Individual and Organisational Knowledge

The journal article “Selling issues to top management” analysed the techniques used by individuals in organisations in order to focus top management's attention on certain issues that arise in the workplace. By analysing the different techniques used by individuals to pass their knowledge of the organisation onto top management, the author was able to uncover the implications as well as the motivations behind the act of issue selling.

Issue selling is described in the article as the act that individuals within an organisation carry out in order to focus top management's attention on issues that exist within the organisation. There are a range of issue selling techniques that are used in order to increase the chances of top management focusing on certain issues as well as a range of implications for the issue seller. These implications, which will be discussed further throughout this essay, are what dictate and shape the information being presented to top management as well as the manner in which the issues are presented.

“Selling issues to top management” discusses the difference between issues and strategic issues. An issue is said to be strategic when top management realises that the issue has relevance for organisational performance. It seems as though top management would only be concerned with buying into issues that are going to impact the performance and potential success of the organisation rather than the issues that may exist for the lower level workers. I would argue that there are many issues that may exist in the organisation that do have an impact on the organisation's success even if indirectly and that it is these issues that may not be considered by top management as strategic and therefore are not focussed upon. It is often these issues such as the workers' morale that have a momentous impact on the success and stability of an organisation, however indirectly, and should still be noticed.

More often than not an individual in an organisation can gain attention from top management on an issue by providing them with information that they may otherwise not have known. Individuals such as members of middle management, in an organisation may use issue selling as a means of sharing their individual knowledge with top management thereby making it organisational knowledge. If the issue being sold to top management gains their invested interest, there are certain benefits that
may result for the organisation. This is one of the reasons that the knowledge of individuals within the organisation is a critical factor in the success of the organisation and is a reason why issue selling should be encouraged.

The article claims that issue selling allows for an increase in organisational performance. If an individual in an organisation attempts to sell an issue to top management however, there are a range of techniques that can increase the chances of top management buying into that issue. I would suggest that with over half of the article stressing how difficult it can be to sell issues to top management and still come out of the situation with a decent reputation that it may be rather difficult to get the top management to actually buy into an issue, let alone dedicate its resources to solving the issue in a manner that can lead to better organisational performance.

It is well known that members of an organisation may know a great deal about the workings of the organisation that perhaps top management do not. It is up to the individual who has this knowledge to make the decision about whether or not they wish to share this information with top management or if they should with hold such information. Often I would suggest this decision can be easily made by an individual based on the benefits the outcome may have on oneself. Many of the reasons for and against issue selling that have been stated in the article “Selling issues to top management” are driven by an individuals desire to advance their position in the organisation. I would like to suggest that almost every individual that works for an organisation and develops a strong understanding of there role in the larger context of the organisation would possess at least a small degree of knowledge that could assist in improving organisational performance. The decision to be made is not what an individual can do to increase the performance of the organisation but what an individual can do to improve there stance in the organisation, in top managements eyes or in society.

An issue selling attempt if recognised by top management, as stated in the article, will often produce one of two results it will either increase or decrease the issue sellers’ credibility. Often an issue seller will opt to reveal or conceal certain knowledge they possess based on the expected outcome. An issue seller is more likely to sell an issue to top management if they believe it will be of benefit to them selves. The only way an issue can be sold to top management and improve the issue sellers credibility is if the issue is also beneficial to the organisation, otherwise the issue selling attempt would not only be disregarded but the individual exposes themselves
to reducing their credibility within the organisation. At this point it seems reasonable to suggest that it is only when an individual realises the benefits they may receive due to realising the link between an issue and its ability to improve organisational performance that an individual will come to share that knowledge with top management, and that perhaps if no self gain is to achieved by an individual sharing this knowledge with the organisation then the individual will conceal this information.

This idea supports the suggestion made in the article “Selling issues to top management” that is in the best interests of an organisation to encourage its members to issue sell as they have knowledge gained through there position in the organisation that members of top management do have and this is knowledge that top management would not otherwise have without the knowledge being offered by individuals lower in the hierarchy of the organisation.

Over all the article outlines the ability that an individual has to improve the organisations knowledge and therefore performance based on the knowledge that an individual gains through the work they carry out with in the organisation. It is this knowledge that is offered by issue sellers that has the potential to increase organisational performance as well as society’s perception of the organisation. This is the reasoning behind the argument that it is in the best interests of an organisation to encourage the act of issue selling and supports the suggestion that the individuals within an organisation possess information that is valuable and remains individual knowledge until offered by that individual in perhaps an issue selling attempt, or in any other form of communication, to top management where is can be used in the strategic interests of the organisation and not only to benefit the individual.
Bibliography
