Green Human Resource Management: An Organisational Strategy for Greening Employees

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Abstract

Global warming is a reality. Organisations realise their corporate responsibility to conduct their business with the 'future' in mind. Further, organisations realise that going green is a smart organisational strategy (Mandip, 2012). Sustainability is having a green conscience and ensuring the steps you take today do not have a negative impact on the future. Green Human Resources Management is to promote the sustainable use of resources within business organisations (Mandip, 2012). The aim of this research is to provide an organisation, with a green human resource management strategy (GHRM). A qualitative research approach was followed and five participants interviewed. The researcher followed this approach to gain an in-depth understanding of business eco-friendly practices, and to ascertain if the organisation utilises human resources to drive "green" in the organisation to engage employees. The study found that most organisations have implemented some eco-friendly practice and know the value of becoming a 'green' employer. However, the researcher identified a significant gap in that organisations are not aware of through a lack of knowledge how to utilise human resource practices to obtain staff engagement in green policies and procedure. The researcher has developed various ideas and recommendations to business on how human resource practices can be utilised to go green and engage staff. An example of a key recommendation would be to ensure the employer make themselves known to the public and future employees as a green employer. This is a strategic move and can be accomplished by taking part in green initiatives in the community, hosting green workshops, confirming green involvement on the company website and recruiting employees that are already environmental conscience.
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1. Introduction

Deshwal (2015) states that organisations realise that their focus can no longer just be on financial profits. Global warming is a reality, and therefore all organisations need to focus on their carbon footprint and sustainability. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is an emerging universal concept. The implementation of GHRM will assist organisations to adopt environmental strategies, policies and programme, and support their "go green" philosophy.

1.1.   Organisational Context

A beautiful boutique vineyard is nestled among 30 acres of native bush and rolling vineyard. This Estate was established in the legacy of the philanthropic founders with a culture built around integrity, respect and sustainable environmental business practices. The Estate also has connections with a tertiary institute which aims to continue the innovative spirit. The programme provides a unique learning experience for students to be immersed in a fully operational winery.

The vineyard is a boutique wedding venue that can accommodate up to 150 guests with an outdoor wedding venue option as well as an indoor (wet weather) option. The organisation structure is shown in figure 1.

Employees working at the vineyard are a very close cohesive team with family values, and a 'go get' attitude. The vineyard currently employs five full-time employees. They are the owner acting as manager, the head chef, events manager, cellar door manager and the accountant. Under each section heads are part-time or casual employees. The amount of support staff under each manager will be different form season to season, function to function. It all depends on how big the booking is, how many guests are being catered for. There is a list of casual employees who received vineyard training and they are scheduled a month in advance according to the bookings. As this is a 'seasonal' industry, support staff are employed on a casual basis. The business is at its busiest in spring up to autumn, with substantially less bookings for the winter season. The business strategy is to make the bridal parties dream come true by doing everything in their power to deliver the day envisioned by their guests.
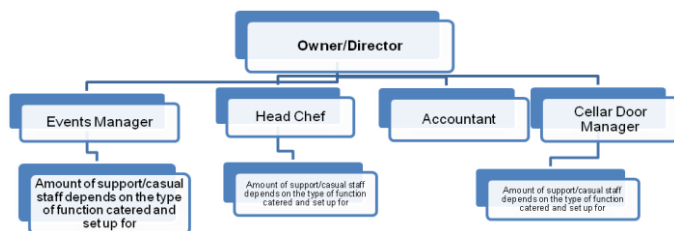

Figure 1 - Organisational Structure of the vineyard

The vineyard currently implements green practices in the form of recycling, worm farms, a compost heap as well as encouraging staff to make use of the coffee machine and mugs provided, instead of buying coffee. They are as a hospitality industry, sensitive to food waste and try to prevent wastage in their planning and preparation the meals. The Vineyard also, where possible make use of suppliers that are green businesses and would always opt for free-range products.

