HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

THE CULTURE OF HUMAN-CENTRED MANAGEMENT IN A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF UNITING A MULTINATIONAL WORKFORCE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF BBR YAPI)

Shodiyeva Diyor

BBR YAPI Office Manager

Email: dshodiyeva308@gmail.com

Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21932780

Abstract: The article analyses the formation of a culture of human-centred management and its influence on the effectiveness of the workforce on the example of BBR Yapı, a company operating in the international construction market. The aim of the study is to generalise, from the standpoint of management theory, the direct participation of managers on site, the practice of uniting a multinational workforce around a common goal, the attention paid to the health and family circumstances of employees, and the system of incentives. The study was conducted on the basis of the company's official information sources and the author's direct observations during more than a year of work at its sites. The company has 17 years of experience, a workforce of 780 employees, 18 major completed projects and sites in several countries. The analysis identified five practical principles of human-centred management: the manager's presence on site, the acceptance of cultural diversity as a resource, the treatment of the employee as a person, the practical priority of occupational safety, and the promptness of recognition. The consistency of these principles with the theories of transformational leadership, psychological safety and the gemba approach is substantiated.

Key words: management culture, human capital, multinational workforce, transformational leadership, motivation, psychological safety, occupational safety, construction industry, corporate social responsibility, employee loyalty.

Introduction

The construction industry is one of the most labour-intensive sectors of the modern economy. In this field the final result — the quality of a building or structure — depends not only on technology and materials but also on the condition, the mood and the attitude to their own work of the people who labour on the site every day. It is precisely this dependence that raises the question of management culture in construction enterprises from a secondary matter to the level of a direct factor of production.

The relevance of the topic is reinforced by a further consideration. The workforce of construction companies operating on international projects is, as a rule, composed of representatives of different countries and nationalities. On a single site, Turkish, Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and other workers labour side by side; their languages, customs, attitudes to work and everyday ways of life differ from one another. Uniting such a workforce around a common goal is the most complex and, at the same time, the most rewarding task of management.

The aim of this article is to describe the practical forms of the culture of human-centred management on the example of the construction company BBR Yapı, which operates in the Turkish

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

and Kazakh markets, to compare them with modern management theories and to draw generalisations that are of significance for other enterprises. The objectives of the study are as follows: to provide a general description of the company; to identify the principal forms of its management practice; to assess their outcomes for the employee and for the enterprise; and to provide a theoretical interpretation and develop recommendations.

Object and methodology of the study

The object of the study is the construction company BBR Yapı and the workforce at its sites. The subject of the study is the management culture manifested in the relations between management and employees. The information base consisted of two groups of sources. The first comprised materials from the company's official website: general information, the statement of its mission and values, the list of projects and contact details [1; 2; 3; 4]. The second comprised the author's direct observations gathered during more than a year of work at the company's sites [5].

The study employed the methods of participant observation, descriptive analysis, grouping and theoretical generalisation. The results of the observation were grouped according to the recurring forms of management practice and were then compared with the classical theories of motivation and leadership. The strength of the method lies in the opportunity to observe the phenomenon from within, inside the everyday work process; its limitation is that the assessment is qualitative in character and is not fully confirmed by quantitative measurements. For this reason the conclusions presented in the article should be interpreted as descriptive and analytical rather than statistical.

Results and their analysis

1. General description of the company. BBR Yapı is a company with 17 years of experience in construction, operating in the markets of Türkiye and Kazakhstan. Its head office is located in Istanbul and its regional office in the city of Turkistan in Kazakhstan [4]. The company carries out full-cycle construction on turnkey terms, as well as structural and finishing works. According to official data, the workforce comprises 780 employees, 18 major projects have been completed and services have been provided to approximately 120 clients [2]. The company's declared mission is to create safe, aesthetic and functional living spaces on the basis of quality materials and a skilled workforce [1; 2]. The main indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Main indicators of BBR Yapı

Indicator	Value	Comment
Experience in the field	17 years	continuous activity on international projects
Size of the workforce	780 employees	experienced engineering and technical staff
Major completed projects	18	hotel, residential, retail and infrastructure facilities

