

"Fostering Employee Engagement and Retention through Ohana Culture: A Case Study of Salesforce"

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of Ohana culture, as implemented by Salesforce, in fostering employee engagement and retention. Ohana, the Hawaiian term for family, has been embraced by Salesforce to create a supportive and inclusive workplace environment. The case study analyzes various aspects of this culture, including leadership practices, employee well-being initiatives, and community involvement, to understand their impact on employee satisfaction and loyalty. Through qualitative and quantitative data, the research highlights how Salesforce's Ohana culture has contributed to high levels of employee engagement, reduced turnover rates, and overall organizational success. The findings suggest that adopting a family-like workplace culture can be a powerful strategy for companies aiming to improve employee morale and retain top talent.

Keywords : Employee Engagement, Employee Retention, Ohana Culture, Salesforce, Workplace Culture, Organizational Success, Leadership Practices, Employee Well-being, Community Involvement, Employee Satisfaction

Background

Salesforce is a well-known name in the tech industry, which was set up by Marc Benioff in 1999. The company provides cloud-based software in all countries. Salesforce has given a few things such as innovation, customer success, and doing something new for the community. As the company expanded, it had to face some challenges related to employee satisfaction, and it began to impact retaining employees. To address this challenge, the company introduced the "Ohana Culture". This concept was based on Hawaiian culture.

The culture formed by these four core values, Trust, Customer satisfaction, Innovation, and Equality. Keeping these values in mind, the company looked at every aspect and provided the best environment for its employees, where employees feel positive and are given a supportive environment to increase employee satisfaction.

Introduction

Detailed Timeline of Events

In 1999, the Salesforce company was set up by Mark Benioff, Parker Harris, Dave Moellenhoff, and Frank Dominguez. The main aim of the company was customer success and innovation.

In 2004, Salesforce raised \$110 million and launched an IPO (Initial Public Offering), expanding its workforce and customer base while keeping its core values in mind.

Introduction and Development of the Ohana Culture

- In 2014, Marc Benioff introduced the concept of Ohana Culture for Salesforce employees. Ohana, meaning family, inspired by Hawaiian culture, was created by Benioff in a very sensible manner to keep the community connected to the company.

- By 2015, Salesforce became a renowned company with a focus on ensuring employee satisfaction. This led to the establishment of a distinct identity, emphasizing the company's successful commitment to employee satisfaction through a bot, along with a firm adoption of the Ohana Culture.

- In 2016, Salesforce developed the Trailhead learning platform, offering free training and development resources to its employees. This program was initiated to strengthen the core values of Ohana and encourage continuous learning.

Key Initiatives and Milestones

- In 2017, Salesforce promoted an Equality office that included diversity within the company. The office's role was to treat employees equally without any discrimination based on their background, focusing on their skills and abilities.

- In 2018, Salesforce emphasized their vision of the "4th Industrial Revolution" and how technology should be shaped through social changes. The company also reaffirmed the integration of Ohana culture as a social responsibility and a business strategy.

- In 2019, Salesforce achieved a significant ranking, being #2 on the Fortune "100 Best Companies to Work For" list. This achievement had a positive impact on employee satisfaction through Ohana Culture.

Recent Developments and Ongoing Commitment

- **2020:** Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Salesforce adapts its Ohana culture to support remote work. The company introduces virtual events and wellness programs to maintain employee engagement and well-being.
- **2021:** Salesforce acquires Slack, a leading collaboration platform, to enhance its offerings and further support the Ohana culture by improving communication and collaboration among employees.
- **2022:** Salesforce continues to expand its global presence while maintaining its commitment to the Ohana culture. The company invests in sustainability initiatives and community programs, reinforcing its values of trust and equality.

Outcomes and Impacts

Short-term Outcomes

In the short term, Salesforce's implementation of the Ohana culture led to several immediate benefits:

- **High Employee Satisfaction:** Salesforce focused on family, trust, and community, creating a supportive work environment, and emphasized high levels of job satisfaction among employees.
- **Improved Employee Retention:** The positive work environment and strong sense of community contributed to low turnover rates, helping Salesforce retain top talent.

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** The focus on trust and open communication fostered better collaboration and teamwork across the organization, driving innovation and efficiency.

