



MAURITIUS RESEARCH COUNCIL

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MRC Unsolicited Research Grant Scheme:

How Do Mauritian Managers Manage?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is now recognised that management embodies considerable diversity in its philosophy and application. As we progress into the 21st century, the business environment is undergoing dramatic transformations in terms of globalisation, technological innovations, and hyper competition. Managers are under severe pressures to continuously improve their performance and organisational effectiveness. The MIM undertook this project in order to provide empirical data about the strengths and shortcomings of Mauritian Managers and the challenges facing them.

The project aimed at providing a basis for making proposals for improving their competencies and achieving better results in such vital areas like productivity improvements, innovation, change management and diversity management.

The objectives were to:

- Establish the profile of Mauritian Managers in relation to age, experience, education and training, designation and gender
- Understand how Mauritian Managers set objectives, priorities and determine current management practices
- Explore the style of management in the private sector, public sector, family businesses, in multinational organisations and in small businesses, etc
- Analyse how managers are adjusting in a global context
- Determine the characteristics that organisations look for in Mauritian Managers.

The methodology used for this project comprised three main elements:

- Research of appropriate literature to identify existing management style and profile on the international scene
- Design, administration and analysis of a comprehensive questionnaire (Phase I)
- Site visits and interviews of a representative sample of companies that had answered the questionnaire (Phase II).

The survey covered 123 enterprises ranging from small to large enterprises. All the main sectors of the economy were well covered including the public sector and parastatal bodies.

PHASE I – SURVEY RESULTS

PROFILE OF THE MANAGERS

Gender

81.1% of the respondents surveyed were male managers while only 18.9% were female managers.

Marital Status

The great majority of respondents i.e. 91% were married.

Age

Very few respondents were below 25 years

Education

31.7% of the respondents were postgraduate degree holders, 29.3% held professional qualifications and 15.4% were degree holders.

Membership to a Professional Organisation

48% of these managers were members of professional organisations.

Salary Range

More than half of the respondents were earning more than Rs35,000 monthly.

MANAGER' QUALITIES

Strength(s) of a Manager

Organisational skills (65%), Communications Skills (57%), the ability to motivate others (57%), Leadership (55%), Delegation (43%), Decisiveness (39%), Assertiveness (27%) and Entrepreneurship Flair (26%).

Weakness(es)

22.1% of Mauritian Managers did not manage their time efficiently, 20% were not aware of new technology and 20% failed to contain costs.

Management Style in the Private Sector and the Public Sector

31% believed that the management style in the private sector was democratic. 31% of the respondent felt the management style was authoritarian in the public sector.

31% of the respondents felt that the management style in the public sector was authoritarian and 12% felt that the management style was democratic.

Management Style in the Surveyed Enterprise

44% of the respondents perceived that the style of management adopted in their organisations was participative. 34% perceived it to be democratic.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Most important requirement for the development of a leader,

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|----------------------|-----|
| Values and Integrity | 76% |
| Communication Skills | 68% |
| Interpersonal Skills | 52% |

DECISION MAKING

90% of the respondents participated in strategic decision-making in the enterprise.

90% participated in setting objectives for the short term

77% participated in setting objectives in the long term.

More than 90% believed that the objectives were realistically attainable and sufficiently challenging.

96% of the respondents participated in establishing priorities for the enterprises.

72% considered potential bottlenecks in their planning process.

65% prepared contingency plans to put into operation in case problems occurred.

MANAGING PEOPLE

Staff Working as a Team in the Enterprise

The staff in 96% of enterprises surveyed worked as a team.

General Atmosphere within the Teams

95% indicated that the general atmosphere within the team was one of mutual support and co-operation.

Factors Motivating the Teams

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|------------------|-----|
| Recognition | 75% |
| New competencies | 57% |
| Reward | 51% |

Handling Conflicts

74% handled conflicts by mediating and 39% by smoothing.

MANAGING COMMUNICATION

Mode of Communication

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Meetings | 89% |
| Informal face-to-face interaction | 84% |
| Group discussions | 68% |

There was:

- A good flow of communication downward 69%
- A good flow of communication upward 56%

Reliability of Communication

Communication was described as being generally reliable 73%, helpful and supportive 62%.

The following principles were applied at the respondent's level:

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|---------------------------------|-------|
| Emphasis on results | 91% |
| Clear responsibility for action | 90.1% |
| Clear standards and objectives | 86.9% |
| Letting Managers Manage | 87% |

PHASE II – INTERVIEWS

Phase II were undertaken to explore additional areas, which were not covered in Phase I and to test the validity of selected responses from Phase I. Phase II interviews were very eye-opening. They served to reinforce the general observations emerging in Phase I.

Phase II results showed that Mauritian managers are qualified and experienced. They are challenged by changes in the environment. They are faced with issues such as high competition, mobility of labour, high costs, changes in international legislation, lack of creativity and no quality consciousness. Attempts are made for adapting the organisation to the need of customers and to adjust in the global context. However, it was revealed that they generally think in the local context, which makes it difficult to cope with global competition.

Leaders have a great responsibility towards the realisation and execution of strategies in the development of the organisations. The development of people in this regard is not always considered as a top priority by leaders in their pursuit of business objectives. The organisations claim to be democratic but Phase II revealed that decision-making still remains with top management whilst lower level management deals with operational decisions. Managers have a leadership role to accomplish. The right qualities and appropriate behaviour are felt to be equally important in the workplace. In this respect findings in Phase II did not tie up with Phase I results.

Phase II showed that awareness exists about the effectiveness of measurable indicators but not all organisations use them to monitor performance.

However it was encouraging to find that all organisations have a vision and a mission statement, which is a positive sign. It was also reassuring to find consistency about components of what constitute leadership in both Phases I and Phase II.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Effective leadership involves an element of vision, which gives direction. Leaders must not see the vision themselves; they must get others to see it too
- Leaders should not only lead others but should demonstrate human qualities in addition to other leadership qualities
- There is definitely a need to move away from autocratic style of management to a democratic style where the employees should be allowed to take part in decision-making
- Management has to continue innovating. Continuous investment in the development of competencies at all levels of organisations should be undertaken.
- Management should be prudent. It is high time to create and inculcate a culture of risk taking in Mauritius
- Managers should not hold on tasks that others should be doing for them. They should learn the secrets to delegating.

- Managers have to replicate strategic models and implement techniques within the organisation to alter competitive dynamics. -Benchmarking is a powerful management tool which should be used
- Organisations have social responsibilities, which must be managed to make Mauritius a better place to live
- Managers must communicate as much as they can and skilfully listen to others
- Managers have to follow a structured improvement method that leads to prompt solutions, actions and positive results
- To be customer oriented managers should adopt the role to satisfy both the internal and external customers
- Organisations should participate in diverse management events to share their knowledge, experience and management skills e.g. a management award.