



“Corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams”

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CORPORATE CULTURE AS THE SOCIAL FOUNDATION OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF VIRTUAL TEAMS

Abstract

The article explores the features of corporate culture as a social basis for managing virtual teams in the context of modern digital transformation and globalization. It considers the role of the corporate culture of organizations in the context of managing virtual teams. The importance of effective mechanisms of corporate culture in maintaining work productivity, motivation, professional and personal development, and cohesion of employees in virtual teams, where the actual presence of the employee in the office is minimized or absent, which causes many risks and challenges, is determined. The study highlights important aspects of corporate culture, such as the social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams and, in particular, its influence on communication, coordination, trust, and adaptation of new employees in remote work conditions. An analysis of the role of strategic management for virtual teams of organizations and the role of corporate culture was carried out, and its advantages and disadvantages were highlighted. To overcome the key risks and challenges of working with virtual teams, taking into account the specifics of their functioning, the key principles of forming an organization's corporate culture are proposed. The article reveals how corporate values help overcome cultural barriers and ensure effective cooperation in multinational teams. Special attention is paid to the issue of forming an optimal scheme for the gradual formation and development of the organization's corporate culture, with an emphasis on the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the culture, as well as on the need to develop communication strategies, taking into account the specifics of the work of virtual teams. The article emphasizes the importance of developing new tools and approaches to support the motivation of inclusiveness and ethical standards in the development of corporate culture for members of virtual teams of the organization, which is a real challenge of today's organizations in crisis and unstable conditions.

Keywords

corporate culture, strategy, strategic management, HR
management, personnel development, virtual team,
conflicts, innovativeness

JEL Classification

M12, O31, O10

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КОРПОРАТИВНА КУЛЬТУРА ЯК СОЦІАЛЬНИЙ ФУНДАМЕНТ СТРАТЕГІЧНОГО УПРАВЛІННЯ ВІРТУАЛЬНИМИ КОМАНДАМИ

Анотація

Стаття присвячена вивченню особливостей корпоративної культури як соціального фундаменту управління віртуальними командами в умовах сучасної цифрової трансформації та глобалізації. У статті автори розглядають роль корпоративної культури організацій у контексті управління віртуальними командами. Визначається значення дієвих механізмів корпоративної культури у підтримці продуктивності праці, мотивації, професійного та особистого розвитку та згуртованості працівників у віртуальних командах, де фактична присутність працівника в офісі мінімізована або відсутня, що викликає ряд ризиків та викликів. Автори виділяють важливі аспекти корпоративної культури, як соціального фундаменту стратегічного управління віртуальними командами, зокрема, її вплив на комунікацію, координацію, довіру та адаптацію нових співробітників в умовах віддаленої роботи. Проведено аналіз ролі стратегічного управління для віртуальних команд організацій та роль корпоративної культури, в результаті чого виділені їх переваги та недоліки. Для подолання ключових ризиків та викликів роботи з віртуальними

командами, враховуючи специфіку їх функціонування, запропоновано ключові елементи формування корпоративної культури організації. У статті розкриваються принципи, як корпоративні цінності допомагають подолати культурні бар'єри та забезпечують ефективну співпрацю в багатонаціональних командах. Особливу увагу приділено питанню формування оптимальної схеми поетапного формування та розвитку корпоративної культури організації, з акцентом на критерії оцінки ефективності культури, а також на необхідність розробки комунікаційних стратегій враховуючи специфіку роботи віртуальних команд. Стаття наголошує на важливості розвитку нових інструментів і підходів для підтримки мотивації інклюзивності та етичних стандартів при розробці корпоративної культури для учасників віртуальних команд організації, що є справжнім викликом організацій сьогодення в кризових та нестабільних умовах.

