

Employee Relationship Management: Key to Improve Efficiency of LIS Professionals

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Abstract

This present article has been made an attempt to study the concept of ERM and its benefits, implication strategy in library and information science, further the article also directs to formulate a good ERM with librarians and his colleagues. At the end of article concluding remarks has been given. The present paper highlights employee empowerment, relationships among staff and the working conditions as critical to any organization.

KEYWORD: Employee, Soft Skills, Management (ERM), Library and Information Science

1. INTRODUCTION

Library and Information centers are playing an important role in maintaining soft relations with the employees by applying various strategies of management. Number of organizations adopting manpower planning, management development techniques of personnel management etc. Administrative authorities from industrial sector as well as service sector emphasized on management of individual employee relationships for smooth functioning of the institutions. However it is need of present era to maintain good relation with employee for better and quality services.

Human resource has technically competent in testing, interviewing, recruiting, counseling, job evaluation negotiation and collective bargaining. It also acquired expertise in wage and salary administration, employee benefit schemes and services, training and development and other allied services. The top management started encouraging line managers in middle management to consult personnel departments in these respects. The personnel or human resource manager became a part of top management.

In order for any organization to improve on its productivity and services, it should train and develop its human resources and should encourage effective cooperation among staff and management. Staff training and effective communication between management and staff is important.

Every establishment has employees. They are paid salary and other benefits; they give their service for fruitful work. Libraries recognized the power of individuals in overall development of the library. Libraries & information centers also knows the importance of participation of their staff in the development of libraries. ERM is focused on increasing the value of the employees.

The concept ERM is used in management as well as organizations to establish good relation with employee the same concepts if applied in organization such as libraries and information centers the result will positive hence an attempt was made to find out the relationship based on the conviction that satisfied employees tend to be more

loyal, more motivated, more likely to have positive impact on the retention of users, all of which is better for library bottom line. The concept of ERM is more than attracting and retaining employees, in fact it is part of modern library strategy that aims to satisfy the employees to make them loyal. As today most of the libraries are suffering from talent crunch, formulation of good ERM strategy and its successful implantation can reduce the intensity of problem.

A good relationship is a relationship where there is a reciprocal exchange of value between two parties. Both parties must want to be part of that relationship and contribute to the relationship to work.

Libraries have adopted technology to improve service quality, regardless of geographical boundaries. Digitization, resource sharing and to impart national network have altered the landscape of libraries and information science. The UGC plays vital role in the development of college libraries by providing grants for library building, books and journals and equipments. In this process of reengineering there is growing realization that it is not technology alone, but intellectual capital, which will see college libraries' through 21st century and beyond. A strong talent base will be the key differentiating factor. Attracting, managing and nurturing talent in LIS Professionals it will be the single most critical issue and Educating the existing staff on other hand that libraries will have to struggle in the new millennium. First libraries have to create an organizational environment where talent can flourish. Second they have to put in place systems that help unleash their potential. And third they have to build in a reward and recognition mechanism that provides value for the employees. ERM is actually business strategy by which an organization can bloom their talent. Unleash the potential of their employees and provides value to their employees. It is the reason that the concept of ERM is gaining popularity all over the world. Therefore college management and UGC must spend to hire, train manage and retain employees. According to Dr. S.R. Rangnathan, staff (employee), user and reading material are three basic pillars of Library, absence of any one in this pillar library cannot exist. Employees are the main assets of library and information centers. It is essential that the employees perform together as a collective unit and contribute equally towards the realization of common goal. No task can be completed if the individuals are engaged in constant conflicts and misunderstandings. It has been observed that targets are achieved at a much faster rate if the employees work together and share a warm relationship with each other. Employees must be comfortable with each other to deliver their best and enjoy their work.

Improves Employer Employee Relations: Performance appraisal is not only a useful guide for the supervisors and employees but it improves the employer-employee relations by creating a more conducive and amicable atmosphere in the organization. It also stimulates free exchange of thoughts and ideas between the supervisor and his men. In this way performance appraisal bridges the emotional gap between the employer and employee by bringing them more close and by reducing man-to-man differences in the organization.

2. MANAGEMENT

Management is a mental process. Management as the process of coordinating total resources of an organization towards the accomplishment of desired goals of that

organization through the execution of a group of inter-related functions such as planning, organization, staffing, directing and controlling.

