

Using EAP to Build Sustainable Organisations

A PAPER PRESENTED AT THE
EAP CONFERENCE ORGANISED
BY THE SERVICES SETA

Assumptions

- Basic understanding of EAP and EAP operations
- No need to define
- Benefits of EAP operations are clear and undisputed.
- This presentation focuses on strengthening and value adding benefits

What makes Organisations Sustainable?

- **Vision**

Knowing when it is time to identify and establish new goals

- **Leadership**

To rally resources, human and material, towards a common goal

- **People**

To make it all happen

Vision

- Identifying a strategic advantage and leveraging it to create a long term favorable position in the eyes of the customer
- Knowing where you want to go, and using every *transaction* to ensure that you get there
- Ensuring that you never arrive where you are going

Elements of Sustainability

- CUSTOMER FOCUS
- CONSISTENT EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE
- VISIONARY LEADERSHIP
- CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

CUSTOMER FOCUS

- Consistently meeting a customer's expectations
- Excellence of product as well as service offering
- Understanding value from a customer's perspective
- Customer as a partner rather than a target
- Preempting changing customer needs

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Quality is not about being perfect, it is about getting better
- Continuous improvement not only of systems and processes, but of the organisation as a whole
- Growth through innovation and creativity
- Turning customer satisfaction into customer delight

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

VAN GINKEL'S INNOVATION STAIRCASE (2001)



LEADERSHIP

- Leaders who vision, align, empower, coach, and care
- In order to steer organisations through the many modern day changes and challenges, leaders today have to be more concerned about others, flexible, adaptable, innovative and more thoughtful and responsive
- Leader as master and leader as colleague
- Service to Customers and to Employees

Employee Participation

“The most popular misconception is that the whole economic structure revolves around *money*. What is missed in these arguments is that markets are made up of *people*, and that the transactional base of society is in fact of *people serving people*”

Ceronio 1996

Employee Performance

- The main vehicle for achieving customer satisfaction is the external value created by satisfied employees
- People are what distinguishes good organisations from great organisations- people set organisations alight
- People are the only resource that shareholders cannot really own