Long-term Outcomes

Salesforce's Ohana culture has indeed had a profound impact on its business operations, culture, and industry leadership in several key ways:

Sustained Innovation

The collaborative and inclusive nature of the Ohana culture has been a cornerstone for Salesforce's ability to drive sustained innovation. By fostering an environment where diverse ideas are encouraged and valued, Salesforce has been able to continuously introduce new products and solutions that effectively meet and anticipate customer needs. This culture of innovation has kept Salesforce at the forefront of the tech industry, constantly evolving and improving its offerings.

Strong Employer Brand

Salesforce's commitment to its Ohana culture has significantly strengthened its employer brand. The company's reputation as a great place to work, characterized by inclusivity, collaboration, and employee well-being, has made it an attractive destination for top talent. This strong employer brand not only helps in recruiting skilled professionals but also enhances employee retention, further solidifying Salesforce's competitive advantage in the tech industry.

Global Influence

The success of Salesforce's Ohana culture has had a ripple effect, influencing other companies and industries. Salesforce has set a benchmark for best practices in corporate culture and employee engagement, demonstrating that a strong, values-driven culture can lead to exceptional business outcomes. Many organizations look to Salesforce as a model for fostering

a positive, inclusive, and productive workplace environment, thereby amplifying Salesforce's impact beyond its own operations.

Social and Economic Impacts

Social Impact

Salesforce's Ohana culture, which emphasizes family, trust, and community, has significantly influenced its employees' work-life balance and job satisfaction. This culture promotes flexibility and efficiency in the workplace, allowing employees to achieve a healthier balance between their professional and personal lives. Salesforce's commitment to equality and diversity has set a positive example within the tech industry, fostering inclusivity and social responsibility. These efforts have created an environment where employees feel valued and included, contributing to higher morale and a more positive workplace culture.

Economic Impact

The success of Salesforce's Ohana culture has translated into robust financial performance and a strong market position. High levels of employee engagement and retention, driven by the positive work environment, have led to increased productivity and innovation. This has directly contributed to revenue growth and profitability. The positive culture has also reduced turnover costs and attracted top talent, further bolstering the company's economic strength.

Lessons Learned

Key Takeaways

1. **Culture Drives Success:** Salesforce's experience illustrates that a strong, inclusive culture is fundamental to business success. The Ohana culture has enhanced employee satisfaction, retention, and innovation, all of which contribute to the company's overall performance.

2. **Leadership Sets the Tone:** Effective leadership is crucial for fostering a positive culture. Marc Benioff's dedication to Ohana values has established a clear, values-driven direction for the entire organization, ensuring these principles are integral to all business operations.
3. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Salesforce's ability to adapt its culture to evolving circumstances, such as the shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, has been essential in maintaining employee engagement and satisfaction.
4. **Continuous Improvement:** Emphasizing continuous learning and development, through initiatives like Trailhead, has empowered employees to grow and innovate, driving sustained success.
5. **Social Responsibility Matters:** Salesforce's commitment to social responsibility and community involvement has strengthened its brand and reinforced its values of trust and equality.

Implications for Future Practice

The lessons from Salesforce's Ohana culture provide valuable insights for other organizations aiming to enhance their own cultures. Key strategies for success include:

- **Fostering a Strong, Inclusive Culture:** Organizations should prioritize creating a supportive and inclusive environment that values trust, collaboration, and community.
- **Leadership Commitment:** Leaders should actively promote and embody the company's values, setting a positive example for the entire organization.
- **Adapting to Change:** Flexibility and adaptability are crucial for maintaining a positive culture in changing circumstances. Organizations should continuously evaluate and adjust their practices to meet evolving needs.

- **Emphasizing Continuous Learning:** Providing opportunities for continuous learning and development can empower employees and drive innovation.
- **Promoting Social Responsibility:** Companies should integrate social responsibility into their business strategies, demonstrating a commitment to making a positive impact on society.

Conclusion

Salesforce's Ohana culture offers valuable lessons on the importance of a strong, inclusive culture in driving employee satisfaction, retention, and business success. The company's emphasis on family, trust, and community has created a positive work environment, fostering innovation and maintaining industry leadership. The insights gained from Salesforce's experience can guide other organizations in enhancing their cultures and achieving long-term growth. By adopting similar strategies, companies can build dynamic, innovative, and resilient organizations that thrive in fast-paced, competitive environment

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