Ключові слова корпоративна культура, стратегія, стратегічне управління, управління людськими ресурсами, розвиток персоналу, віртуальна команда, конфлікти, інноваційність

Класифікація JEL M12, 031, 010

INTRODUCTION

Corporate culture is one of the main elements of human resources management, as it is aimed at the formation of common values and principles of employees of organizations, which, in turn, direct the behavior of each employee of the organization in the right way and contribute to the creation of a sustainable, creative and productive working environment within the organization. In modern organizations, both Ukrainian and foreign, there is a tendency to form such a type of corporate culture that emphasizes creative approaches, general flexibility and support for employee initiatives. Such approaches to the formation of corporate culture allow employees to feel more deeply involved in the work process, reduce the level of stress and contribute to the increase of creativity and innovation, which is positively reflected in the indicators of the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization's activities.

In today's conditions of globalization and technological changes, corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management plays a critical role in coordinating the efforts of employees, especially those working in multicultural or virtual teams. Modern companies actively and diligently build a culture that will promote mutual respect in the middle of the virtual team and effective communication between its members, which, in turn, allows to minimize cultural and geographical barriers. This type of approach to the formation of corporate culture allows to ensure a team spirit, even if its members work in different countries or time zones.

The corporate culture also aims to facilitate the adaptation and socialization of new employees, which inevitably occur when they start working in the organization. Modern and creative organizations that apply a strategic approach in their activities implement practices aimed at integrating new team members into the corporate environment, providing them not only with professional training, but also with deep immersion in the values and principles of the company, allowing them to feel integral part of both the team and the organization. This significantly speeds up the adaptation process, creating favorable conditions for effective inclusion in work, which is especially important in conditions of high competition for qualified personnel. In this way, organizations can begin to use the potential of their human resource as quickly and efficiently as possible (Bielova & Bielov, 2022; Poskrypko & Bielova, 2020).

It should be noted that an important aspect of corporate culture is its decisive role in establishing ethical standards. Today, many companies are increasingly integrating the principles of social responsibility and sustainable development into their culture, responding to modern challenges. Following these trends helps organizations regulate internal processes and employee behavior, which, in turn, contributes to the formation of a positive image on the market. Corporate culture, which is oriented to ethical principles in its activities not only on paper, increases the attractiveness of the organization for talented specialists and contributes to the strengthening of trust on the part of clients and partners through the formation of a positive image and reputation on the market.

It is important to emphasize that corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management in modern organizations performs important functions both inside and outside the organization: it contributes to the formation of collective identity, simplifies the processes of adaptation and socialization of employees, which is especially important for the formation and effective work of virtual teams. and also sets an ethical guideline for sustainable business.

1. LITERARY REVIEW

In classic and modern scientific literature and research, a wide range of scientists deal with issues of corporate culture. Corporate culture is considered in various aspects: from the influence of cultural values on the management of organizations to the role of corporate culture in the development of organizational behavior in general and human resources in particular. Thus, Ukrainian scientists actively study corporate culture in the context of adaptation to modern economic changes and the formation of competitiveness of Ukrainian enterprises. In her research, Libanova focuses specifically on the social aspects of corporate culture, in particular on its role in the development of labor resources. Petrova emphasizes the importance of corporate culture for small businesses and the importance of developing creativity within the framework of strategic human resources management (Petrova, 2014; Petrova, 2017; Petrova & Albdrane, 2020; Petrova, 2022).

Among foreign researchers of the corporate culture of the organization, the trend is to emphasize its influence on the efficiency of companies and intercultural interaction (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Denison, 1990). Thus, Denison (1990) connected culture with the efficiency of companies and proved this connection. In his research, Cameron (2011) pays special attention to the impact of a positive and effective corporate culture on the well-being of employees. Shane offers a three-level model of corporate culture, which became the basis of the modern understanding of this phenomenon. Trompenaars analyzed how national differences affect management processes in global companies. Hofstede studied corporate culture in the context of cultural dimensions and their influence on organizational behavior, the author carried out a significant study of the cultures of different countries and their influence on organizational behavior.