1.2.   Literature Review

1.2.1 Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

Mandip (2012) explains the implementation of green human resource management policies into an organisation. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is to promote the sustainable use of resources within business organisations and, more specifically, support the cause of environmental sustainability. Human Resources should drive and promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness regarding the organisations' green strategy (Mandip, 2012). The key aspect is 'greening' your employees to buy into the green path forward and ensure employees are engaged and committed to issues of sustainability. Murai (2014) emphasise the key responsibilities of Green Human Resource Management are creating a green workforce that appreciates, understands, and practices green initiatives. Recruitment, hiring, induction, learning & development and performance management are some of the crucial areas where Green Human Resource Management should be implemented (Boston, 2006).

1.2.2 Sustainability

Mandip (2012) advocates that more companies need to realise their corporate responsibility to conduct their business with the "future" in mind. Sustainability is having a green conscience and ensuring that the steps you take today, in operating your organisation, do not negatively impact on the future needs of others. Companies need to focus on the development and implementation of green policies and procedures as part of their organisational strategy (Mandip, 2012).

1.2.3 Creating a Green Workplace

A range of green activities can be implemented by HR to set the trend of the new 'green organisational strategy'. It is also important

for employees to see that key stakeholders are taking the lead (Deshwal, 2015).

Paper Usage

A paperless office is the way forward with polices included in the Green Human Resource Strategy, to guide employees when printing (Jacobs, 2012). Manuals and similar documents should be made available online through a staff intranet system. If printing is necessary, the use of eco-friendly paper with a higher post-consumer recycled content is desirable, with paper recycle boxes at all printing stations.

Conservation of energy

Conservation of energy in the organisation must be a focus (Costantion, 2009). Eco-friendly initiatives to conserve energy, such as making use of natural light, installing timers or motion sensors for lights, tuning air pumps and computers off when leaving a room for an extended period, will all assist in saving energy. Installing energy saving light bulbs throughout the building is also a must when going 'green' (Jacobs, 2012).

Eco-friendly fixtures & Healthy Office Environment

All office furniture and supplies should be from recycled material. The use of nontoxic cleaning products and the placement of indoor plants to absorb pollution, to create a healthy office environment (Meduna, 2015). Features of a green building include minimal disturbance to the landscape, the use of environmentally friendly and recycled building material and non-toxic material. Organisations can also make use of renewable energy, efficiently use water cycling and ensure they make use of eco-friendly office equipment (Shaikh, 2010).

Travel by Management

All organisations should develop a green travel and transport policy. The policy could, for example, stipulate all future company vehicles be hybrids, restricting where possible managerial travelling to clients, focusing on telecommuting instead of travelling, and encouraging management and staff to make use of bicycles, carpooling or public transport to restrict their travelling carbon footprint (Robinson,2015). Using these strategies management will give clear messages and set the trend that they are serious about their green policies. Going green is all about a culture shift, and the lead taken by management will make a significant difference to staff buy-in for green policies and procedures.

Recycling & waste disposal

A Green Human Resource Management strategy can also include the implementation of recycling programs as part of their green initiatives (Costantino, 2009). It is essential to clearly communicate to staff how the recycling will work and have appropriate systems in place. The recycling expectation of employees, can be reinforced by the introduction of 'reuse, reduce, recycle' workshops and practical activities to get staff involved (Costantino, 2009).

1.2.4 Staff Buy-In

Green Recruitment & Talent Management

The importance of ensuring sustainable development issues must be integrated into the recruitment process (Mandip, 2012). The recruitment process should be used wisely and as the first part of your strategy to obtain the right type of 'green' employee for an organisation. Environmental aspects should be included in the job description, and the interview questions tailored to determine potential compatibility with the organisation's green vision. The recruitment stage can be utilised to brand your organisation as a green employer, to attract potential suitable recruits (Meily & Susanti, 2013).

Gaining a reputation as a green employer is also an efficient way to attract new talent (Jacobs, 2012). Recruiting candidates who are passionate about going 'green' is also desirable. . Passionate 'green' employees will ensure a more natural induction process into the organisation's green policies (Murai, 2014).

