

Green Practices

**“Go Green,
there
is
no
Planet B!”**

-Anonymous

CASE CHAPTER 9

Aiming Green: Ausniz on Implementing Green HRM

Fazluz Zaman

Sessional Faculty, Federation University Australia &
Central Queensland University, Australia.

fazluzzaman@gmail.com

Abstract

The case highlights the idea of Green HRM. The case discusses an emerging tech-based company from Australia named Ausniz Technologies and its aspiration to be a green business in totality. The case study underlines the green HR plan developed by Ausniz Technologies and the issues connected with its implementation. With eight branches across Australia and New Zealand, the case reflects the technicality of the situation and how the HR unit has been striving to achieve its 'green' aims. Overall, the case is a fine piece of industry-academia blend to educate students on the vitality of green HRM, its planning, and the creation of awareness for HR managers and decision-makers about development issues they face when it comes to green HRM in the contemporary business world.

Synopsis

It was Monday morning in Sydney when Liam Thomas, the Head of HR at Ausniz, called in a meeting to discuss progress on work regarding the effective transformation of conventional HR practices into *green ones*. He started the meeting by discussing the strategic goal of the company to become a green business in full in the long run. Liam also reminded everyone that the HR unit of the business had decided to take lead in initiating efforts for the achievement of this goal. The meeting also

discussed how the HR unit in the head office and eight branches across Australia and New Zealand are doing and facing problems in this regard. Important to note that the project had started six months ago with a ten-month implementation deadline.

Ausniz Technologies

Ausniz Technologies is an internet and smart device network company. The company was founded in 1995 in Australia. The company offers a wide range of internet devices and smart network systems for domestic and commercial use. The company has eight retail and wholesale units across Australia and New Zealand and aims to open three more by the end of 2022. With the headquarters in Sydney, all major business decisions pertaining to company operations, sales, services, product sourcing, and pricing are taken place there. The company has a track record of satisfied domestic customers and corporate clients. With aims to be a listed company in ASX (Australian Securities Exchange) in the future, the company aims to grow business further in the Northern territories, Western Australia and New Zealand. Ausniz is also eyeing on expanding across Southeast Asian economies. Recently, the company management also signed an agreement with a leading Japanese company to supply the latest networking devices and related products; whereby, Ausniz Technologies will serve as the sole distributor and retailer for them across Australia and New Zealand. The company has high aims and vision for the business. According to their Chief Operation Officer (COO) Jack Arvin,

'the company is expanding despite a tough competitive situation. We envision to be the ultimate company of choice for our customers in the category of internet devices and smart network systems. At Ausniz, we believe in the specialization of skills, and with a niche focus on this service and product category, we are determined to excel in every possible way to maximize customer satisfaction'.

Green HRM

Green HRM relates to policies and practices that enhance the use of resources in an organization with a caring eye for environmental wellbeing (Ahmed, 2015). Green HR practices focus on developing both individual mindset and practices at the workplace that would result in activities promoting environmental sustainability. Green HRM is gaining much importance across the globe these days. It is essential to note that the company HR strategy has a huge role to play for all major organizational decisions regarding ranging from organization-wide strategy, development of work culture, corporate response to investors, strategic and operational plans, customer needs, identification of community work, social areas of focus, response to governmental regulatory requirements and action plan for public policy agendas. Therefore, an effective HR strategy catering to green prospects will infuse and energize other domains of the business for the same. In a way, it will act as a guiding light for the entire organization to work for the establishment of activities that minimize and/or limit the environmental damage from its operations (Renwick, 2018).

Importance of Green HRM

Much has been written and debated regarding the importance of green HR practices from a wide range of perspectives. Specific to individual businesses, in particular, green HR practices may result in:

- Lowering operational cost
- Increasing operational efficiency
- Minimizing carbon footprint
- Reducing paperwork, its physical storage, and maintenance
- Establishing a healthy work environment
- Developing a sense of responsibility amongst the employees
- Portraying better image towards stakeholders
- Effective information management
- Profit maximization (Wehrmeyer, 2017).

Hence, green HRM can profit organizations both financially as well as non-financially. The author (Wehremeyer, 2017) in the book has also indicated the idea of corporate social responsibility and how green HRM can make a major dent in factors affecting the environment while facilitating organizations in fulfilling their social duty towards society.

