from the real world to the digital world. Use a blend of digital and physical teaching methods to provide employees with more vivid examples[8].

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