Green Induction

A comprehensive orientation and induction program for newly hired employees is essential. Greening your staff starts here (Mandip, 2012). The green policies, procedures and implementation need to be introduced as part of the standard induction checklist (Meily & Susanti, 2013).

Employee orientation programs need to be designed in a way that integrates new employees into a culture of green consciousness. The green induction program would highlight the organisation's concern for green issues and green working conditions (Deshwal, 2015).

Green Performance Management System (GPM)

As part of Green Human Resource Management, performance management systems

should include 'green' targets in the key performance areas (KPI's) (Deshwal, 2015). Green performance management should consist of the organisation's environmental policies and expectation of their employees regarding their environmental responsibilities (Meduna, 2015).

Employees should be held accountable for their carbon emission and be able to track and measure their carbon footprint (Mandip, 2012). The job description should include and specify the green goals and the tasks of the employee. This will tie the performance evaluation to the job description in an effective way (James, 2017). The Human Resource department should also lead by example, ensuring they use where possible electronic HR systems. This will assist management and employees to track their own carbon footprints. Communication with employees should be clear on what the green schemes are in the organisations. Managers should set green targets, goals and responsibilities for their departments and immediate staff. The role of the manager is crucial in achieving the desired green outcomes in the performance appraisals of staff. As always, the manager should set the example and motivate their team to commit to the policies and procedures. The performance appraisal should assess some green incidents such as the use of the environment to perform your job (environmental job analysis), and the environmental responsibility of the staff member (Mandip, 2012).

Green Learning & Development

An essential for environmental issues to be included in the learning and development programmes (Mandip, 2012). It is crucial for employees to know how to conduct a waste analysis of their work area. Green learning and development should include methods on how to conserve energy, reduce waste, and diffuse environmental awareness within the organisation (Goddard, 2007). Another positive initiative is to establish 'green' teams in each department as well as job rotation. Those members will be valuable in motivating their teams, keeping track of the team's adherence to green policies and setting a positive trend in each department (Susanti, 2013). Management should again lead by example during training, and ensure they take advantage of online and web-based training rather than to print handouts. Case studies are a useful tool, to demonstrate to employees the benefits of going green and interactive fun workshops is ideal to enable employees to develop their knowledge on

environmental issues and ensure staff are engaged (Deshwal, 2015).

Green Employee Involvement & Participation

An integral part of getting staff 'buy-in', is for the Green Human Resource team to ensure employees are engaged and feel involved with the 'green' initiative (Constatino, 2009). Green Human Resource Management should encourage employee involvement and participation as it will create socially and ecologically orientated employees. An easy way to obtain green employee engagement is to encourage staff to take part in green and company social responsibility projects. Employees should be able to share and suggest eco-friendly ideas, and in doing so a culture is created in which employees know they have an impact on the decision and actions that affect their jobs (Susanti, 2013). Organisations should allow company time wherein employees are free to attend tree planting days or cleaning up beaches (Dickens, 2017). Increasing managerial and supervisory support and introducing an environmental helpline would increase employee participation (Portland State University, 2014).

Green Compensation & Rewards

It is a smart strategy to reward employees who support the environmental activities in the organisation (Jacobs, 2012). Rewarding employees for their positive green actions could motivate other employees to get on board with the 'green' initiatives and environmental management programs (Murai, 2014). However, Mandip (2012) states that going green is a culture change. Employees that get on board with the green initiates feel proud of what they achieve and the changes they make. Very often for these employees, recognition is the reward in itself. For other employees that still needs some reward, it is suggested awarding them with a dinner voucher or an afternoon off. Having a 'green employee of the month' award will instil a competitive attitude amongst employees, and it will get everyone involved in a fun way (Mandip, 2012).

2. Method

2.1.   Interviews

A qualitative approach was followed when collecting primary data. An advantage of qualitative

research is the use of interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, which allowed for the participants to share their stories and provide more information on the topic. It also allowed the interviewer to ask follow-up questions which led to discussions around the topic and research question and aim. Interviews provide an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions and trends organisations have regarding 'green', and this was shared during the interviews.

