



FOUR SEASONS

Hotels and Resorts



01

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR CASE STUDY

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INDEX

- Goal Setting
- Planning and Research
- Design and Development
- Release
- Tracking and Analytics

Introduction

- Four Seasons is a hotel chain operating in 48 countries with 119 hotel resorts and 45 residential properties.
- It was founded by Isadore Sharp in 1960 in Canada and has revolutionized the concept of luxury service.
- He proved to be a great visionary and entrepreneur in the hotel industry and immediately in 1970 came the second opening, this time in London in the area of Hyde Park.



"There has always been a consistent thread and it propels us forward today, as we continue to grow globally, and that's service"

Isadore Sharp



- After the great success of London in 1972, the hotel chain Four Seasons presented one of its biggest projects of the time. It is a large conference center with 1600 rooms located in Toronto.
- The expansion of the hotel chain continued for years, in 1990 Four Seasons could count about 23 hotels divided into three countries.
- In 1992, Four Seasons has been considered the world leader but the biggest success came in 1994 when Saudi Prince Bin Talal bought 25% of the shares. Thanks to the Saudi prince, the hotel chain obtained the necessary funding to expand worldwide.
- Four Seasons, in recent years, has begun to expand into new niches.

KEY POINTS FOR SUCCESS



Service



Quality



Organizational Culture



MISSION

“ [...] We create properties of enduring value using superior design and finishes, and support them with a deeply instilled ethic of personal service.”



VISION

“[...] we believe our purpose is to create impressions that will stay with you for a lifetime. It comes from our belief that life is richer when we truly connect to the people and the world around us.”



VALUES

“Treat others as we wish to be treated”.



Isadore Sharp's golden rule transmitted to the employees.

- The real luxury value they offer is the service offered by their employees, as the success of the organization depends on them.
- Since the beginning, it was recognized the great importance of the employees: that is why they are the center of the organizational culture. Every employee, from the porter to the receptionists, must feel included in it.
- For this reason, managers tried to create an environment where employees feel comfortable, listened and part of a big family. They were implemented different strategies to align company's and employee's objectives. Some of them are public knowledge, but some of them are part of a professional secrets.
- Isadore Sharp has succeeded in creating a community where client and employees belong. A community where people share vision, mission and values of F.S. creating a loyalty towards the hotel chain and a sort of psychological contract.
- The internal interaction is supportive, friendly, participative. What encourages this is the collaborative and trustfully relation between manager and members of their teams.

Here it can be noticed importance that is given at F.S. to some areas considered essential for the evaluation of the effectiveness of culture such as customer orientation and employee orientation.



Leadership

Leaders at F.S. are those who most influence the behavior of employees and are the spokespersons of the culture, as they must transmit it and teach it to everyone.

They support the culture of the organization by making everyone understand that it is based on offering excellent service, (an aspect that cannot be overlooked).

At F.S. It is unacceptable for leaders to ignore a behavior that is inconsistent with culture and in these cases they try to remind employees about the importance of the company's mission, vision and values rather than opting for severe measures. By doing so they create an environment in which the employees are more focused on the task and give less space to the fear of making mistakes.

Supervision is so central that even those at the bottom of the organization chart have the task of making sure that no wrong messages are sent. This suggests that in the leadership of F.S. there is a high power distance index (Hofstede) as it is not a culture in which employees in the lower categories seek continuous approval from managers.

Emotional Intelligence

Long before the term emotional intelligence was coined, Mr I. Sharp, the founder and the president of FS, understood that an empathetic and self-aware employees would build a sustainable competitive advantage in an extremely competitive industry.

Nowadays customers are looking for connections with businesses, and the best way to deliver an authentic customer experience is to rely on emotionally intelligent employees.

Companies must have a purpose beyond financial goals, and a comfortable working environment that brings out the best of people.

In 2019, F.S, together with Harvard Business Review Analytic Service, presented a study concerning the importance of the emotional intelligence in business. In this study is affirmed that if a business doesn't build its organizational culture around emotional intelligence, it will have great difficulties in hiring young and talented employees. Emotional Intelligence concerns attention, mental health, creativity, self-awareness, communication skills and attitudes to challenges. Indeed, ignoring E.I. has a serious impact on human capital and future successes.

Four Seasons relies a lot on the great importance of emotional intelligence as a source of happier, motivated and efficient employees and on its employees as a resource itself

Four Seasons goes to Paris

An important global case study about the adaptation of the company to a new social and cultural context without overturn their organizational culture.

- **PROBLEM:** French employees were too inflexible and not very empathic. For this reason, there were difficulties in the application of the company's golden rule. Also, the American management style was being perceived as too imposing.
- **SOLUTION:** Appointment of a new general director with 25 years of experience in the sector and a team of 35 experts to train the new employees and convey the company ideals. The solution also included the involvement of the staff in the creation of the organizational culture that didn't had to change but simply incorporate new elements.

There was the need to make Employees feel understood and comfortable with the organizational culture and that is why it is essential to opt for flexible management as these are people who have a different background, creed and language and only the awareness and acceptance of all this will lead the new team to the need of identifying with the organizational culture and actively participate to ensure that the objectives are achieved.

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