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Indicator	Value	Comment
Number of clients	≈120	high share of repeat orders
Geography of operations	Türkiye, Kazakhstan and other countries	Istanbul and Turkistan offices
Main types of service	turnkey delivery; structural works; finishing works	full-cycle contracting model

The company's project portfolio gives an idea of its technical capacity: it includes the Karvonsaroy complex and residential phases in Turkistan, a resort hotel, a theme park and a city centre in Aktau, the Fairmont, St. Regis and Talan Towers hotels, a centre of culture and spirituality, an airport terminal and large retail complexes [3]. Carrying out such diverse projects simultaneously in different countries requires a high level of coordination capability from management (Table 2).

Table 2

Classification of the company's projects by type

Type of project	Examples of facilities	Characteristics from the management standpoint
Hotel complexes	Fairmont, St. Regis, Talan Towers, the Aktau resort hotel	the highest demands on finishing quality; a large number of specialised brigades
Residential complexes	Karvonsaroy residential buildings, phases 1 and 2	large volume and strict deadlines; high density of the workforce
Cultural and social facilities	centre of culture and spirituality, care centre	non-standard architectural solutions; an individual approach
Retail and business facilities	city centre, retail complex, business centre	complexity of the engineering networks
Infrastructure facilities	airport terminal	the highest level of safety requirements

2. The practice of uniting a multinational workforce. The most striking feature of the company's sites is the multi-ethnic composition of the workforce. Representatives of different countries and peoples work side by side on a single site. In theory, such diversity may produce two different outcomes: it may turn into communication barriers and intergroup tension, or it may create an additional resource through the combination of different experiences and skills. As G. Hofstede emphasised in his research on cross-cultural management, the outcome is determined not by the cultural difference itself but by the way it is managed [6].

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Observations showed that in this company the task is solved through practical and simple means. First, work instructions are always precise, demonstrative and given in the simplest possible language; instead of a complex explanation the manager often demonstrates the work directly, which is the most reliable way of overcoming the language difference. Second, when brigades are formed the criterion is professional qualification and experience rather than nationality; as a result, what takes shape in the workforce is not a boundary between "ours" and "theirs" but a master–apprentice relationship. Third, the common goal — delivering the project on time and to the required quality — is formulated identically for everyone, and therefore the achievement of the final result is perceived by every worker as a shared victory [5].

A particularly noteworthy aspect is the respectful attitude towards the everyday customs and religious practices of representatives of different nationalities. Simple signs of consideration relating to meal arrangements, rest periods and holidays create in the employee the feeling of being an equal member of the team. In the terminology of A. Edmondson, this is an environment of psychological safety: the employee is not afraid to ask a question, to make a mistake or to express an opinion, and as a result problems are not concealed but resolved in good time [7].

3. The manager's presence on site. The core of the company's management style is formed by a single practical principle: the place where the manager takes decisions is not the office but the work site. On cold winter nights, during concrete pouring or when urgent works are being carried out, managers have been observed standing alongside the workers, monitoring the process, giving instructions and providing encouragement [5]. Such practice has a well-known name in management theory: in Japanese management it is called the gemba principle, that is, the principle of "the place where value is created". As M. Imai emphasised, a problem can be seen in its true form only on site; the impression obtained from a report is always partial [8].

The manager's presence on site produces three kinds of result. The first is technological: decisions are taken promptly and an error is stopped before it turns into a chain. The second is psychological: the employee feels that their work is visible and has not been left unnoticed. The third is cultural: the conditions endured by the manager are perceived by the worker as fair conditions as well, because hardship is shared equally. In transformational leadership as defined by B. Bass and R. Riggio, this corresponds to the component of "idealised influence": the manager sets an example through their own conduct and turns following them from an obligation into a voluntary choice [9].

4. Attention to the health and family circumstances of the employee. Construction is a field with a high level of physical strain and risk. As emphasised in the International Labour Organization's code of practice on safety and health in construction, a safety culture is not merely a set of technical measures but an everyday practice of management [10]. Observations showed that in the company any circumstance related to an employee's health — illness, injury or signs of fatigue — is not left unattended: where necessary the work schedule is revised, medical assistance is arranged and heavy physical loads are temporarily eased [5].

