Understanding the Workplace Culture

As a new employee entering a new enterprise, it is in your best interest to familiarize yourself with the way how the organization functions. This requires an understanding of the expectations, requirements, policies, processes, procedures and practices. As a new entrant into a workplace, it is necessary that you exercise your powers of observations and be prepared to be a fast learner. Every organization has it unique character which is guided by the values it promotes, traditions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour.

As an individual you are expected to fit into the workplace culture. This culture is driven by the mission, vision, and values which are reflective of the beliefs and philosophies of the organization. In identifying with the mission, vision and values, it is important that as an individual you hold fast to being responsible, projecting a good image of one self and maintaining your character and dignity. In fitting into the culture of the workplace, it should never be a case where the existing culture is allowed to negatively impact on your personality and character.

Taking an objective look at the workplace the evidence points to the fact that it generally operates on rules. The workplace is also expected to have standards which every employee is expected to meet. If these are absent, it means that a sense of indiscipline will prevail. It is expected that the individual employee in this situation, will not compromise or lower their standards of behaviour and performance, but would undertake the lead to influence positive change. This must be seen as a work in progress as it is very unlikely that change will occur overnight and without resistance.

Knowing what the workplace stands for and is likely to accept, can prove to be an important factor in the building of positive communications linkages at all levels. It is in the best interest of employees to have knowledge of how management responds to ideas and suggestions. A management which is non-receptive and non-inclusive of workers' input will do little to inspire confidence. An assessment also has to be made of made of the manner in which communications takes place within

the workplace. It should be established whether transparency, openness and confidentiality are practiced. Caution ought to be taken of being overly critical. As a matter of fact, it would be best to learn whether management and team members are receptive to constructive criticism. It is there good to have knowledge of what are the communications pathways for the sharing of information between employees and management and between employees and employees.

Knowing if the organization embraces the team concept is important, as it makes a fundamental difference to your internal customer relations experience and individual productivity. This can give a sense of the cooperative spirit which is expected to exist in the organization, and also an overall view of what is required of an individual employee in playing a meaningful role in the life of the organization.

It has to be underscored that knowing the practices, policies and philosophy is critical to understanding the culture of an enterprise. The philosophy of the enterprise is usually reflected based on its traditions, employment policies and practices and its corporate social responsibility. A good way to gauge the culture of the workplace is by examining its hiring practices, performance remuneration and benefits schemes, recognition and award, training and development, promotion, wellness, work life balance, dress code and conflict resolution approaches and strategies.