Role Clarification Exercise for Tata Motors Ltd., Dharwad

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Comments by Faculty

Tata Motors is the market leader in commercial vehicles and among the top three in passenger vehicles. It is the world's fourth largest truck manufacturer and the world's third largest bus manufacturer. Its manufacturing facility in Dharwad is the latest green field project of CVBU (Commercial Vehicle Business Unit). It is spread across 400 acres with a proposed vendor park. The product manufactured here is Ace Zip. The employee strength is 615. The present study aims to conduct a role clarification initiative at TML. This exercise helps in identifying and eliminating role conflicts that occur at the work place.

In Tata Motors Limited, Dharwad, being a green field project, the roles are still in the process of gaining more definition and clarity. A Gallup Survey was conducted by Tata Motors, Dharwad to check whether employees were clear about their roles and what job responsibilities they were expected to handle. A Role Description initiative has been undertaken to update and modify roles and to bring clarity among employees.

This exercise has been a great learning opportunity as it has involved in-depth interviews with the managers, which in turn has helped in the better understanding of the working of Tata Motors. For the same purpose, a template has been used (prepared by TML) in the present study. The student covered five divisions of Tata Motors during the course of the study, namely Process Quality Assurance, Vendor Quality Assurance, Finance, HR and Technical Services. The present study has provided the student the unique opportunity to investigate the organization and its processes. The student, during the study, has implemented the conceptual learning into real company scenario.

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Company Profile

JRD Tata founded Tata Motors Ltd. (TML) and changed transportation in India forever. Established in 1945, Tata Motors Limited is India's largest automobile company. It has a committed workforce with 51,000 people of 16 nationalities. Tata Motors is a 27 billion dollar fortune 500 company. It is the market leader in commercial vehicles and among the top three in passenger vehicles. It is the world's fourth largest truck manufacturer and the world's third largest bus manufacturer (http://www.tatamotors.com/know-us/company-profile.php).

The company's commercial vehicle range is produced at its manufacturing bases in Jamshedpur, Pune, Lucknow, Pantnagar, and Dharwad. The manufacturing facility in Dharwad is the latest green field project of CVBU (Commercial Vehicle Business Unit). It is spread across 400 acres with a proposed vendor park. The product manufactured here is Ace Zip. The employee strength is 615.

Literature Review

The present study aims to conduct a **role clarification** initiative at TML. This exercise helps in identifying and eliminating role conflicts that occur at the work place.

A **Role** is the place one occupies in a social system as defined by the functions one performs in response to the expectations of the 'significant' members of a social system and one's own expectations from that position or office. (Pareek, 2011)

Role conflict occurs when there is a difference in the role as perceived by the employee and what is expected of him by the organization. It occurs when people are confronted with incompatible role expectations in the various social statuses they occupy.

When a person becomes a member of a social system he receives certain expectations from other members and responds to these, at the same time projecting his own expectations on to the role. Either one of these attitudes may dominate. One may react very positively and with greater satisfaction to others' expectations. This is a reactive approach which will help the individual take on the role effectively. In contrast, he may use the expectations (reflexive expectations) he has from the role to develop a role behaviour which is a proactive approach. Conflict may also occur when people disagree about what the expectations are for a particular role or when someone simply has difficulty satisfying expectations because their duties are unclear, too difficult, or disagreeable. (Pareek, 2011)

Role Clarification

Role clarification helps team members perform more effectively. Clarifying roles on a regular basis is essential for a high-performing work team. By setting aside time to give and receive feedback in a positive way, team members will avoid blow-ups and stress producing chaos. Role clarification is a management tool that:

- Accurately describes positions as they exist

- Is accepted by the incumbent and the supervisor

- Provides a method of fine tuning roles to remove gaps and overlaps

- Provides useful information for developing a competency profile of the position

- Defines the permanent objectives of the position, and therefore is the basis for individual objective setting and performance review

Role Clarification Exercise

The role clarification exercise is an intense process involving in depth interviews with the interviewees which could run from one and half to two hours. This is then followed by the documentation of the same which again involves another two to three hours of work. The process usually begins with the role of the head of a department, followed by the manger and finally the officer. The role clarification exercise consists of the following stages:

- Job analysis

- Job description

- Job validation

Objective of the Study

Tata Motors Limited, Dharwad being a green field project, the roles are still in the process of gaining more definition and clarity. A Gallup Survey was conducted by Tata Motors, Dharwad to check whether employees were clear about their roles and what job responsibilities they were expected to handle. Based on the employee engagement survey, a Role Description initiative has been undertaken to update and modify roles and to bring clarity among employees.