Analyzing the study of corporate culture in virtual teams, we can conclude that scientists, first of all, emphasize the important role of corporate culture as a tool for coordination and integration of employees, which is especially relevant in the conditions of globalization and digitalization, because corporate culture helps to solve problems of communication and trust between participants of virtual teams. Author Schmidt emphasizes that corporate culture promotes trust in the virtual team and, as a result, increases the productivity of the organization's workers (Schmidt, 2018). Robson emphasizes the role of transparency, inclusiveness and mutual respect in ensuring effective work of virtual teams regardless of the location of each member (Robson, 2019).

We can conclude that modern domestic and foreign studies emphasize that corporate culture is the main social foundation for the coordination and management of virtual teams. After all, it is the corporate culture that helps to cope with the challenges associated with the decentralization of work processes and cultural diversity, ensuring a high level of involvement of each employee in the processes of the organization's activities, and also promotes the interaction of employees at different levels of the organization.

However, it should be noted that despite such a significant contribution to the study of corporate culture, its functioning precisely in the conditions of popularization and dissemination of the work of virtual teams remains insufficiently researched. Modern trends and realities require the development of a step-by-step scheme for the formation of corporate culture as a social foundation for the strategic management of virtual teams, which should take into account the specifics of digital interaction, cultural differences and the limited physical presence of employees. Therefore, today the question of dynamic adaptation of corporate values and norms to the conditions of remote work is relevant, which involves the creation of flexible and adaptive models of corporate culture of strategic management of virtual teams.

It cannot be ignored that the problem of integration of new employees into virtual teams is becoming particularly relevant and urgent today. It is no secret that it is personal interaction that traditionally contributes to the formation of collective identity, however, in the absence of direct contacts, there is a need to develop effective methods of maintaining team unity. That is why the step-by-step scheme of establishing a corporate culture of strategic management of virtual teams should include mechanisms that facilitate the integration and socialization of new members in virtual environments.

Overcoming effort problems in virtual multicultural teams is also an important aspect, this issue also requires attention. Cultural barriers related to differences in the perception of leadership and decision-making, support of the emotional well-being of employees working remotely, problems of their motivation and social involvement in the processes of the organization can be overcome through the implementation of flexible models of corporate culture of strategic management of virtual teams, which ensure the preservation of the unity of corporate values.

Equally important is the development of new metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of the corporate culture of strategic management in virtual environments. Traditional assessment tools designed for physical offices may not be effective for virtual teams. Therefore, the step-by-step scheme should include adaptive assessment tools that ensure transparency of communications, trust and cohesion in remote teams. Thus, the development of the indicated scheme of formation of corporate culture as a social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams will contribute to increasing the level of coordination, motivation and efficiency of virtual teams, which is critically important for the success of modern organizations.

The main purpose of the article is to study corporate culture as a key social tool for managing human resources in general and virtual teams in particular, which contributes to the adaptation of modern organizations to the conditions of remote work. In particular, the article is aimed at developing a conceptual model that illustrates the role of corporate culture in the coordination and inte-

gration of employees in the working conditions of virtual teams. It investigates how corporate values, norms and rules of interaction affect the efficiency, involvement and productivity of distributed teams, even in the absence of physical presence of employees.

2. METHODOLOGY

The following approaches and methods were used in the article: a process approach - for the formation of a step-by-step model of the formation of corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams; strategic approach - to substantiate an effective strategy for the development of virtual teams; the method of scientific abstraction - to determine the basic categories of the topic; the method of analysis and synthesis - for the integration of various methods and means of managing virtual teams and the use of a strategic approach; generalization and critical analysis - to analyze research results.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The corporate culture of an organization is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that is formed on the basis of the principles and values of both individual employees and the organization as a whole, and has a significant impact on its development. Among the key elements forming corporate culture, it is necessary to highlight a system of principles and values that influence the behavior of employees and determine their attitude to the organization as a system, their own place and role in this system, and development opportunities. Among them, it is possible to note the effectiveness of communications, structuring of responsibility, conflict resolution, training and development, image of the employee and the organization. It is important to note that these important elements of the organization's corporate culture create the basis for the formation of the company's status on the market and contribute to the motivation of personnel for self-development and professional growth tied to a specific organization. Next, it is worth analyzing the features of corporate culture for virtual teams, and each of these key indicators separately (Poskrypko & Bielova, 2020).

