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Undertaking:

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Management Learning from Dabbawalla

The Dabbawalla of Mumbai offers a valuable lesson in management and that can be applied in various works and industries. Success story of Dabbawalla has not only made them famous around the world but has captured the attention of management scholar around the world and being admired for their clear and well-defined vision. The key factors that made them successful was their focus on customer needs despite all the operation challenges working through busy streets of Mumbai without relying on any modern technology along with the simplicity in operations that even the non-educated can follow the system and the strong organizational culture, all the members share a commitment towards work and values and a sense of pride for working in Dabbawalla ltd and being a Dabbawalla, this well-defined values not only motivates the employees rather members but help align their efforts towards a common goal to server their customers and ultimately creating a value for customer.

Looking ahead this principle can be followed by other organization working in similar structure like cooperative societies, leaders and managers can adapt this unique management practice in their working culture to create a more resilient and value-based organizations. The Dabbawalla have simple yet powerful communication system making them the most effective in what they do, this simple method of communication makes the whole process more efficient, the Dabbawalla system have multiple layers of collector, sorter, and delivery men all working together to ensure that every meal reaches its intended recipient on time and this level of precision and coordination is only possible through clear roles responsibility and process within the organization. By integrating these lessons, organizations can build flexible and human centered management system capable of thriving in an increasingly complex business environment.

In recent times Dabbawalla have created a big change in how they operate on an organizational level while preserving the core values intact which in fact has only strengthened them, the Dabbawalla has formalized their operations by incorporating as a company and started the providing the life and medical Insurance to their members and tied up with banks to create a bank account for them and in coming months will start with official salary slips so that their

members can take advantage of all the facilities provided by government and banks .

As a management student, it is important to recognize the significance of having a clear vision and managing work accordingly with respect to academics and other activities and along with it the value of continuous improvement with changing time as it is correctly said “Change is the only constant”.

While the Dabbawalla are trying to innovate and look forward to continuing the legacy of more than a century old organization, I as a management student thinks there are several challenges and opportunities that can be taped,

Challenges: -

- Scalability – Dabbawalla are dependent on the connectivity of Mumbai and its public transport and that is extremely difficult to replicate in any other cities and even if there is one, creating a demand for this kind of service is not feasible.
- Competition from modern Delivery systems – India is seeing the rise of multiple online food delivery system especially Mumbai that will give a stiff competition with their extensive food option and convenience and marketing and changing food habits of young Indians.
- Regulatory Issue- Expanding into new areas of business and entering into other product/service category will require compliance with various regulatory bodies and that will limit the reach for new source of revenue.
- Economic factors- The Dabbawalla earns around 15000 rupees a month and with time the salary expense for organization will increase and charges around 800 rupees for a month to a customer and a slight increase in charges will make a customer look for other option or switch to the competing food delivery option or carry his own tiffin.
- Maintaining quality of service- Any expansion or diversification could strain the system, potentially leading to a decline in the reliability for which the Dabbawalla are known for.
- Shortage of workers- Younger generation might be less inclined to join the Dabbawalla profession because of multiple reason that can potentially lead to shortage of workers and impact on whole system.

Opportunities: -

- Brand leveraging- Only few organization in the world have the legacy of being more than 137 years old and Dabbawalla can use the same brand legacy to enter into new markets and create branded products starting with water/beverage and eventually fast moving consumer goods and not only products the Dabbawalla the unique opportunity of starting a chain of restaurant that provides thali system or a chai/tea/coffee point throughout mumbai and spreading to other part of India .
- Collaboration with modern food services- The Dabbawalla can use their extensive network of workers and their reach to partner with food delivery system to handle their food delivery operation and not only food but also quick commerce segment.
- Competing with food delivery giants – In India the whole restaurant industry are tired with delivery giant taking major chunks of their profits and they don't have any other alternative but to hire their own delivery staff which is very costly to maintain as well but Dabbawalla have an opportunity to get into delivery of food by partnering up with all the restaurant starting with Mumbai and take advantage of its low cost delivery options.
- Starting a courier venture- Dabbawalla can enter courier service and also handle the logistic of small online brands throughout mumbai to start with.

By addressing the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities, the Dabbawalla's have the potential to evolve their business model while preserving their core values and efficiency that have made them successful for over a century.

Dabbawalla's serves as a n inspiration for us to strive for excellence. By emulating their discipline, teamwork and commitment to improvement, we can improve our own skill and achieve greater success in personal and professional lives. Let's take a leaf out of the Dabbawalla's book and carry their vision forward.