The same attitude applies to family situations. A significant event in an employee's family — illness, a birth, bereavement or another necessity — is treated by management as a personal matter, assistance is provided as far as possible and the question of leave is resolved. This practice also has an economic logic: in construction, losing a skilled worker costs more than the expense of finding a new one, training them and adapting them to the conditions of the site. A human attitude towards the employee is therefore at the same time a rational economic strategy for the enterprise.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

From the standpoint of A. Maslow's theory, such practice brings the lower levels of the hierarchy of needs — physiological needs and the need for safety — into a stably satisfied state, which creates the basis for the activation of the higher-level needs for recognition and self-realisation [11]. In the terms of F. Herzberg, working conditions and the attitude shown are "hygiene factors": unless they are well organised, no incentive will work [12].

5. The system of incentives and motivation. The main feature of the incentive practice observed is its promptness and precision. Recognition for work well done is not postponed until the end of the month but is expressed on the same day, often in front of the whole brigade. Material incentives are applied together with recognition. Psychologically this is extremely important: as W. Kahn showed, an employee's engagement with work is formed precisely through the feeling that their labour is seen and valued [13].

The second feature is the balance between the collective and individual forms of recognition. When an important stage of a project is completed, the result is acknowledged as an achievement of the whole team; at the same time, an employee who has particularly distinguished themselves is rewarded personally. This balance is especially important in a multinational workforce, because on the one hand it unites people around a common goal and on the other it prevents an individual contribution from remaining invisible. The five main management practices and their outcomes are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3

Management practices observed in the company and their outcomes

Practice	**How it is manifested**	**Outcome for the employee**	**Outcome for the enterprise**
The manager's presence on site	monitoring the process side by side with workers, including on cold nights	a sense of consideration and fairness	promptness of decisions; early detection of errors
Management of cultural diversity	brigades formed by qualification; respect for customs	a sense of belonging to the team	reduction of intergroup conflicts
Attention to health	adjustment of the work schedule; medical assistance	satisfaction of the need for safety	reduction of injuries and lost working time
Attention to family circumstances	leave and support where necessary	trust and gratitude	reduction of staff turnover
Prompt recognition	acknowledgement on the same day, in front of the team	the sense that one's work is valued	growth of labour productivity and quality

Source: compiled on the basis of the author's direct observations [5].

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

6. Theoretical interpretation of the practice. An important aspect of the practices observed is that they operate not separately but as a single system and are consistent with the fundamental propositions of modern management theories (Table 4). This consistency is not accidental: the classical theories were themselves formed as a generalisation of practice, and therefore a well-managed enterprise reproduces them in practice even without having studied them.

Table 4

Correspondence of the observed practices to management theories

Practice	Corresponding theoretical proposition	Source
The manager's participation on site	the gemba principle: decisions are taken where value is created	[8]
The manager's personal example	the "idealised influence" component of transformational leadership	[9]
An environment of expressing opinions and speaking openly about mistakes	the concept of psychological safety	[7]
Attention to health and working conditions	the lower levels of the hierarchy of needs; hygiene factors	[11]; [12]
Prompt recognition and incentives	the conditions of employee engagement	[13]
Management of cultural differences	the cross-cultural management approach	[6]
The everyday practice of a safety culture	the requirements of the code of practice on safety and health in construction	[10]

Source: developed by the author.

7. Practical recommendations arising from the experience. The practice observed can be brought into a form that is reproducible for other construction enterprises as well. The first recommendation is to turn the manager's presence on site from an occasional occurrence into a regular practice: for example, to include in the work schedule the manager's personal participation at the start of every shift and at the most critical technological stages. This measure requires no additional expenditure, yet it significantly increases the speed of decisions and the employees' sense of being noticed.

The second recommendation is to reduce the communication barrier within a multinational workforce. For this purpose it is sufficient to set out the principal instructions on occupational safety and the technological process in visual form — through drawings, signs and short phrases — in the languages most widely spoken in the workforce. The practice of designating a bilingual employee in each brigade as an informal coordinator also produces good results.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

The third recommendation is to turn a human attitude into a system. A clear and simple procedure should be established for requests relating to an employee's health and family circumstances, while incentives should be linked to measurable criteria (quality, deadlines, compliance with safety rules). In that case humanity ceases to be the personal quality of an individual manager and becomes a stable management standard of the enterprise, one that is preserved even when the manager changes.

