

2.1 MANAGEMENT LESSONS FROM MAHABHARATA

Mahabharata is considered the largest epic in the World. In Mahabharata, there was a fight between Kauravas and Pandavas. Kauravas were led by Dhronacharya and Pandavas were led by Lord Krishna. Mahabharata encompasses many lessons on Management which can potentially be applied to modern business practices.

Management Lessons from Mahabharata:

1. Work on your Weaknesses and convert it into your Strengths:

One of the main lessons to be learnt from Mahabharata is identify your weaknesses, work on your weaknesses and convert it into strengths. During exile the Pandavas, having recently lost their kingdom and honour, utilized their time to acquire new skills and tried to convert their weaknesses into strengths.

In the same manner, an individual should continuously try to learn new skills and try to convert their weaknesses into strengths.

2. Share Responsibility:

Efficiently sharing responsibilities among the workers is vital for the success of the organisation. In Mahabharata, the Kauravas had a centralised leadership with entire responsibility on one person. This resulted in the failure of Kauravas. On the other hand, Pandavas had a Modern Management Structure with proper sharing of responsibility and authority among different individuals.

Thus, sharing of responsibility and power leads to a democracy in the management and reduced reliance on one individual, thus reducing risk.

3. Team Work leads to Success:

The Kauravas had number advantage i.e. they were more in number than Pandavas. But Kauravas lacked the team spirit and they all fought individual wars. On the other hand, Pandavas fought with one goal, setting aside personal beliefs and turned out to be successful.

Thus, we can learn that Teamwork Succeeds where individual fails, but the team formed must have the same vision, goals and passion.

4. Commitment is more important than Competence:

The Kauravas had highly competent people with them as compared to the Pandavas; still the Kauravas were on the losing side. It was the difference in the commitment of people on both sides that made the difference.

Thus, when selecting a team it is always better to have people who are passionate and committed rather than people who excel individually. The best man for the job is not the one with the best skills but with the greatest commitment.

5. Take Calculated Risks:

Any venture in the real World comes with associated risk with it and all the decisions require us to take decisions after evaluation of these risks. In Mahabharata, Krishna has acted as a greatest crisis manager showing how to take calculated risks at the time of crisis. Management is all about taking calculated risks. Pandavas and Kauravas both took risks but Pandavas took calculated risks which mostly paid off. Thus, taking calculated risks with well-associated decisions is the trademark of good management.

6. Women Empowerment:

Mahabharata is probably the oldest and the only one to recognize the importance of women. Pandavas relied on the involvement of women and their thoughts. In any decision making structure, women always bring in a holistic view at the situation. The aggressive and dominative masculine traits are balanced by harmonic and sustainable traits of a woman. It is only a team that is able to have this balance is able to sustain in the long term.

7. Know every Member's Potential:

For a Manager, it is very important to know what role suits the best to which employee. Pandavas knew how to harness energies from each man in

their army. The manager should be smart enough to use his team's ability and potential to the maximum.

8. Decision – Making

The art of taking sound decisions is vital for success of the organisation. An individual should grab the opportunity at the right time to gain competitive advantage over the competitors.

2.2 MANAGEMENT LESSONS FROM BIBLE

The Bible has plenty to say about business etiquette and ethics which needs to be followed in day to day business activities.

1. Be Humble:

Bible teaches that an individual should always be humble and avoid any kind of ego or pride. Thus, a manager must be humble and treat everyone with respect and humility. A manager must accept and encourage criticism, especially from his employees that understand the business better than anyone. By creating an environment that allows suggestions and criticism, he can greatly improve his business and allow employees and customers to feel more part of the business.

2. Build a reputation for integrity and honesty.

Bible teaches that an individual should conduct business with utmost integrity and honesty. There is no greater temptation to cheat than is a business setting where one can earn more profits. If one can overcome this great temptation, one will reach a high level of character that others esteem. Moreover, when one conducts his business in fair and honest manner, he will have support of his customers, employees and his business will grow.

3. Treat your employees fairly.

One of the most difficult parts of running a business is dealing with employee issues. Bible teaches that you should always treat employees equally and fairly. There should be no discrimination among employees on the basis of race, age, gender, religion, colour etc. Moreover, there should be no discrimination in payment of salaries and promotions/ transfers should also be purely on the basis of merit. When you develop a reputation for fairness to your employees, they respect you more and know that they were treated properly.

