

Online case study for Introduction to Organisational Behaviour Chapter 1

Using a case you know to understand organisations and learn more about them.

As this is the first of the on-line case studies and we can assume you are at the beginning of your studies/course in organisational behaviour, this case should be used as a way of introducing more reality to the concepts covered in chapter 1.

The way you should approach it is to think about one organisation that you are familiar with. It could be one that you have worked at, one that you know something about already or one that you are really interested in.

Once you have decided which organisation to use, go through the following exercises to see how the concepts and ideas in Chapter 1 apply.

Exercise 1: Ten questions about your organisation

For your chosen organisation see how many of the following questions you can answer. Where you cannot or are unsure of the answer, ask yourself how you could find out?

1. Does the organisation exist to make a profit or is it non-profit making?
2. Who owns the organisation, i.e. who funds what they do?
3. Who is in control of the organisation, i.e. who manages what they do and dictates activity?
4. What stakeholders does the organisation have? This means who has an interest in what the organisation does?
5. How would you describe the culture of the organisation? What makes you describe it in this way? (By culture we mean what is it like to be part of the organisation, is it very fast paced, is it very modern? Here you can use a metaphor if it helps. Think of the animal that most represents the organisation in the way it behaves, looks or things that it is good at. For example if your organisation was a large bank we might say it was like an elephant in that it is big, quite slow to react, but it is also careful and reliable.
6. Think about 4 ways you could measure the organisation to judge its size, which way is the most accurate? Which of your measures is the most meaningful?
7. How would you describe the management style of the organisation?
8. What type of technology does the organisation use?
9. What type of person typically works for this organisation?
10. Where does this organisation want to go in the future?

Exercise 2: Ten questions about the People in your organisation

Now consider the people you know about in your organisation. You might have friends there or you might even be able to interview someone. The next set of questions are designed to give you some understanding of the key 'human factors' that we need to be aware of when studying organisational behaviour.

1. How and by what are people motivated in your organisation?
2. Do people work in teams or are they more individually focussed?
3. What do you think is the level of satisfaction amongst people who work there?- how could this be judged accurately?
4. When people leave the organisation is there any particular common reason?
5. What do those who work there really like about the organisation?
6. How diverse is the workforce of your organisation?
7. What opportunities for personal development exist in the organisation, such as training or promotion?
8. Are there any benefits from being part of the organisation apart from the money they can earn?
9. How do people feel about the future in your organisation are they optimistic or concerned?
10. What technological or other changes are they expecting to have to deal with in the next few years?

Now, if you were able to answer most of the questions, you will have two good profiles of your case organisation. Your data now needs to be interpreted or analysed. Unless we do this it is just 'so what data' which might be interesting but not of any use or not telling us anything new.

There are a number of ways you can do this. One way would be to carry out the same exercises for another organisation in a similar situation where you might expect the results to be close, and see if there are any differences. Another way would be to ask the same questions of the same organisation after a significant time has passed. This way you could see if there had been any trend changes over time.

A better way would be to offer to share your results with a few others on your study programme and see what they have found about their organisations. That way, by sharing your knowledge, you will all have gained from the experience and know more about the building block concepts in Chapter 1.

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