

A Study of the Application of People Management as Represented by the Team Spirit of "Journey to the West" in a Fortune 500 Company

Wenyu Zhang *

International Business School, Jilin International Studies University, Changchun, 130117, China

*Corresponding Author: chloeup0251@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In recent years, with the acceleration of the globalization process, international trade competition has become more and more intense, prompting enterprises to constantly adjust internal and external management strategies, coupled with the fact that there are still some inefficiencies in enterprise people management. Numerous enterprises urgently need to develop a larger market space. The enterprise studied in this paper is Procter & Gamble, which is also affected by different degrees, based on this, this paper researches on the enterprise human-centered management within Procter & Gamble, and reasonably draws on the management strategy embodied in the literary masterpiece "Journey to the West" to increase and improve the staff's motivation and innovation ability. This paper introduces factual cases through the method of relevant literature excerpts, based on the academic research on enterprise management, sorting out and summarizing the conclusions on how the ideological culture and management programs complement each other, and exploring the ideas and methods to solve the problem for the further development and growth of the enterprise.

KEYWORDS

'Journey to the West'; People management application; Procter & Gamble; Fortune 500; Strategic research

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In recent years, people-oriented thinking has been widely valued by all walks of life, especially the establishment and dissemination of the "people-oriented" concept of development, which makes the application of people-oriented thinking in social production and life the norm [1]. Starting from the needs of enterprise talent management, promoting people-oriented human resource management work, consolidating the foundation of human resources work, in line with the interests of enterprise development, but also a necessary move for the benefit of all employees. Since the last century, the development of enterprise management issues began to be highly concerned about and pay attention to the international economics community, becoming a hot spot of concern for many scholars, and has achieved more research results. The development of many of the world's top 500 companies can not be separated from the management of a large number of staff and service network, in the face of today's world of layoffs, the rise of the wave of employee strikes, how to effectively balance the relationship between staff needs and corporate interests has become the main issue of enterprise development. This includes how to maintain employee job satisfaction and well-being in the context of globalization and technological advances, while enhancing productivity and innovation to ensure long-term organizational sustainability.

Although *Journey to the West* is a chapter book, one of the four great Chinese novels, it conveys a number of specific ideas about people management, such as the role of a leader's example, teamwork, separation of rewards and punishments, and emotional management, through its rich storyline and profound characterizations. Traditional personnel management is characterized by centralized authority, performance evaluation, and clear division of labor, but this common management style is not immune to facing many drawbacks: such as insufficient employee participation, lack of market adaptability, excessive rigidity and hierarchical limitations, and serious brain drain phenomenon. Although the content of "*Journey to the West*" is not real, the ideas in it still have a certain degree of reference.

2. PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The *Journey to the West*, as one of the Four Great Masterpieces, must have a profound guiding significance for being passed down to this day. Why can the four masters and disciples overcome the difficulties and obstacles and finally unite as one on the spiritual mountain? It must contain the corresponding management strategies and means. In real life, the world's top 500 companies are generally world-famous, and the corresponding internal "people-oriented management", with the "*Journey to the West*" embodied in the "people-oriented management," "corporate beliefs" and other management ideas into the development of enterprises, which can help the development of enterprises. Management ideas such as "*Journey to the West*" are integrated into enterprise development, which helps employees to better adapt to the enterprise environment and actively participate in enterprise construction.

In addition to helping the development of enterprises, it can also widely disseminate traditional Chinese culture and help enhance the cultural influence of multinational corporations. Fortune 500 companies, including P&G, are multinationals, and accordingly their market expansion involves many countries and regions. Meanwhile, China is a populous country with abundant labor force. Compared with the big strike wave in foreign countries, the domestic economy declined during the epidemic, and some enterprises are still in the recovery period, but the impact of the strikes is relatively small, on the one hand, it is due to the Chinese people's strong sense of demand for work, and the social and economic development is stable; on the other hand, the relevant government policies have a certain degree of reasonableness [2]. At the same time, the management ideas related to "*Journey to the West*" can help to enhance the cultural belonging and identification of Chinese employees to the enterprise, and improve the work efficiency, so as to improve the work atmosphere. In the face of China's excellent traditional cultural essence, we should make rational use of it, so as to achieve more unexpected results.

3. CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1. Research

This paper draws on the management ideas embodied in the "*Journey to the West*", with the intention of providing P&G, as a Fortune 500 company, with corresponding new ideas on human-centered management, strengthening the construction of corporate culture and the application of human-centered management ideas, and committing itself to the expansion of the Chinese market.

3.2. Research Methodology

The research methods of this paper mainly include literature research method, case study method, historical and comparative research method, etc., which are analyzed as follows:

(1) Documentary research method

Collect the related literature on enterprise human-centered management for research, understand the existing research ideas and methods, and provide a certain theoretical basis for the in-depth study of enterprise management strategy in this paper.

(2) Case study method

This paper does a research on the management structure of P&G's world's top 500 famous companies, as well as a comparative analysis. And further combined with the team management ideas in the "Journey to the West" for a comprehensive analysis, comparing P&G's sales, marketing style and corporate management style

In-depth understanding of traditional culture rationally applied to enterprise management methods, so as to provide targeted countermeasures to improve the efficiency of enterprise management suggestions.