Management is nothing but a technique which brings people together on common platform and guides them so that they achieve their desired targets without fighting with each other. In a Layman's language, management is nothing but managing things effectively so that tasks are accomplished without any hassles and confusions. Management is required everywhere.

3. EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (ERM)

ERM refers to managing the relation between the various employees in an organization. The relationship can be between employee and the employer as well as between employees at the same level; ERM is an art which effectively monitors and manages the relation between individuals either of the same team or from different teams.

ERM activity helps in strengthening the union among the employees and ensures that each one is contented and enjoys a healthy relation with each other.

ERM includes various activities undertaken by the superiors or the management to develop a healthy relation among the employees and extract the best out of each team member.

Defining ERM is more difficult than defining something like Customer Relationship management. The nature of the relationship between a employer and employee is far more complex than the relationship with customers. Customers simply go off to competitors when the relationship is not working while unhappy employees can remain for long periods in the company. Customers only experience the organization at some key points of truth while employees are daily experiencing a relationship with their employer. The employee experience the relationship with the employer from the moment the employee enters into a workspace. Their moments of truth is overshadowed by a total experience over a period of time.

Employee relations are concerned with managing and maintaining the employment relationship, which involves handling the pay-work bargain, dealing with employment practices, terms and conditions of employment, issues arising from employment, providing employees with a voice and communicating with employees. It consist of the approaches and methods adopted by employers to deal with employees through their unions or individually.

The term 'employee relations' encompasses that of industrial relations, which are about relationships between managements and trade unions involving collective agreements, collective bargaining, disputes resolution and dealing with issues concerning the employment relationship and the working environment.

4. THE BASIS OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Employee relations are basically about the engagement and commitment. In contrast, employees want a say in how much they are rewarded, their terms and conditions of employment and the way in which their work is organized. Employee want good working conditions; security of employment; a healthy and safe working environment and the scope to raise and resolve grievances. Conflict of interest can arise between employers and employees on these issues, and these conflicts are resolved by the various managerial tools and techniques.

4.1 Employee relations procedures:

Employee relations procedures are those agreed by management and trade unions to regulate the ways in which management handles certain industrial relations and employment processes and issues. The main employee relations procedures are concerned with grievances, discipline and redundancy. Disputes procedures are usually contained within an overall procedural agreement. In addition, agreements are sometimes reached on health and safety procedures.

4.2 Employee relation processes:

Employee relations processes consist of the approaches, methods and procedures adopted by employers to deal with employees either collectively through their trade unions or individually. These processes are concerned with workplace relations and include dealings between management and trade unions involving collective agreements, collective bargaining, disputes resolution and handling issues concerning the employment relationship and the working environment.

4.3 Purpose of employee relations:

The purpose of employee relations is to provide for effective and consistent procedures for rulemaking, consistency in dealing with employee relations issues, fairness, processes that can affect and improve employee behavior or mechanisms to resolve differences/disputes. The value-added outcomes that can result from good employee relations include improved morale and commitment, fewer grievances, productivity increases and better control of labour costs.

5. EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN LIBRARY

We have a relationship between managers and employee,

- ❖ they feel close to each other,
- ❖ they have report with each other,
- ❖ they interact well,
- ❖ they communicate,
- ❖ they are sympathetic to each other
- ❖ they are responsive,
- ❖ they feel sympathy with each other.

5.1 Elements of employee relations

Elements of employment relation management:

- **Training**, i.e. the preparation of an overall training plan of the company which makes it possible to handle a catalog of compulsory or optional internships, requests by employees, and tracking of training actions;
- **Pay**, to prepare a statement of payments and mailing of salary bulletins;
- **Recruiting**, in particular follow-up on recruiting interviews and new recruits;
- **Competence and career management**, consisting in the implementation of a competence reference standard which permits improved management of jobs within the enterprise and in-house transfers. The goal is to value human assets by prioritizing the competences, knowledge, and know-how of the employees;
- **Time management**, i.e. the management and quantification of the activity of the employees of the company, in particular with a view to compliance with existing