Green HRM Plan Initiated by Ausniz Technologies

The company worked with the external consulting business to develop a detailed Green HR plan underlining how the key personnel practices could be transformed. The plan was devised keeping in view the definition forwarded by The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2012) that asserts green prospects in HR as “Activities which produce goods and services to measure, prevent, limit, minimize or correct environmental damage to water, air and soil, as well as problems related to waste, noise and eco-systems. This includes technologies, products, and services that reduce environmental risk and minimize pollution and resources”. The plan developed catered into major HR practices ranging from entry (recruitment) to exit (Resignation/departure), details of which are as follows:

Sourcing and Recruitment

- Revision and development of green job descriptions and selection of green methods for the job advertisement.
- Focusing on green candidates with good knowledge and interest in the green way of working.
- Including ‘Green Awareness’ as part of the interview
- Introduction of green work practices in the induction phase

Training and Development

- Initiation of employee training on green workplaces and green working
- Development of green training content
- Ban of single-use materials in the training events.

- Usage of reusable and recyclable materials in training programs only
- Development of paperless content for the training participants

Performance Management

- Launch of Green-o-Meter to assess green initiatives and activities of individual employees and departments
- Evaluation of individual performance metrics in the sphere of green HR
- Assessment of green development plan for each department
- Emphasis on managers to initiate green goals and targets for their respective departments and teams.
- Incorporation of green criteria to be included in appraisals
- Revision of appraisal policy for the managerial positions with the inclusion of assessment of the initiation and development goals and targets for their departments and teams.
- Revision of appraisal policy related to top management with the inclusion of assessment on the diversity and number of green initiatives launched in the company.
- Development of green performance indicator plan for the entire company to include the assessment of a number of green incidents and use of environment-friendly prospects for business operations and communication

Rewards and Recognition

- Launch of Employee recognition scheme to honor 'green' employee(s) of the month
- Allocation of bonus allowances for employees performing well in terms of green practices
- Launch of green point scheme to record employee`s voluntary green initiatives for rewards annually
- Special Bonus schemes for successful green initiatives in line with the green performance indicator plan

- Recognition of green employee initiatives for job promotion and pay rise

Record Keeping and Employee Exit

- Transfer of all paper-based employee record to newly designed central PMS system
- Maximum utilization of People Management System (PMS) for all employee information and record-keeping ranging from employee induction to exit surveys, electronically.
- Complete
- Development of online forms for employee exit surveys

The Meeting

As per the plan, the management was responsible for playing a key role in developing effective channels of communication. Individual managers from all eight branches across Australia and New Zealand were available in the meeting. Everyone expressed their concerns about the implementation of the proposed green HR plan. Mr. Liam emphasized that the results of this meeting will be discussed with the top management so that they could take the green HR plan seriously. As the meeting started, some of the managers asserted that they are working on many things, and the time is minimal that is why 100% implementation of the plan is impossible. Accordingly, some raised arguments on specific activities of the plan, such as transfer of all paper-based employee data to newly designed central PMS system, which only managers can access.

The attendees also highlighted that these huge tasks require a lot of time which is difficult to be spared, particularly during the ongoing peak business period. In line with this, some managers also requested for extension in the deadline for another six months. There were many other minor issues discussed in the meeting, and above all, the majority seemed reluctant to implement the policy. Mr. Liam appeared very disappointed with the progress made so far and said,

'let me discuss with the top management. Overall, this is not what I was expecting to hear from all of you, and I am sure the management will express the same'.

Discussion Questions

- Q1. What is your opinion about the concept of Green?
- Q2. How do you view green HRM and its viability for business and environmental sustainability?
- Q3. Assess the Green HRM plan of Ausniz Technologies to highlight its strengths and weaknesses.
- Q4. As an HR practitioner, what will be your action-call, if given an opportunity to improve the Green HRM plan of Ausniz?
- Q5. How do you see the time plan given for the implementation of this plan? Can Ausniz Technologies possibly achieve effective implementation within the given time?
- Q6. What is the way out for Ms. Liam to resolve the issues?
- Q7. How management could play its part in ensuring the effective initiation and implementation of Green HR practices in the business?

Suggested Readings

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Exhibit 1: Map of Australia



Exhibit 2: Organizational Information of Ausniz Technologies

Item	Description
Name of the Company	Ausniz Technologies
Number of Branches	08
Employees in Top Management	11
Number of Management Staff	16 (2 per branch)

Number of General Staff (admin, office, reception, and support)	158
Number of Technical Staff	97
Total Work force	282

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