Today, modern organizations are faced with many challenges that arise in the conditions of an unstable external environment, crises, globalization and digitalization of business. Popularization and development of virtual teams, whose members work at a distance, have cultural differences, different time zones in some cases, with the impossibility of their physical presence in the office, creates new conditions and challenges for the development of corporate culture. It is in virtual teams that such principles as “trust” and “confidence” gain special importance, since the lack of direct (physical) interaction between virtual team members increases the need to feel involved in the project on which the virtual team is working, to believe in its project and to be confident in the competence of their colleagues (Poskrypko & Bielova, 2021). Accordingly, in this case, a feature of the organization’s corporate culture is that it should contribute to the support of the above factors and criteria, forming a sense of unity among team members, regardless of their location.

It should be noted that an established communication process is critically important in the formation of corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams. In addition, the culture of communication that is formed in the organization should ensure the convenience of information exchange, transparency of processes and effective interaction between the members of the virtual team. Precisely because in organizations where work with virtual teams is rapidly developing, traditional forms of non-verbal communication are minimized, the culture of information exchange in the process of forming the corporate culture of the organization becomes a key success factor.

An equally important factor is that virtual teams especially require a clear structure of responsibility. That is why, when forming the corporate culture of the organization, it is necessary to take into account the ability of employees to independently organize their work, set priorities and responsibly approach the performance of tasks. This is explained by the fact that a feature of virtual teams is the lack of direct management control, and the quality of task performance by each member of the virtual team depends on the level of responsibility of each individual employee, which emphasizes the importance of appropriate corporate norms.

Separately, it is worth noting that tolerance and resolution of conflict situations are extremely important for virtual teams, which should also be taken into account when building a corporate culture, since communication in virtual teams can be complicated due to the distance factor, as a result of which the risks of misunderstandings increase. To overcome these barriers and resolve conflicts, the corporate culture formed in the organization should promote tolerance, mutual respect and a constructive approach to conflict resolution in such environments.

In addition, employee development remains an important element of corporate culture, even in virtual teams. Training and professional development are necessary conditions for adapting to rapid changes in the digital world. Organizations should encourage employees to self-develop by providing them with access to learning resources and opportunities to improve their professional level, regardless of the form of work.

Appearance and business style are an important element of corporate culture. Of course, this is inherent in teams in traditional office environments, but this factor is no less important in virtual teams. Since the members of such teams have to meet with customers and clients online (in addition to daily communication with each other), communication ethics expressed through appearance reflect the level of professionalism and affect the image of both each member of the virtual team in particular and the entire team as a whole, respectively, are reflected and on the image of the organization.

All these factors are extremely important for the effective work of virtual teams and should be taken into account when optimizing or forming corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams. Today, it is remote work that is becoming the norm, therefore there is an urgent need for organizations to make changes and develop corporate culture in order to meet the requirements, challenges and trends of the market with such a rapid change in the influence of exogenous environmental factors.

An organization that seeks to maintain its competitiveness must recognize that corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic manage-

ment of virtual teams not only determines the effectiveness of the organization’s activities, but often becomes the basis of its survival in conditions of global instability. That is why a feature of the developing corporate culture is its ability to quickly change and adapt to new conditions in the modern world, where technological progress and changes in working conditions occur at an extremely fast pace. The fact that in new realities organizations are forced to review their cultural approaches within a year, and sometimes within several months, is decisive. Thus, these factors of time and flexibility require organizations to use a strategic view on the formation of corporate culture, focused on the future and dynamism in decision-making, which allows corporate culture to be a mechanism capable of quickly responding to external changes and internal challenges.