(3) Historical and Comparative Research Method

This paper compares P&G's historical corporate management downturn and its heyday to analyze the overall revenue situation, to understand the trend of revenue changes brought about by the development of corporate management, and to further compare and analyze it with the overall market averages within the industry to understand P&G's competitive position within the industry.

4. CULTURAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTER-TEAM COOPERATION ATTITUDES INVOLVED IN THE WESTERN JOURNEY

Journey to the West is a classic production of Chinese classical literature, and the cultural self-consciousness it embodies is multifaceted; it is not only a literary masterpiece, but also a treasure of Chinese culture. Through the study and interpretation of Journey to the West, not only can we better understand the connotation and value of traditional Chinese culture, but also provide more useful inspiration and reference for the construction of contemporary culture, which naturally includes many contents other than culture.

The Journey to the West contains a number of well-known episodes that embody specific ideas about team management - such as the Three Strikes of the White Bone Demon, the Battle of the Lion's Camel, and so on. Particularly, in the episode "The Three Strikes of the White Bone Demon", the White Bone Demon changes its human form three times in an attempt to deceive the Tang Monk and his disciples. Sun Wukong, with his fiery eyes, recognizes the White Bone Demon's trick and kills him. However, the Tang Monk mistook Sun Wukong for an innocent man and drove him back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruits. Porky Pig and Monk Sha did not stand firmly on the side of Sun Wukong in this process, nor did they explain the truth of the matter clearly to the Longevity Monk in time. In the end, this led to a situation where the whole team was faced with almost falling apart. This clip exemplifies the need for mutual trust, communication and support among team members, otherwise the team will have problems.

This is true for a few people and even more so for large organizations that command hundreds of employees. Procter & Gamble is a globally recognized consumer goods company with a wide range of product lines and a large market share. The company has been able to achieve what it has by always emphasizing the importance of teamwork [2]. Teamwork, as one of P&G's core values, is in line with the spirit of people-based management. Take the Tide laundry detergent team of P&G as an example, the team faced the challenge of how to improve the cleaning effect and environmental performance of laundry detergent when developing new products. In order to solve this problem, team members from different departments of the company, including product development, marketing, production, etc., worked together to conduct a lot of experiments and research. For example, the R&D team is responsible for developing new formulations and technologies, the marketing team conducts consumer research to understand their needs and expectations of laundry detergents, and the

production team ensures that the new products can be mass-produced. Through close cooperation and information sharing among team members, they finally succeeded in launching an innovative Tide laundry detergent that not only cleans better, but is also kinder to the environment. All these achievements could not have been achieved without the mutual trust and communication support between the various departments [4].

This example demonstrates the power of teamwork in P&G. Through cross-departmental cooperation, the team is able to fully utilize their respective professional strengths to solve problems together and achieve common goals. This spirit of teamwork plays an important role in the development of P&G.

5. HOW TO CORRECTLY RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK, SO AS TO STRENGTHEN THE "PEOPLE-ORIENTED MANAGEMENT" WITHIN THE ENTERPRISE?

The first thing to recognize is that teamwork is an important management concept and organizational behaviour. From the example of the battle against the Lion and Camel in Journey to the West, the Monkey King and his party still lacked the ability to organize and cooperate in the face of absolute power, so they needed more systematic support when facing a great enemy. The Journey to the West can be taken as the KPI of the enterprise, the Tang Monk and his disciples as the whole enterprise, and the gods and goddesses or various other generals can be taken as the internal and external forces of the enterprise [5]. They all play an indispensable ability to each other no matter where they are in the process. For example, Tang Monk is responsible for guiding, Wukong is responsible for leading the way, Piggy and Sha Monk are responsible for picking the luggage and so on.

Teamwork is of vital importance in the overall people management system of an organization. Whereas people-based management emphasizes people as the most important resource in the organization, companies should pay more attention to the needs, development and participation of employees. Meanwhile, teamwork is one of the important means to realize the goal of people-oriented management.



Figure 1. Image Source "P&G FY2023 Annual Report

As can be seen from the above Figure 1, P&G has classified employee value as one of the four key areas of focus, which indicates that P&G is committed to creating an autonomous, flexible and cohesive organization and culture for the company's employees, which values their interests and thus leads the departments to support each other in accomplishing the tasks around the world. Teamwork is regarded as an important organizational behavior and management strategy in management science, which can bring multiple benefits and have a positive impact on both organizational performance and member development. For example, it stimulates employee creativity and facilitates knowledge sharing and collision of ideas among members; it brings together the wisdom and opinions of multiple members to make more informed decisions through joint discussion and analysis. Team members can provide information and suggestions from different perspectives, reducing bias and errors in decision-making and improving the quality and feasibility of decisions, etc.

