

Implementing Positive Social Change From an Organizational Perspective

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Incorporating Positive Social Change

Positive social change is achieved when a corporation makes a difference in its local community or advances the rights or liberties of others. It is seen when a company benefits the public and sets out to attain a positive impact on society (Walden University, 2017). When the leaders of businesses practice socially conscious leadership, they attend to maximizing profits in ways any other leader would except they are additionally attentive to ethical and legal considerations (Owie, 2017). Businesses can incorporate positive social change into their mission and values by discerning the needs of the community and giving thought to the manner in which the collective skillset of the team of employees can be leveraged to contribute to the fulfillment of those needs. By way of example: An information technology company could provide computers, tutoring, and tech support to seniors in assisted living facilities, an accounting firm could provide free annual tax assistance to veterans, or as another example a business could donate a portion of profits to select non-profit organizations or community causes that directly benefit the members of the local community.

HR's Role in Supporting Positive Social Change

Human resources leaders occupy many roles in the course a company takes in pursuing positive social change initiatives. Often HR will lead, educate, advise, and participate in social change (Zayed, 2018). As a *leader*, HR professionals take control of the planning and execution of a social change initiative (Zayed, 2018). Meanwhile, as an *educator*, HR will provide their expertise and knowledge to aid stakeholders in successful and positive initiatives with the goal of providing the greatest benefit within the confines of the resources which are available. As a social change *adviser*, HR will aid in preparing and implementing the social change initiative.

Lastly, HR staff will, from time to time, *participate* in the company's social change initiatives which can be helpful because they can often and easily spot potential areas in which issues are likely to arise (Zayed, 2018).

Positive social change initiatives have a definitive impact on the workforce, the surrounding community, and organizational culture. Positive social change impacts the workforce by adding value to their labor, raising morale, and causing the workers to have increased self-worth as their self-esteem is bolstered through acts of service to the community and helping others (Walden University, 2014, p. 2). Ultimately the surrounding community is the recipient of this benefit and as the members of the community are aided, their view, value, and appreciation for the company grows. The organization's corporate culture strengthens as the disparate workers band together to accomplish goals greater than any one could have accomplished in and of themselves; the team becomes more effective and communication overhead decreases as team members work better and more fluidly together.

A tremendous example of a company leading positive social change is Jeff Bezos' company, Amazon. Amazon is a multi-national technology company which specializes in e-commerce, cloud computing, and digital streaming. Amazon launched the Amazon Smile program which allows consumers to select any charitable organization to be the recipient of half of one percent of the value of all of their eligible purchases. A second example of companies reaching into their communities to offer a helping hand includes information technology firms which specifically target and assist minorities or other at-risk groups and support them with discounted or free computers and support for technology devices. A third example is found in the

banking community. Smaller community banks and credit unions have many free financial education programs which members of the local community can take advantage of. Additionally, they offer high interest rates on CDs and savings accounts while offering low rates on mortgages, a home refi, and interest on repayment of student loans. Positive social change can be achieved in many ways and comes in many different forms. HR is often in the unique position to support these initiatives within the organization.

Using a SWOT Analysis to Create Positive Social Change

A SWOT analysis is an incredibly useful tool for an organization in the way it easily helps a team to understand situations a business encounters and to make decisions in those instances which call for further evaluation (Holman, 2011). The name of the analysis is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and is used to perform analysis on each of those areas. Business managers use a SWOT analysis to review strategy, position, and direction of a company or other business ideas (Businessballs, n.d.). Of the four factors which SWOT analyzes, two represent internal factors, to wit; strengths and weaknesses. The other two areas which this method of analysis elucidates on include business opportunities and threats, both of which are external factors (Businessballs, n.d.).

When a business uses a SWOT analysis while working on implementing positive social change, they are able to glean many insights on the internal strengths and external opportunities (Kadi, 2017). For instance, steps can be taken to analyze and then adjust tactics in use to produce a greater return on the investment. By way of example, suppose the business invested its resources such as manpower and hours of its shift employees to provide some benefit for a

targeted and needy group within the local community, analysis could be made to see where to better allocate human resources to obtain the greatest benefit for the community (Businessballs, n.d.). Several methods may even be up for consideration and a SWOT analysis could be used to visualize which are most effective. The SWOT analysis can also be used to visualize internal weaknesses and external threats. Suppose in some prospective service to the company, the staff were opened up to some licensing issue or other liability, the SWOT analysis would be useful to visualize risk and analyze the steps necessary to mitigate these risks (Businessballs, n.d.).

Implementing Positive Social Change Initiatives

There are several steps which HR may recommend that an organization take to implement a positive social change initiative. HR may see the need for the company to clarify their initiative. The objective and specific goals upon which the success of the initiative will be based should be known and be clear (Zayed, 2018). The organization leadership and those employees involved should have a degree of preparedness and should be ready to take on the social change initiative: A plan and contingency should be fully developed.

In synthesizing Kramer (2012), I assert that a shift should occur from the traditional reporting framework to that of a learning framework whereby HR is engaged in gradual learning as the initiative progresses and steps should be taken to refine and perform adjustments as necessary to better the positive effects of the social change initiative. HR can oversee the initiative and should be conducting further analysis on what is, and is not, working as they see the effects of the initiative on the business itself, its clients, and the surrounding community. Another source of insight which is useful in seeing the full picture comes from monitoring

reporting by local news media for coverage on the company's initiatives, whereby enabling the company to see their impact through the lens and perspective of the general public (Kramer, 2012).

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