The chosen method of collection was interviews. Interviews were used to gain an in-depth understanding of business eco-friendly practices and to ascertain if they utilise HR to drive "green" in the organisation and engage employees.

Five participants were selected by the researcher. Two of the participants were related to the business where the researcher had work placement. The other participants were in the hospitality industry, and an organisation that provided a service or product that is eco-friendly. The participants were interviewed by the researcher. The interview consisted of seven interview questions.

2.2. Research Process & Analysis

Before primary data collection, the researcher had a meeting with the participants to explain the aim or the research, and to find out if they would be willing to partake in the interview process. No formal interview was held at this stage, and no data was collected. After the participants agreed, a consent form was signed by the participants. After, ethics approval the researcher set up interview times with the participants. A face time interview was held with two of the participants, and they also confirmed and elaborated on their answers via e-mail. The other participants were interviewed at their workplace and confirmation of the interview answers were emailed to the researcher for ease of reference.

The data was analysed by creating an Excel spreadsheet with each question. A thematic analysis was followed to obtain similar themes and to identify common 'green' trends in the different organisations.

3. Results & Discussion

The results indicated some knowledge of GHRM as shown in figure 2. Results from respondents indicated that:

➢ Organisations implement some eco-friendly practices in their organisations,

➢ Management realises the importance and value of becoming a green employer;

➢ Organisations are not sure how to engage their staff in their green practises and procedures; and

➢ Management is not aware or not confident how to utilise their human resource practices to engage staff in their green policies and procedures
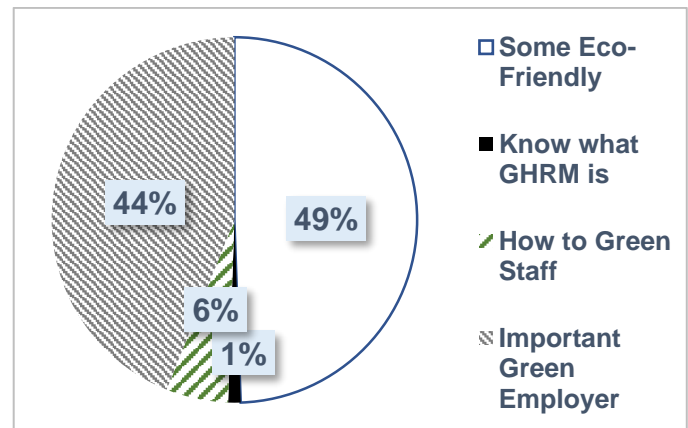

Figure 2. Organisation Content

Interviewees were asked questions to ascertain organisational content of the business and to identify what environmentally friendly product they produce or what eco-friendly systems they have implemented to have a sustainable green, eco-friendly organisation. The aim of the interview questions was to try and establish similar themes of what green business practises and strategies exist. Some of the themes suggested by the participants were confirmed as green initiates. Some of these similar themes are paper usage, eco-friendly travel options, conservation of energy in the organisation, and waste management (recycle).

The following are similar green practices implemented by the participants. These themes were also supported by the literature.
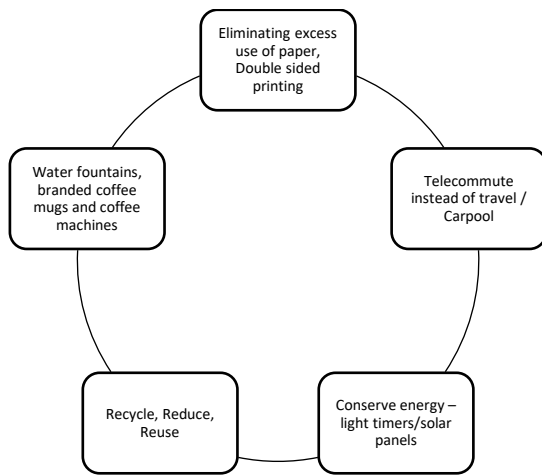
Figure 3. Similar Green Initiatives Implemented by Interview Participants

	YES	NO
Participant 1		X
Participant 2		X
Participant 3	X	
Participant 4		X
Participant 5		X

Figure 5. Green Human Resource Management

Interviewees were asked about the organisations utilisation of HR to drive "green" in the organisation and engage employees. The overall answer from all participants was no, or that they are unsure how they can use the HR practices to drive the green initiative in their organisation.

