

Green HRM: An Effective Tool to attain & maintain Competitive Advantage

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Abstract: *It's not yours, not mine, It's ours. Protect your resources which nourish you.* There lies the concept of Green HRM. Green HRM refers to designing and implementing HR policies in the organization that promote sustainable use of resources and Eco-friendly HR practices in the organization. With the growing concern on Environmental Sustainability, the business domain started looking at expanding roles of HRM functions in a way to reach Environmental Sustainability. *The way is metamorphosing HRM into Green HRM.* Green HRM strategically aims at preservation of resources for future generations. The main purpose of the paper is to portray how and why Green HRM can become an effective tool for attaining a competitive advantage.

Key Words: Green HRM, Environmental Sustainability, Competitive Advantage

“Going green doesn’t start with doing green acts – it starts with a shift in consciousness” –

Ian Somerhalder

“If you really think the Environment is less important than the Economy, try holding your breath while you count your money” – Dr Guy Mc Pherson

Introduction:

The impact of our day to day activities on living environment causes depletion of natural resources and global warming. This realization triggered not only individuals to go green but also organizations. The globally growing concern on ecological balance made businesses concentrate on formulating and implementing green policies in the organization. Companies started moving towards their goals with green sense of responsibility. Human Resource management with green touch is becoming the force of environmental sustainability by adopting eco-friendly practices and policies. Green HRM is one such significant area of management that works to attain sustainability. *Green HRM refers to designing and implementing HR policies in the organization that promote sustainable use of resources and Eco Friendly HR practices in the organization. It is a commitment towards environment through green HR initiatives.*

The objective of this paper is mainly to focus on Green initiatives that can attain competitive advantage globally.

Theoretical Framework

Human Resource Management (HRM) is an important function of management that deals with the most valuable assets of an organization. The focus of HRM function is to attain sustainability. An eco-friendly policy should be made as a part of HR policy such that the objective of sustainability over resources can be communicated to all the human resource in organization. Green Human Resource Management is the most significant element of sustainability.

Go Green is a culture of conservation which can be possible through collective approach. Going green is a part of social responsibility in the present economy as environmental issues have business implications. Organizations should adopt Green policy as a tool to attain competitive advantage over others. They should develop a business strategy with sustainable management as its core.

According to Dutta (2012), GHRM includes two major elements namely, environmental-friendly HR practices and the preservation of the knowledge capital. Also Green human resources refer to using every employee touch point/interface to promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issues of sustainability (Mandip, 2012)

Mampra (2013) defines Green HRM as the use of HRM policies to encourage the sustainable use of resources within business enterprises and promote the cause of environmentalism which further boosts employee morale and satisfaction. Others describe Green HRM as the use of HRM policies, philosophies, and practices to promote sustainable use of business resources and thwart any untoward harm arising from environmental concerns in organizations (Zoogah, 2011).

Why Go Green:

Nowadays, concern for environment has become the strategic issue that can compress the competition globally and hence going green is a means of attaining competitive advantage. The two main driving forces behind adoption of green concept in companies are saving resources/energy for sustainability and to fulfill the regulations laid by government. Going green involves adopting various changes in daily operations at every level in the organization leads to cost effectiveness and achieve competitive differentiation. The company with green image will be definitely paid through high returns as well as lower costs. Thus adopting green policy in organization is a strategic way of attaining competitive advantage as well as sustainability.

Green Initiatives:

Some of the eco-friendly initiatives that we can adopt in Human Resource Management resulting in better efficiency, low costs for the organization and reduce carbon footprints to the environment are as follows.

1. Online Training
2. Electronic Sharing
3. Electronic Filing
4. Telecommunicating
5. Paperless Organization
6. Green Workplace
7. Recycling & Waste Disposal



COMMITMENT: Commit towards sustainability and develop an eco friendly policy with short term and long term targets.

COMMUNICATE: Communicate the green policy to all workforce in the organization to plan, implement and regulate green performance in the organization.

CORRELATE: Apply the green strategy into daily operations wherever possible to achieve sustainable growth

CONTROL: Review the green performance in the organization regularly and identify the areas for further improvement

Conclusion:

HRM has significant role to achieve sustainability through eco-friendly initiatives. Companies must evolve their policies and strategies that can contribute to overall sustainability. Thinking green globally and acting green locally will be a competitive advantage for companies in the current business environment.

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