Modern trends show that organizations that attach special importance to the development of elements of corporate culture aimed at working with virtual teams gain an undeniable competitive advantage in the market. And in accordance with modern research, it can be concluded that strategic management in the context of corporate culture combines targeted and integrated approaches to the organization’s activities as a whole (Poskrypko, Bielova & Poskrypko, 2021). The combination of these approaches allows not only to set develop-

ment goals, but also to compare them with the existing capabilities of the enterprise and adapt them according to market conditions, and therefore, as a result, ensures the effectiveness of strategic planning, since the corporate culture becomes the basis for determining the strategies that most fully correspond potential of the organization and its market environment. At the same time, speaking about the peculiarities of corporate culture when working with virtual teams, it is worth noting that the ability of organizations to implement a culture based on trust, flexibility and openness to new technologies becomes a decisive condition for their success in the conditions of the modern market.

Thus, it can be concluded that corporate culture as a social foundation for managing virtual teams and organizations is both a personnel management tool and a strategically important resource. It is this kind of corporate culture that contributes to the creation of effective virtual teams, which allows enterprises to maintain stability and productivity even in the most difficult conditions of global instability.

For a more accurate understanding of the features of corporate culture as the social foundation of managing virtual teams in Ukrainian organizations, it is necessary to analyze the inherent ad-

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of a strategic approach and corporate culture in managing virtual teams

Source: Developed by the authors.

The role of a strategic approach in managing virtual teams (effective coordination, support of communication and achievement of organizational goals)			
	ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES
Flexibility and adaptability	Allows organizations to quickly adapt to changes in the market and economy, which is especially important in conditions of instability and digital transformation.	Complexities of coordination of virtual teams	Companies may face problems coordinating the actions of employees, especially if the organization does not have clearly established processes for managing virtual teams.
Integration of innovative technologies	Contributes to increasing the efficiency of management, improves the exchange of information and promotes the development of technological skills among employees.	Lack of physical team dynamics	Virtual teams can experience a lack of social interaction, which can negatively affect team spirit, reducing the level of mutual support and collaboration.
Increasing employee engagement	Helps organizations retain key professionals and increase their productivity.	Problems with supporting corporate culture	A difficult task, since remote work limits the possibilities of personal interaction and the creation of strong interpersonal ties.
Optimization of resources	Allow organizations to optimize infrastructure costs and reduce office maintenance costs.	Technological dependence	Virtual teams are completely dependent on digital technologies, which creates additional risks related to technical failures, data security and unavailability of necessary software.

Table 1 (cont.). Advantages and disadvantages of a strategic approach and corporate culture in managing virtual teams

The role of corporate culture in managing virtual teams (ensures cohesion, effective communication and support of common values)			
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES	
Supporting the unity of virtual teams	Helps unite employees, even if they work remotely, creating a sense of community and common goals.	Lack of physical interaction	Can lead to alienation and lower levels of trust among employees.
Increasing motivation and engagement	Contribute to increasing the level of employee motivation, creating a sense of involvement in the company's success.	Risks of cultural incompatibility	Conflicts may arise, especially in virtual teams, where the process of adaptation is complicated by remote interaction.
Adaptation to changes	Organizations with a strong corporate culture better adapt to new working conditions, in particular to the transition to remote formats.	Slow adaptation to digital innovations	Organizations may struggle to implement digital tools to support corporate culture.
Strengthening the company's reputation	Forms a positive image of the organization both among employees and in the market, increasing its attractiveness for talented specialists and partners.	Difficulties with maintaining culture in virtual teams	It is difficult to maintain the unity of corporate values and norms, because personal interaction between employees is limited, which can weaken the bonds in the team.

vantages and disadvantages of the role of a strategic approach to managing virtual teams and the role of corporate culture (Table 1).

As can be seen from the Table, there are both common and distinct advantages and disadvantages in the role of a strategic approach and the role of corporate culture in managing virtual teams in Ukrainian organizations. However, the fact remains unchanged that the features of working with virtual teams are basic for any organization and

require special emphasis when developing or improving corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams. Thus, to overcome the shortcomings indicated in the Table, it is necessary to focus on optimal principles that will help to adapt to the special conditions of remote work and ensure effective interaction of virtual teams' members. Figure 1 shows a list of key principles that can become the basis for the successful formation and development of corporate culture in modern conditions for organizations.