Only two participants indicated that they try and recruit environmentally conscious employees and add some environmental analysis to their induction and onboarding process. However, both participants confirmed that they do not feel their effort is successful in optimising these HR practices to the full and to obtain staff buy-in. This was supported by the literature; there is a limited initiative on how to implement Green Human Resource Management by utilising the HR practices.

Participants were asked to provide some advice for other businesses initiating the green route. Most participants indicated that it is a daunting process and that small changes should be made at a time. Encouraging staff to be part of the changes to encourage ownership and increased awareness. The literature provided some guidelines on how to get started as a green organisation. Figure 6 shows similar suggestions made by the participants.
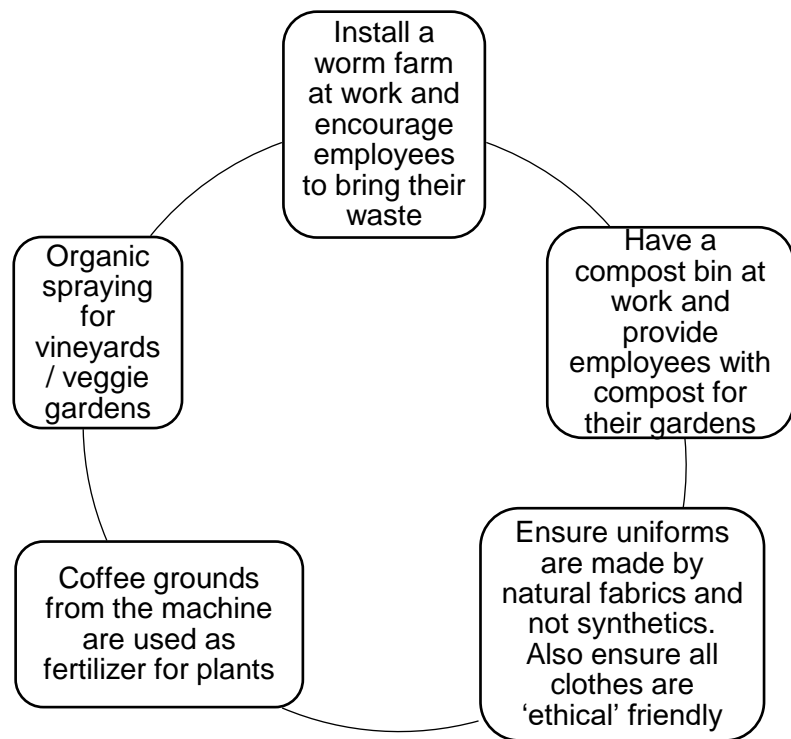

Figure 4. Green Practices implemented due to Organisation Differences

Interviewees were asked about Green Human Resource Management. Only one participant during the interview knew the meaning of Green Human Resource Management. The literature indicates that there is an awareness of Green Human Resource Management across organisations.

Figure 6. Green Initiatives to Implement in an Organisation

Interview participants were asked how they currently try and engage their staff in their green policies and procedures. Every organisation had a different approach, but the universal message was to make it fun, and to include staff from the beginning so that they can see the benefits. Employees should feel that their suggestions and input are valued. Also, to allow staff company time to attend environmental workshops.

4. Conclusion

The results showed that organisations do not use Green Human Resource Management as a strategy to engage staff in their green policies and procedures. The recommendations for organisations are to utilise their Human resource practices to engage staff into green policies and procedures using the following approaches.

