Improving the Functioning of the Workplace

Organizations should be built on structure, systems, rules and regulations. These elements also pertain to workplaces. They are important to effective functioning, as these lend to the cementing of the organization towards achieving the business agenda and its ultimate goals. The structure of the organization stands out as a major pillar as it represents the guide to the role and functions of its personnel, the expectations of the organization and the efficiency of its operations.

It is important to understand that the structure of an organization provides for the division and distribution of work between management and employees. The structure basically directs how activities within the organization are co-ordinated so that the strategic, specific goals and objectives can be realized. Added to this is the fact that the structure has a direct bearing on the resource base of the organization both human and capital. All of this is consistent with the fact that these are factors which lend to the various organizational roles which are to be played, in order to provide the efficient level of service delivery and service excellence.

It ought not to be lost upon those who lead or manage organizations that in order to achieve effective and efficient management of any organization, it requires that systems are put in place. Inasmuch that management has the overall responsibility for the management of the organization, it is required to plan, organize, recruit staff, lead, direct, control, monitor, inspire and motivate. It must be noted that while the role of management may be to dictate, it does not necessarily mean that it must be dictatorial.

Whilst the organizational structure is important, the functioning of the organization ought to bear some relation to its organizational culture. The organizational culture is defined as a system of shared assumptions, values, beliefs, traditions, interactions, behaviors and attitudes which govern how people behave in organizations. Organizations are known to have a unique culture, but what informs their culture is the fact that shared values have a strong influence on persons within them. This serves to dictate both behavior and job performance.

The many fallouts which occur in organizations between management and employees may have their genesis in the way systems work. By and large the inappropriate use or abuse in the exercise of authority in applying rules and

regulations, can change the employer–employee relationship. This relationship can also be altered where there is a change to the workplace culture. There is much to be gained by an employer in ensuring that there is a prevailing positive workplace culture. Where this exits it will more than likely contribute to an increase in productivity, an improvement in employee morale and a better employee job experience which is known as job satisfaction. Employers who resort to intimidation and harassment can expected to create an uncooperative, unproductive and hostile work environment.

The development of a negative workplace culture is the one thing that employers should guard against. Where this is allowed to develop it can contribute to the workplace being plagued by unethical behavior. It is in the employers' interest that they support the development of a positive workplace culture. Where this prevails, workers tend to be contented and happy, there is a greater level of communication, collaboration, employee empowerment, engagement and participation.

It is believed that the culture of an organization emerges out of experiences and practices which inform the ethical behaviour of the employees and management. This provides a platform for the promotion of a discipline organization, where the emphasis is placed on image building and cultivating a sense of pride in the workers. It is expected that in an organization where there is strong emphasis on promoting **transparency and flexibility, recognition of effort and the rewarding of valuable contributions, that such would go a long way in cultivating strong workplace relationships, help to inspire employees and to drive employee loyalty and commitment.**

Workers are prone to feel valued in an environment that promote inclusiveness. The culture of the workplace should not be characterized as one of tension and conflict, which is found wanting owing to the lack of systems to address conflict directly, openly and immediately.

Marked improvement in the functioning of the workplace can be attained by paying close attention to creating and maintaining a positive culture, where the critical attention is paid to reinforcing things positive and finding solutions to those negative draw backs and practices. To revert to the status quo ante, may not in all cases prove to be desired, as in a dynamic work environment the need for changes in the workplace culture, may be determined by new trends and expectations.