Source: Developed by the authors.



Figure 1. Key principles of successful development of corporate culture as a social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams



Figure 2. A step-by-step scheme of corporate culture formation as a social foundation of strategic management of virtual

At the same time, the process of forming an optimal corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management in Ukrainian organizations, especially for virtual teams, requires the implementation of a clear strategy that covers all aspects of the organization's activities. In connection with this, a step-by-step scheme for the formation (development) of corporate culture as a social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams is proposed (Figure 2).

As can be seen from the figure, this step-by-step scheme for the formation of corporate culture as a social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams, in addition to the generally accepted stages, emphasizes the fact that specific criteria should be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed corporate culture specifically for virtual teams of the organization. The relevance and appropriateness of using effective communication strategies to increase the effectiveness of interaction between members of virtual teams is also not left out. Another important element of the presented scheme is the proposed measures for the development and motivation of virtual team members, which will positively affect the work efficiency of each member of the virtual team in particular, as well as the efficiency of the entire organization in general. Accordingly, the proposed scheme helps to create such a corporate culture that can play the role of an integration mechanism that ensures consistency of actions, support

of motivation and a high level of responsibility of employees regardless of their physical location, which is relevant for work in virtual teams.

It follows from the above study that corporate culture as the social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams creates unified values and principles that become a strong and well-founded basis for making effective management decisions and determine the nature of interaction between all employees of a virtual team. Especially in virtual teams, where physical absence can hinder effective communication and coordination, such a culture helps to ensure an atmosphere of trust, openness and transparency. Thus, an optimally formed structured corporate culture, which supports the personal and professional development of employees, is able to overcome all challenges and shortcomings caused by the peculiarities of working with virtual teams and conditions of instability of the organization's external environment.

Thus, optimal corporate culture, which acts as the social foundation of human resource management, is a key factor in successful strategic management of the organization. It forms unity of action, ensures flexibility and adaptation to changes, increases employee motivation and supports effective communication processes, which is especially important for organizations that work with virtual teams.

CONCLUSIONS

In the conditions of today's challenges, for any organization that strives for successful development, corporate culture plays a decisive role as the social foundation of strategic management of virtual teams. The importance of the work of virtual teams in organizations is growing rapidly, and the peculiarities of working with virtual teams are receiving more and more attention from both scientists and business representatives. It is corporate culture that helps to form a single system of values for participants of virtual teams, a set of norms and rules that contribute to effective coordination, communication and motivation of employees. In virtual teams, where the physical presence of employees is minimized, corporate culture becomes a tool that ensures not only team cohesion, but also supports high productivity, trust and responsibility at all levels of the organization.

The proposed scheme of formation allows to form an optimal corporate culture that not only adapts the organization to external changes, but also promotes the rapid implementation of new technologies and work processes, which is especially important for virtual teams that are constantly faced with changes in work methods. It also helps keep employees motivated and engaged, which is a key factor in remote work environments where employees may feel isolated or demotivated. Due to the proposed methods

of open feedback between members of virtual teams, recognition of achievements and support for personal development of the organization, the latter, in turn, can effectively reduce the risks of such challenges, risks and shortcomings.

Prospects for further research in this area are provided in the study of the specifics of the impact of corporate culture on the long-term effectiveness of organizations operating in conditions of full or partial remoteness. In particular, questions related to the identification of tools and methods that help create and maintain such a corporate culture that promotes inclusiveness, mutual respect and innovation in virtual teams are relevant, as well as questions devoted to the analysis of the role of digital technologies in maintaining the optimal level of effectiveness of corporate culture and studying how it is the use of these methods can affect the involvement of virtual team workers in the processes of strategic management of the enterprise and the motivation of employees.

In conclusion, corporate culture is the foundation not only for human resource management, but also for the overall strategic success of organizations working with virtual teams. It remains a critical factor in adapting to global changes, maintaining internal stability and long-term competitiveness of the organization in the modern business environment.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Olena Bielova, Oleksandr Bielov.

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