- laws (reduction of working hours, payment of overtime, accounting of vacation, work breaks and absences);
- **Internal communication**, which permits sensitization and transversal information, which makes it possible to break the isolation of the different sectors of the enterprise.
 - The formal and informal employment policies and practices of the organization.
 - The development, negotiation and application of formal systems, rules and procedures for collective bargaining, handling disputes and regulating employment. These serve to determine the reward for effort and other conditions of employment, to protect the interests of both employees and their employers, and to regulate the ways in which employers treat their employees and how the latter are expected to behave at work.
 - The bargaining structures, recognition and collective agreements and practices that have evolved to enable the formal system to operate.
 - Policies and practices for employee voice and communications.
 - The informal as well as the formal processes that take place in the shape of continuous interactions between managers and team leaders or supervisors on the one hand and employee representatives and individuals on the other. These may happen within the framework of formal agreements but are often governed by custom and practice and the climate of relationships that has been built up over the years.
 - The philosophies and policies of the major players in the industrial relations scene: the government of the day, management and the trade unions.
 - A number of parties, each with different roles. These consist of the state, management, employer's organizations, the trade unions, individual managers and supervisors, HR managers, employee representatives or shop stewards and employees.
 - The legal framework.
 - A number of institutions such as in the UK, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and the employment tribunals.
 - The Directives produced by the EC.

5.2 Employee relations framework – key learning points

5.2.1 Conceptual Framework of ERM

The concept of ERM is based on the conviction that satisfied employees tend to be more loyal, more motivated, more likely to have positive impact on the retention of customers, all of which is better for business bottom line. ERM is a method of equipping a company's most important resources its employees and thus can be defined as the use of methodologies, strategies, information and software based capabilities that allow companies to acquire skilled employees, train them, organize them, retain them, value them and satisfied them to generate loyal employees, as loyal employees are more valuable than the non-loyal employees. The nature of relationship between librarian and library staff is far more complex than the relationship of users. Users simply go off to the competitors when relationship is not working while unhappy employees can remain for long periods in the library at some key points while employees are daily experiencing the relationship with employer from moment the employee enters into workplace. Hence

CRM and ERM is the both concept emphasizes on 'satisfaction through good relationship.' The regulations and rules may be expressed in collective agreements or exist as custom and practice.

- ❖ **Collective Bargaining:** - Collective bargaining is the establishment by negotiation and discussion of agreement on matters of mutual concern to employers and unions, covering the employment relationship and terms and conditions of employment.
- ❖ **Unitary and pluralist views of employee relations:-** Social partnership is the concept that, as stakeholders, the parties involved in employee relations should aim to work together to the greater good of all. It has been defined by Ackers and Payne (1998) as 'a stable, collaborative relationship between capital and labour, as represented by an independent trade union, providing for low social conflict and significant worker influence on business decision making through strong collective bargaining'.
- ❖ **Individualism and collectivism:-**A distinction can be made between 'individualism' – policies focusing on individual employees, and 'collectivism' – the extent to which groups of workers have an independent voice and participate in decision making with managers.
- ❖ **Voluntarism:** - This concept of voluntarism was defined as 'the policy of the law to allow the two sides by agreement and practice to develop their own norms and their own sanctions and to abstain from legal compulsion in their collective relationship'.
- ❖ **The parties to employee relations:** - The government, trade unions, shop stewards or employee representatives, the Trade Union, staff associations, management, employers' organizations, various agencies and institutions and officers, the EU and the HR function are the party of employee relations.

5.3 Essential activities for a healthy employee relationship management:

- ❖ **Communication:** Transparency in communication is of extreme importance for a healthy employee relationship management. A single point of contact must be assigned who should be made responsible for handling queries of all the team members and escalating it to the seniors. The hierarchy should not be too complicated and every employee should be accessible to each other to solve any problem or query. There everyone has the liberty to express his opinions freely. Important information can also be put on the notice boards for everyone to read and get a common picture. If anyone has performed exceptionally well, do display his name on the bulletin board. Let everyone read it and get inspired to perform better next time. Exchanging information through emails is also an important way to improve the relation among the employees as everyone knows what is being communicated to the other individual.
- ❖ **Group activities to develop healthy environment:** Inspire individuals to work together probably in a group so that the comfort level increases. The more they talk, the more they get to know each other. Give them a target, a deadline and ask them to take each other's help and complete the task. They would definitely come closer this way and start trusting each other more. An individual spends the maximum time at his workplace and one should treat his team members as a part of one's extended family. It is important to celebrate festivals, anniversary at organization; Such informal get together go a long way in improving the relation among the employees. Individuals come together, enjoy together and

come to know lot many things which actually they don't bother to find out during the normal working hours. The team leaders must ask their team members to take their lunch together so that they discuss other things apart from their daily work.