4.1   Green Talent Management

The following is recommended to be included under green talent management:

➢ Green job descriptions for employees should contain environmental aspects, as well as green goals the employer wish to achieve. This can be achieved by the organisation stating their green vision and mission for the organisation, i.e 'As an organisation we are committed in becoming more resource efficient, reducing the amount of waste we produce. We see this as an essential strategy to give us a competitive advantage, reduce unnecessary costs and maintain our green reputation. These steps will ensure we continue to grow and prosper as an organisation whilst ensuring our steps does not have a negative impact on the future of our planet'. The job description will then invite employees to be a part of this vision and mission and should include the wording 'The successful candidate is proactive, passionate and target driven with regards to the role and the environment'.
➢ Recruit environmentally conscious employees. This can be done by making 'green' part of the interview process.
➢ Implement green recruitment practices such as virtual interviews and online applications.
➢ The organisations green vision and mission should be clearly stated on their website.
➢ Gaining a green employer reputation and promoting green credentials. Your branding should include your green involvement in the community, green processes implemented and green goals achieved.
➢ Introduce green aspects (i.e. environmental job analysis, the way we do things around here with regards to recycle) into the induction/onboarding process.

4.2   Green Training and Development

Training and development is an important key to get staff buy-in. The following are recommended training and development criteria:

➢ It is essential to train staff to produce a green analysis of their workspace and carbon footprint during office hours.
➢ Incorporate environmental training as part of the induction and onboarding process to ensure the organisations green values are carried over.
➢ Training and development on environmental matters should include aspects of safety, energy efficiency, waste management and recycling.
➢ Training in environmental management aspects.
➢ Developing green personal skills. This will ensure employees take the 'green' initiative home with them.
➢ Establish departmental environmental teams and team leaders.
➢ To make the green initiatives fun and to encourage staff participation, competitions can be held between departments. Themes can be chosen by HR. This would be a wonderful opportunity to get all involved and to educate and create green awareness.

4.3   Green Employee Engagement

The aim is to engage staff and obtain staff buy-in into the green policies and procedures. The researcher, therefore, suggests that a lot of time and attention should go to employee engagement. The following are recommendations on how to engage staff:

➢ The employer should involve employees in environmental management practices.
➢ Encourage environmental suggestions and improvements by having an online suggestion system implemented.
➢ Encourage green involvement and participation.

- Select green team leaders and get families involved – make it a fun experience.
- Encourage environmental friendly transport and encourage staff to car pool. Staff can be encouraged to travel together by offering coffee vouchers from the staff canteen or something similar as a reward.
- Encourage employees to take part in environmental workshops and corporate social responsibilities that embrace environmental aspects. The business can offer to pay for or share the cost/ travel cost when staff attends such workshops. Also, organisations should allow some reasonably office time for employees to attend green workshops/green community days.

4.4   Green Performance Management

- Clear communication on environment policies throughout the organisations.
- Communication systems can be video's, virtual videos and links as well as making use of the intranet.
- Incorporate environmental performance indicators on performance management systems and appraisals.
- Conducting dialogues on environmental matters and obtain continuous feedback from employees on their struggles regarding green policies and procedures. To ensure that 'green' does not get lost, it should be a standard item on all staff meetings.
- Incorporate environmental targets, goals, responsibilities for employees and teams.
- Assessing environmental initiatives in the performance appraisals.

4.5   Green Reward Systems

The aim is to get staff engaged, excited and proud of the green initiative. Therefore, the researcher is suggesting various forms of rewards. Seeing that becoming a green employee requires a positive attitude change, the researcher is of the opinion that recognition and non-monetary rewards should take preference.

- In some circumstances, the organisation might see it fit linking environmental participation to promotions
- Introduce monetary-based awards for exceptional achievements and environment suggestions. Depending on the goal, this can be individual rewards as well as for teams.

Recognition and non-monetary rewards in environmental management can be in the form of dinner vouchers, an office award (employee of the month), giving recognition in the company newsletter, gifts or an afternoon off.

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