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CORPORATE CULTURE OF ORGANIZATIONS DURING THE WAR IN UKRAINE

In today's business landscape, corporate culture does more than just create an appealing image for a company. It also serves as a crucial tool for business development and is key to achieving market success. This culture inevitably emerges in every organization, regardless of whether management has actively cultivated it. However, intentionally fostering a culture that unifies all employees, aligns their efforts toward shared goals, and imbues their work with meaning beyond simple monetary gain can lead to significantly more effective operations and superior outcomes.

A study conducted in the 1990s, which analyzed the organizational cultures of over 200 companies across 22 industries, demonstrated that those with a strong internal culture were 20–30% more financially successful than their competitors. It was observed that companies consistently outperform their rivals when they prioritize the well-being of customers, investors, and employees, and when their culture remains relevant to the business environment and swiftly adapts to changes [1].

In the scientific literature, there is an extensive array of definitions for corporate culture, which scholars have grouped into five main approaches [2]. Corporate culture can be viewed as a management ideology that aims to enhance a company's business activities. It encompasses the atmosphere and social climate of the organization, its philosophy, and the prevailing system of values and beliefs. These elements, along with established norms and rules that are universally accepted by all employees, collectively shape their behavior. Thus, the core components of corporate culture are its values and procedures. Values are regarded as ethical ideals and represent the highest moral standards, while procedures are the officially documented and/or tacit behavioral rules that are grounded in these values.

It is essential to recognize that corporate culture is shaped by the dynamic interplay between the company's internal and external environments. Factors influencing its development include the company's founding history and significant events, the alignment of top management's actions with declared values, and the methodologies and content utilized by the organization. External influences also play a critical role, primarily societal expectations for socially responsible and ethical business practices.

Furthermore, corporate culture is responsive to shifts within the political, legal, and socio-economic contexts of the country. It reacts to adverse elements and crises, which may necessitate the reinforcement of existing

cultural elements or the introduction of new values and norms to adapt appropriately. During periods of uncertainty, the prevailing corporate culture largely dictates the company's operational responses and guides employee actions and motivations.

The corporate culture of companies in Ukraine, like elsewhere around the world, began transforming during the pandemic. Lockdowns, the shift to remote work, and the stress and illnesses of employees necessitated changes not only in operational organization and communication systems but also in cultivating new levels of mutual support within teams. The imperative for these changes became even more critical with the onset of a full-scale invasion, which brought forth pressing concerns for the safety of individuals and the survival of businesses.

The ongoing transformation of corporate culture, likely still incomplete, is anticipated to be a significant focus of future scholarly inquiry. However, certain emerging characteristics can already be identified, notably a shift towards more humane interactions and a focus on the substantive content of cultural practices, rather than merely their external presentation to society.

First and foremost, the actions and stance of managerial leadership deserve attention. Almost all companies have publicly declared their positions regarding the national events, actively supporting the armed forces, aiding refugees, displaced individuals, and healthcare facilities. Employers have striven to ensure the safest and most comfortable conditions for their employees by facilitating remote work options. Within their financial means, they have also provided economic support to those in temporarily occupied territories, areas of active conflict, or those who have been displaced or lost their homes.

A critical responsibility of management has been to prevent panic and chaos, while mobilizing teams to continue meeting production goals. This is particularly significant as the majority of Ukrainian company staff report decreased work productivity. Factors such as air raids, shelling, and prolonged power outages inevitably impact work capacity, yet despite these challenges, essential tasks continue to be reliably accomplished.

This adaptation was made possible, in part, due to the continued implementation of remote work, which allows employees the flexibility to tailor their work schedules. Consequently, corporate focus has shifted towards results rather than hours logged – a change that is both logical and necessary under wartime conditions.

The war has also heightened the sense of social responsibility among companies and their employees alike. The surge in volunteer initiatives, charitable events, and financial contributions to support the military and those affected by the conflict has not waned. In addition, there is an increased collective effort within workplaces as employees seek to support one another during these trying times.

Communication has become more crucial, not just vertically between managers and their teams, but also horizontally among colleagues. These interactions often extend beyond work-related topics to include personal challenges, which are commonly shared. Sociological studies have noted a

rise in empathy, aiding individuals in navigating daily hardships. The etiquette of communication during the war has evolved to become more forgiving and tolerant, with managers, employees, and clients generally showing greater understanding towards each other.

Consequently, it is somewhat paradoxical that while the military actions have inflicted severe destruction, losses, and suffering upon Ukraine, they have simultaneously fostered positive developments in the corporate culture of many local companies. The war has unified society and work collectives, bolstering empathy and mutual support. Preserving and enhancing these qualities will be crucial in nurturing a new quality of corporate culture in the post-war period.

References:

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2. Stepanova L.V., Tuzhilkina O.V. (2020) Corporate culture in the context of regulation of social and labor relations. *Social and labor relations: problems of science and practice*. Poltava, pp. 518–534.