6. PROCTER & GAMBLE'S STRATEGIC APPLICATION OF PEOPLE-BASED MANAGEMENT

In recent years, Procter & Gamble has achieved significant sales growth across all categories and regions, all of which are supported by its people management strategy. In fiscal year 2023, which is shown in Figure 2, Procter & Gamble achieved organic sales growth of 7%, core EPS growth of 2%, and core EPS growth of 11% on a constant currency basis, with an adjusted free cash flow productivity of 95%. This is the second consecutive year that P&G has achieved 7% organic sales growth and the fifth consecutive year since fiscal 2019 that it has achieved organic growth of 5% and above (growth rates of 5%, 6%, 6%, 7%, 7%, 7%, 7%, respectively).

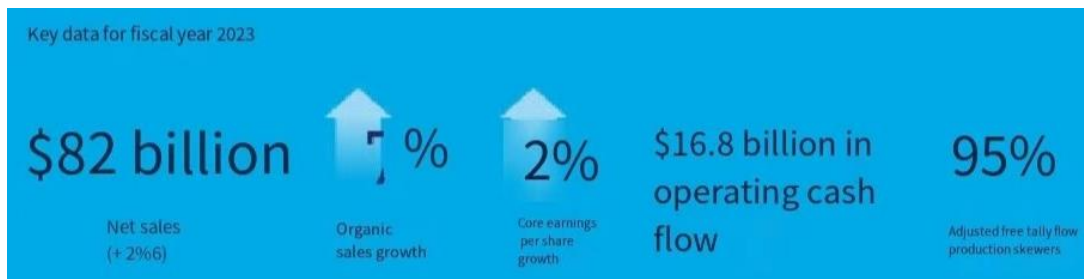


Figure 2. Image Source "P&G FY2023 Annual Report

Since the development of P&G, the company has always been upholding the action strategy of "Caring for Employees". By analyzing the annual report of the company, as of the end of this fiscal year, 41% of P&G's global female employees and 50% of its female executives are women. Especially in the U.S., 30% of the employees have a multicultural background. Currently, 46% of board members are women, and 38% of leaders have multicultural backgrounds. It is easy to see that the company's top management fully understands and respects women as well as multicultural people, and establishes and balances the corporate management to be a more representative organization, thus further promoting balance and sustainable corporate development. Unlike a typical sweatshop, P&G also offers extensive training and development opportunities and maintains an open communication atmosphere to help employees achieve excellent performance. Specific strategies within the company are adapted and developed over time as business needs change, but the overall core of humanism remains the same.

At present, P&G has gradually shifted from the attitude of being responsible for employees to that of consumers and the whole society, and is committed to achieving win-win cooperation between upstream, midstream and downstream, and continuously improving the ability to meet the personalized needs of consumers on the FMCG track. From the small "people-oriented management" to the development of "people-oriented management" in the whole FMCG track, P&G has realized a considerable impact.

7. HOW TO DEEPLY UTILIZE THE TEAMWORK SPIRIT AS A SHARP SWORD OF ENTERPRISE "PEOPLE-ORIENTED MANAGEMENT"?

In summary, we can easily see that the spirit of the enterprise is the pillar of the staff of the "people-oriented management", and teamwork spirit as "people-oriented management system" in the most important. The realization of teamwork, first of all, should establish mutual trust, clear common goals of the relationship. The Tang Monk and his disciples went all the way through nine hundred and eighty-one difficulties only for the final goal - to get the real scriptures. Inter-enterprise teams should also work together to create a good atmosphere of cooperation; secondly, pay attention to timely communication and coordination. The Tang Monk and his disciples cooperate with each other in the relationship of master and disciple, while the enterprise should create an autonomous, flexible and actively take responsibility for the organization. Effective communication is the key to teamwork, but

also to respect the culture and work style of the staff; finally, the enterprise also needs to continuously learn and share, encourage employees to learn from each other, actively participate in the contribution, stimulate staff enthusiasm and creativity.

8. REACH A VERDICT

P&G's people management concepts and practices have had a more positive impact on employee work and loyalty. Employees need more to feel the company's respect and care for them, and thus are more willing to contribute to the company. At the same time, P&G is able to better understand the needs and expectations of employees and further enhance their skills and knowledge through training and development. At the same time, P&G's relevant business experience can provide other enterprises with corresponding reference, help more enterprises to establish a humanized and efficient management mode, so as to strengthen the healthy competition among enterprises and pay more positive social responsibility for the FMCG industry.

REFERENCES

- [1] Li, L. (2024). Research on the application of the idea of "unity of knowledge and action" in enterprise human-centred management. *Old Brand Marketing*, 13: 138-140.
- [2] Zhou, M. (2024). Exploration of quality improvement and efficiency enhancement in management of basic units of state-owned enterprises in the new period. *Transport Enterprise Management*, 03: 67-68.
- [3] Wang, Y. (2024). Exploration of human resource management in institutions under the perspective of people-oriented. *China Management Informatisation*, 08: 160-162.
- [4] Li, S.N., Liu, X.T., Bi, B.X. & Zhao, S. (2019). The application of management information system in multi-brand strategy - A case study of Procter & Gamble. *Enterprise Technology and Development*, 11: 260-261.
- [5] Suja. (2024). The Editorial Board of Cosmic Exploration: Reinterpretation of the theme of "travelling west". *Audiovisual*, 06: 21-25.