Discussion

The analysis presented leads to several generalisations. First, human-centred management is not an additional cost but a resource of production. In construction, labour productivity depends directly on the physical condition, attention and mood of the worker; therefore every unit of time spent on showing consideration to the employee returns in the indicators of quality and deadlines. This dependence is especially evident on time-critical and complex projects.

Second, a multinational workforce is not a difficulty for management but an opportunity. When schools of labour, technical approaches and practical skills formed in different countries come together on a single site, they complement one another. There is only one condition for this: the criterion of assessment must be the result of the work and not nationality. The company's practice shows that the consistent fulfilment of this condition creates in the workforce an atmosphere of cooperation rather than rivalry.

Third, the manager's presence on site is the most visible and at the same time the most influential element of the management style. Its value does not lie in technical supervision alone: sharing the same conditions as the manager creates in the worker a sense of fairness, and that sense of fairness is the most reliable internal source of labour discipline. This aspect acquires particular importance in construction, that is, in a field where the possibility of external supervision is limited and the result depends on the conscientiousness of every worker.

Fourth, the limitation of the study must be emphasised separately. The conclusions rest on qualitative observation and are not confirmed by quantitative indicators such as the staff turnover rate, injury statistics or the dynamics of labour productivity. In future research it would be appropriate to involve these indicators and to make the assessment more objective by conducting an anonymous survey among employees.

Conclusion

1. With 17 years of experience, a workforce of 780 people and 18 major completed projects, BBR Yapı has taken shape as an enterprise operating stably in the international construction market; its technical results are inseparably linked to its management culture.

2. Five principles of human-centred management were identified in the company's practice: the manager's presence on site; the acceptance of cultural diversity as a resource; the treatment of the employee as a person; the everyday priority of occupational safety; and the promptness and openness of recognition.

3. These principles are fully consistent with modern management theories — the gemba approach, transformational leadership, the concept of psychological safety and the theories of motivation — which shows that they are systematic rather than accidental in character.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

4. The main conditions for uniting a multinational workforce are a single criterion of assessment, namely the application of the result of the work, and respect for the cultural identity of every employee. It is precisely these two conditions together that create an atmosphere of trust in the workforce.

5. The company's experience is of practical significance for other construction enterprises in the region: a system of human relations and prompt recognition makes it possible to improve staff stability, occupational safety and final quality indicators without requiring substantial additional expenditure.

References

1. BBR Yapı: official website. Home page. – URL: https://www.bbryapi.com/
2. Hakkımızda // BBR Yapı: official website. – URL: https://www.bbryapi.com/hakkimizda/
3. Projeler // BBR Yapı: official website. – URL: https://www.bbryapi.com/projeler/
4. İletişim // BBR Yapı: official website. – URL: https://www.bbryapi.com/iletisim/
5. The author's direct observations during more than a year of work at the company's sites (field observation materials).
6. Hofstede G. Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations. 2nd ed. – Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001. – 596 p.
7. Edmondson A.C. Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams // Administrative Science Quarterly. – 1999. – Vol. 44, № 2. – P. 350–383.
8. Imai M. Gemba Kaizen: A Commonsense Approach to a Continuous Improvement Strategy. 2nd ed. – New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012. – 426 p.
9. Bass B.M., Riggio R.E. Transformational Leadership. 2nd ed. – Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006. – 282 p.
10. Safety and Health in Construction: an ILO code of practice. – Geneva: International Labour Office, 1992. – 130 p.
11. Maslow A.H. A Theory of Human Motivation // Psychological Review. – 1943. – Vol. 50, № 4. – P. 370–396.
12. Herzberg F. One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees? // Harvard Business Review. – 1968. – Vol. 46, № 1. – P. 53–62.
13. Kahn W.A. Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work // Academy of Management Journal. – 1990. – Vol. 33, № 4. – P. 692–724.