- ❖ **Develop their interest to complete challenging task:** Employer Assign challenging work to your team members so that they feel motivated to deliver their level best. Do not assign something which they do not find interesting. The responsibilities must be divided equally among the team members and no employee should be overburdened. Every employee should be aware of his responsibility areas to avoid confusions. No way should the work get monotonous.
- ❖ **The employees should avoid politics and blame games at work:** Such activities are considered highly unproductive and spoil the relationship among the employees. Backbiting is a strict no no at the workplace. Avoid getting into unnecessary controversies and useless criticism at work. Respect your team members as well as your superiors. It is important that one trusts his management rather than unnecessarily cribbing and finding faults. Avoid conflicts and try to adjust with each other. It is okay to be friends with your colleagues but don't have unrealistic expectations from anyone.
- ❖ **The superiors or the team leaders must not act pricy and try to dominate their team members.** The team leader must understand the needs and expectations of his employees and should not be too harsh to them. The employees must be able to fall back on their team leader anytime. If they want a leave for a genuine reason, do grant them. Don't be after their life if you find them chatting with their family or friends over the phone once in a while or log on to any social networking site. These things are natural but make sure the work does not suffer.
- ❖ **Partialities must be avoided for a better employee relationship.** Treat everyone as one and every individual must respect each other's privacy. There is a limit to everything and thus over indulgence in each other's work, too much of a friendly nature should be avoided.

For a better employee relationship management, it is important that employees have a positive frame of mind and don't always consider their colleagues as their enemies. Don't always assume that your fellow team member would say something against you in front of your boss. Avoid disputes, misunderstandings, instead work together, enjoy together and make the organization a better place to work.

5.4 Formulation of ERM strategy

The aim of ERM is to make employee more productive and efficient. It gives all the information they need in order to serve user better. It makes employee more independent, knowledge, confident in employee day to day working. Good ERM strategy should include the many aspects. These are

- Attract and select skilled employees. As a result, the right people choose to join the organization. Management should implement proven talent selection systems and tools to create profiles of the right people based on the competencies of high performers.

- Retain the excellent employees. Retention requires a competitive salary and great benefits. Employee involvement, recognition, advancement, development and pay based on performance are key factors to retain the best employees. Financial incentives encourage them to participate in activities that make employees feel like value customers.
- Nurturing Talent: Manager must focus on nurturing talent and possess the ability to manage a talented band of renegades. Library will need to look to keep talented employees enthused by continuously upgrading their knowledge and skills etc. This will take the form of cross divisional transfers, working with vendors, collaborating with competitors in the knowledge area, and building relationship with academia.
- Lead and motivate employees: Motivation is important process to collect proper work and job satisfaction of employee. Library can motivate their employee by Training, Orientation, Fairness at work place, providing opportunities, regular appraisal, regular communication, reward,
- Rethinking the value of employee: This means creating taxonomy of jobs within the organization that is consistent across library departments. Various tasks for which a number of skills are required. Some of these tasks are technical and some are related to employee's relationships with coworkers' and outside agencies.

6. **BENEFITS OF IMPLICATION OF ERM STRATEGY**

- ❖ Drastically increasing the performance, services and productivity of employee
- ❖ Creating sustainable innovation
- ❖ Developing leadership skills to support business growth
- ❖ Improving staffs commitment and developing a 'no fear of failure' environment
- ❖ Strengthen corporate communication and culture
- ❖ Capture employee opinions on issues important to their satisfaction such as benefits, policies, management etc.
- ❖ Provide feedback to increase the effectiveness of management and raise moral by letting Employees Company care what they think.
- ❖ Increase employee morale
- ❖ Develop employee loyalty
- ❖ Establish well employee communication
- ❖ Employee should be ready to accept change any time
- ❖ Raise efficiency in employee and organization
- ❖ Reduce cost in project, work, bargaining, recruitment, training, services, dealing any work organization should reduce cost.
- ❖ Establish positive work culture in organization

7. **CONCLUSION**

Now a day's firms, like libraries are facing the problem of a talent man power, the problems of lack of skilled manpower and experienced professionals. So that it is important to understand how to find, attract, train, retain and satisfied employees. ERM concept is think for that. Provide the best to employees and colleagues, it creates value

for users. It will make the employees more productive and their jobs more requiring with immediate access to users and personal information and improved work process.

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