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WL Gore & Associates



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“However, there is a financial incentive for associates wanting to be part of a winning company.” (Moore)

WL Gore exemplifies a long-term established international company which aggressively builds on a corporate culture geared towards incentivating a sense of ownership, job empowerment, and entrepreneurial out-of-the-box-thinking among all of its employees. The company structures its human resources compensation structure to match external market demand for highly skilled workers while implementing an internal stock options, profit sharing, and bonus scheme to incentivate strong individual contributions. This creates a faster paced more aggressive environment which unexpectedly results in higher employee job satisfaction and lower turnover rates as well.



The entrepreneurial spirit which inspires people to greater levels of creativity, innovation, and hard work without guaranteeing financial success or security is a powerful force that many organizations want to cultivate among their respective workforces. Traditionally, when we think of the entrepreneurial spirit we think about one of the hundreds of thousands of small groups of people who start a company each year in an attempt to become one of the handful of companies that achieve viable long-term term success. The spirit of the entrepreneur is a mix of euphoria and desperation where huge amounts of private capital, constituting in many cases the entire financial future of the owners, are wagered on the dream of success. The work ethic and overall dedication that usually accompany such huge leaps of faith in private human industry are tremendous and may seem to contradict the personal interest incentive at the base of capitalism. Why would so many people risk so much and work so hard if the odds of getting compensated adequately for one's efforts are so meager? This cannot solely be explained by money but by the accomplishment, accelerated learning, and the sense of purpose that accompanies these types of ventures. Every now and then groups of entrepreneurs that started companies like IBM, Microsoft, Ford, and General Electric are able to build upon the level of innovation of the entrepreneurs of their generation and truly change the world.

"The annual sales of £26m and a five per cent staff turnover confirms staff are happy to work at Gore. I believe people want to feel involved and important. They know what is happening in the workplace and believe they can make a difference to the overall operation of the company. No system is perfect. We are here to make money and have fun. WL Gore provides a vehicle for our associates to do that." (Moore)

The nurturing of a corporate culture that is supportive of an entrepreneurial culture is not only manifested at startup companies but also in larger established companies like WL Gore and Associates (**Cba.uri.edu**). This is done primarily by upholding financial incentives like profit sharing, stock options, and performance bonuses. An almost equally important component to nurturing the entrepreneurial mindset is by cultivating a sense of mission in the organization. Guy Kawasaki, one of the senior managers at Apple Computer in the early 80s outlines the almost evangelistic approach touted by company founder Steve Jobs in instilling the exciting ambition among Apple employees. They felt responsible for changing the face of human existence through the innovative marketing of new personal computing technologies to businesses and the consumers.

Success in the marketplace, financial incentives, a sense of mission, the opportunity for great riches through stock options, and overall prestige of an organization make it easier to nurture an entrepreneurial work force. Companies like Apple Computer, Microsoft, Yahoo, and many others were able to get many of their employees to consider working 80-90 weeks as a normal part of their career plans.



The problem with having a work force which works at these very intense levels is the risk of premature corporate burnout. It seems that WL Gore and Associates has not experienced this problem which could signify that they have found a congenial balance of nurturing an entrepreneurial culture within an overall work-life equilibrium.

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