Managing Employee Interactions in Professional Service Firms

LAW, Kuok Kei; NG, Ka Wan

Published: 04/05/2011

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Publication record in CityU Scholars: Go to record

Publication details:

Citing this paper
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MANAGING EMPLOYEE INTERACTIONS IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRMS

Dr. Kuok Kei LAW
Ms. Ka Wan NG
Open University of HK
City University of HK
RESEARCH THEME

- **Management** in Professional Service Firms (PSFs)

- Different from traditional management
  - Major production factor:
    - Knowledge
  - X Physical product

- How to manage knowledge workers in PSFs?
RESEARCH IN PSFs

- PSFs are characterized by
  - Knowledge-intensive work
  - Frequent customer interactions

- Workers are highly discretionary

- Focused on facilitating knowledge sharing and knowledge creation
RESEARCH QUESTION

- How are employees’ interaction manners managed to generate profits in PSFs?

- Especially significant for one type of PSFs that has been under-researched:
  - Public Relations (PR) firms
RESEARCH FOCUS

- Exploratory in nature
  - The **types** of interactions in PR firms
  - The **nature** of those interactions
  - The **impact** of those interactions on firm performance
  - **Managerial interventions** governing the interactions
RESEARCH DESIGN

- Participant Observation
  - Being analyzed

- Qualitative Interviews
  - To be conducted

- Case Studies
RESEARCH CONTEXT

- **PR** → manage the communication between an organization and its publics
- Focus on **outcome** (effect), but not output
- Ultimate objectives:
  - sending the right messages to the public
  - changing the public’s perspectives
  - raise the clients’ brand image
- Main asset of PR firms: **People** and **networking**
PR WORK

- Protect client’s interests
- Develop tailor-made strategic plans
- Understand and familiar with the current trend and issues
- Aware of competitors’ news
- Liaise with various parties, such as key of opinion leaders, hotel sales, production house, media
- Organize appropriate activities or events
SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERACTIONS

- **Clients:** well handle the clients’ expectation.
  - X guarantee any unrealistic output
- **Vendors:** bargain for the best services qualities with the lowest cost
  - X disclosing unnecessary client’s information
- **Media:** deliver key messages
  - X wrong messages / data
- **Colleagues:** maintain good teamwork
  - X violating each others’ interests

**Every parties could be good news sources!**

DR EDDIE LAW & MS NICOLE NG, 6TH ASAHK, 4 MAY 2011
Managerial Interventions

- Interaction skills represent the core professionalism of PR workers.

- Managerial interventions help PR workers to learn the appropriate interaction manners:
  - E.g. phone / email manner
  - E.g. confidential content

- \( \rightarrow \) improvisational skill

- X factual knowledge
CONTRIBUTIONS

- Further opening the black-box of managing knowledge workers/PSFs
- Illustrating the significance of managing interactions in PSFs
- Offering theoretical and practical guidance on managing interactions
- Exploring PR firms as one research context of PSFs
To be continued...

Specific features of PR firms

Understand more about HRM in PSFs
THE END

Questions & Comments
Thank you!