Using EAP to Build Sustainable Organisations

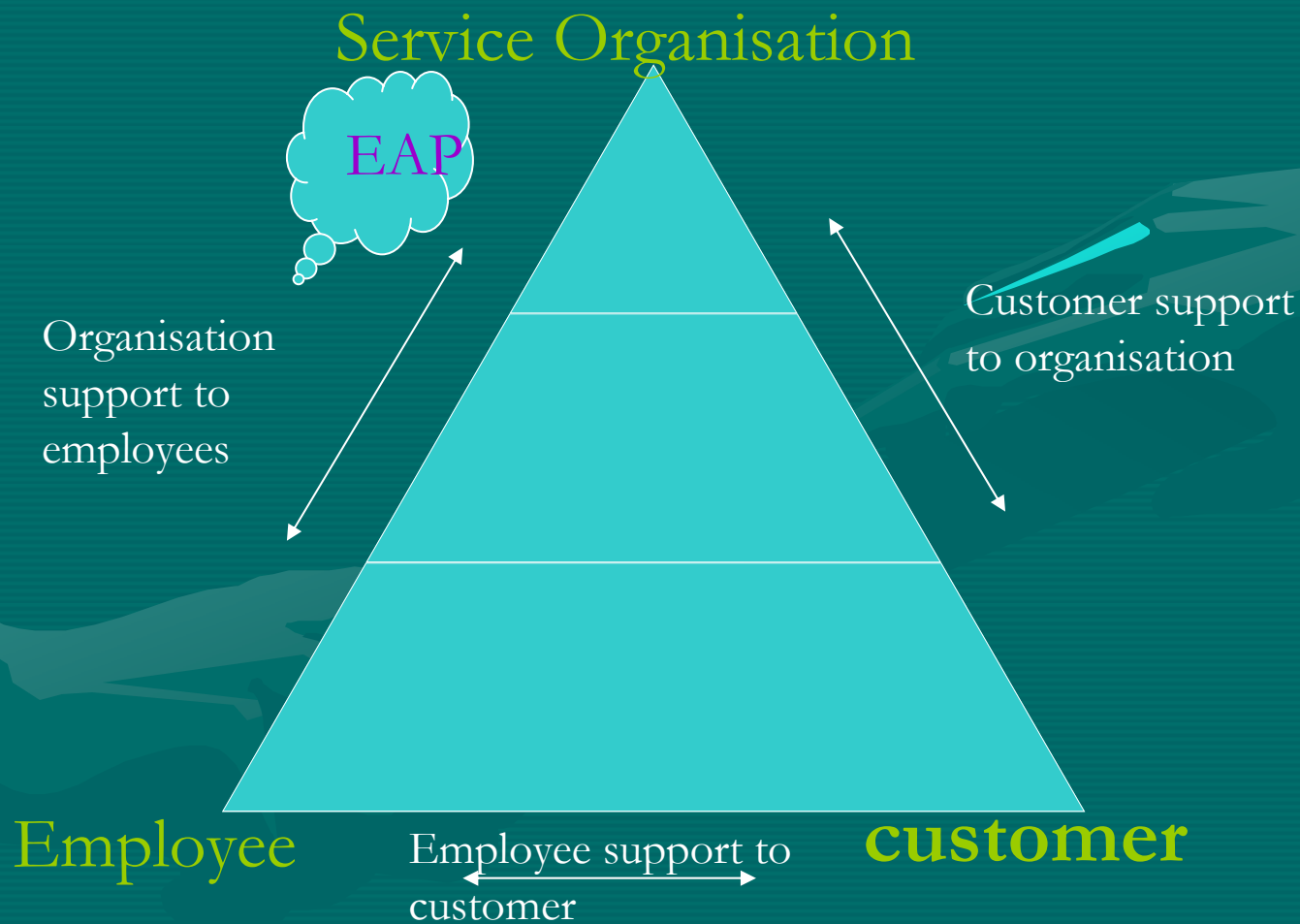
What has all this got to do with
EAP?

Using EAP to Build Sustainable Organisations

EAP services are a component of the workplace because of the key role they play in enhancing productivity and improving profitability


THE SERVICE RELATIONSHIP TRIANGLE

Heskett *et al* 1997



Employee Related Challenges in SA

- Diversity management
- Skills development
- Employee Wellbeing
- Short service tenure
- Crime



Employee
Assistance
Programmes

Using EAP to Build Sustainable Organisations

An organisation's strategy consists of the actions and business approaches management employs to achieve targeted organisational performance

The Role of EAP in enhancing business success

- Can contribute insights into the management of people
- If properly integrated into all business processes, EAP have potential to make a difference at the strategic level of organisations
- Can facilitate the transformation of organisations towards people oriented systems to enhance insight into employees and customers as *people*

The Role of EAP in enhancing business success

- Management of “softer issues”
- Important management time dedicated to “real” management issues while softer issues are delegated to junior management
- Because employees *are* organisations, the wellbeing of employees has to be a business priority

The Role of EAP in enhancing business success

- Facilitating customer focus
- Enhancing continuous improvement
- Encouraging and strengthening employee participation
- Strengthening service oriented styles of leadership

Conclusions

- Inadequate understanding of EAP in SA organisations
- This results in inadequate sensitivity to employees problems, whether work related or unrelated
- The responsibility rests with both EAP professionals and management to change this *status quo*

Conclusions

- Productivity must be seen as a strategic issue for South African companies. This paradigm change will facilitate the use of productivity enhancing strategies like EAP strategically
- EAP must stop being used as a “nice to have”. Companies’ use of EAP should be based on an informed set of expectations with a direct impact on the strategic objectives of the company.

Conclusions

- EAP can be used to achieve the organization's optimal utilization of all its factors of production.
- EAP systems have to stop being only reactionary in focus, and develop a preventative and facilitative role more boldly

Conclusions

- There is a need for EAP professionals to be more aware of the forces of competition affecting the company. This awareness will facilitate their ability to support the company and its employees in a manner that really matters to the company's bottom line

Conclusions

EAP is the central function within the organisation that has the potential to close the service-profit chain