4. Charity:

As per Bible, charity means "love". It is all about loving and caring for the poor and needy by means of Charity. This is also applied to business organisations. A business organisation uses resources from the society and depends on the society for its business. Thus, it has a moral responsibility to give charities and pay back to the society. The Bible says, 'A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor'. Thus, Bible promises blessings to those who believe in charity.

5. Sowing and Reaping

'As you sow, so shall you Reap' – The Bible teaches this in various places and ways. This means that if we sow good, we reap good things. If we sow evil, we reap evil things. Then, if you sow very little you will reap proportionately very little.

This principle applies in day to day business activities. If you put more efforts in your business, you will earn better returns.

6. Conflict Management:

It is often said that it may not be possible to resolve every conflict, but it is possible to manage conflicts. The Bible teaches us to live peacefully with those around us. We are taught the Golden Rule from childhood: treat others the way you want to be treated.

7. Work Hard:

The Bible says: "He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty". It basically means that it takes hard work to become profitable. You cannot succeed until and unless you work hard.

8. Have the highest level of customer service.

Bible teaches– put yourself in the shoes of the customer and treat them as you want to be treated. While many companies struggle with how to handle customer service, following this standard is the best way to build a long term loyal customer base. Customers prefer to patronize businesses that are fair on returns/exchanges and that treat them well. The high level of customer service can help the organisation to differentiate themselves from the competitors. Treat your customers the way you'd want to be treated.

9. Be honest with customers.

Bible teaches that an organisation should always be honest with the customers and do not cheat them in any manner. There may be situations

wherein the organisation can take undue advantage of the customer such as increasing profits by using a cheaper material or a second hand product? Use lower cost components even though the customer believes you are using high end components. However, Bible teaches us to be honest with customers and do not cheat them in any manner.

10. Always act as if you are being watched.

The Sages say, "Know what is above you: An eye that sees". When you realize that someone above is always watching you, the answer is easy. You act differently and work under a higher standard. You run your business and personal life honestly all the time.

2.3 MANAGEMENT LESSONS FROM QURAN

There are several Aayahs in the Holy Quran which declare the 'Usool' or principles in doing business transactions.

1. Obedience and Respect for Authority:

Obedience and respect for authority is essential in any corporate organisation. If the workforce does not have obedience and respect for the authority, the organisation structure would fail. The organisation would not be able to function properly.

Holy Quran instructs: 'Obey Allah and His Messenger and those in position of authority among you'.

2. Mutual Consultation and Team Work:

The Holy Quran advocates the concept of mutual consultation and team work for better results.

The Japanese Management has proved the benefits of team work to the world. There is almost no field in the world where team work does not work. Thus, we can say that team work is essential for success of organisation as:

T – Together

E – Everyone

A – Achieves

M – More

3. Equal Opportunities to everyone:

The concept of equal opportunities basically states that all employees should have an equal right to grow, contribute and be rewarded. This concept is very important for the success of the organisation. Almost all the

companies have to adhere to this principle when they advertise for new job offers. Equal Opportunities make employees work more enthusiasm.

4. Fulfilling Contracts, Commitments and Promises:

For any business to survive, fulfilling its contracts, commitments, promises is extremely important. For employees, it is utmost important to respect the deadlines and deliver work when promised. An organisation will be successful if these principles are followed.

The Holy Quran has instructed → "Allah says, Fulfill your contracts. Contracts will be asked about."

5. Optimum Capacity Utilisation:

The Holy Quran emphasizes on this principle: "No soul shall have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear".

It basically indicates not to over-burden any resource, whether it is a machine or an employee, or not to under-load any machine or employee and to have a balance in the workload.

6. Elimination of Wastages

Quran advocates elimination of any kinds of wastages. Wastage elimination is one of the modern concepts implemented by organisations all over the world. Waste elimination helps to increase the efficiency and lower the costs in almost all aspects of the organisation.

7. Just in Time:

Quran advocates the concept of Just in Time. Just in Time is a concept pioneered by Toyota. It means keeping as much inventory as needed. It reduces cost and wastage.

8. Kaizen:

Quran also lays importance on quality improvement techniques. Kaizen is a Japanese word meaning continuous improvement. In Arabic, this is nothing but Jihad, which means continuous struggle to improve.

9. Customer Satisfaction:

Quran also lays importance on Customer Satisfaction for success of business organisation. Customer satisfaction is a sure business model and it has proved its effectiveness for more than one big company. Dell established its operations worldwide for just this.