Methodology

Role clarification is an extensive exercise involving a lot of interaction with Heads, Managers (assistant managers to senior managers) and officers of each of the departments. This exercise has been a great learning opportunity as it has involved in-depth interviews with the managers, which in turn has helped in the better understanding of the working of Tata Motors.

Role Clarification Template

For the same purpose a template has been used in the present study to guide the job analysis and the subsequent job description process. The role clarification template prepared by TML consists of the following 6 components:

Role Identity

This includes information to identify the role like job title, grade, department/function, location and reporting line

Position Specification

The position summary is a one sentence brief about the role, describing why the role exists and a summary of what it delivers. It is specific to the role and not a general statement which might apply to a number of roles in the department.

Job Specification

It is the minimum requirements for the role. E.g. Qualifications - professional qualification, university degree, qualification, university degree. Amount and nature of prior experience (how many years, which sectors/areas) and any other Specific requirements

Communication Network

This basically involves customer identification. Here we mainly try to find out who are the main internal and external contact groups for the role, who are the external contact groups for the role. We also find out if the contact is routine or occasional.

Competencies

This requires capturing of competencies that a person holding a role must possess. It includes both technical competencies as well as behavioural competencies. Technical competencies such as software expertise and platform expertise are captured. Behavioural competencies - The 14 leadership competencies as elucidated in the Tata Leadership Practices framework

Job Responsibilities and Measurement Criteria

This is a specific area that requires the role holder to be responsible for taking decisions, delivering results or carrying out a significant amount of activity. Each key activity is a distinct area of the role. Each key activity has 2 components – a header and a description of role's contribution to that process. Together the job responsibilities define the authority, scope of the role, and cover all the major outputs/results expected of the role. Measurement Criteria is not the actual targets but the desired outcomes.

The Role Clarification Process

Based on the above template at TML, the following role clarification process has been developed:

6.1 Job Analysis

Job Analysis is the first step in the role clarification process wherein a systematic study of jobs to identify the observable work activities, tasks, and responsibilities associated with a particular job or group of jobs is conducted. It is the process used to collect information about the duties, responsibilities, necessary skills, outcomes, and work environment of a particular job ((http://humanresources.about.com/od/jobdescriptions/g/job_analysis.htm).

It identifies the content of a job in terms of activities involved and attributes needed to perform the work and identifies major job requirements (http://humanresources.about.com/od/jobdescriptions/g/job_analysis.htm).

It identifies the personal qualifications necessary to perform the job and the conditions under which work is performed. It reports the job as it exists at the time of analysis; neither as it was in the past nor as it exists in another organization

The Job Analysis May Include These Activities:

- reviewing the job responsibilities of current employees,
- doing Internet research and viewing sample job descriptions online or offline highlighting similar jobs,
- analysing the work duties, tasks, and responsibilities that need to be accomplished by the employee filling the position,
- Researching and sharing with previous studies conducted, and articulation of the most important outcomes or contributions needed from the position.

Job Description

A job description is a formal document that summarizes the important functions of a specific job, using clear and concise language. It consists of written statements that describe the:

- duties,
- responsibilities,
- most important contributions and outcomes needed from a position,
- required qualifications of candidates, and
- Reporting relationship and co-workers of a particular job.

A job description is usually developed by conducting a job analysis, which includes examining the tasks and sequences of tasks necessary to perform the job. The analysis considers the areas of knowledge and skills needed for the job. A job usually includes several roles. A job description may include relationships with other people in the organization: Supervisory level, managerial requirements, and relationships with other colleagues. A job description need not be limited to explaining the current situation, or work that is currently expected; it may also set out goals for what might be achieved in future (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_description).

Job descriptions are based on objective information obtained through job analysis, an understanding of the competencies and skills required to accomplish needed tasks, and the needs of the organization to produce work. They clearly identify and spell out the responsibilities of a specific job.

Job Validation

Once the exercise has been completed and documented it is sent to the immediate higher up/ superior for validation. Once the document has been reviewed, any changes required or errors identified are rectified.

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