

Leadership and Quality of Work Life in the Organization that Has Successfully Adopted the Philosophy of the Sufficiency Economy: Chumphon Cabana Resort and Diving Center

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Abstract

Rita, human resource and organization development director of her family-owned company, was assigned to launch a project about employees' quality of work life and sustainable development in the organization, adopting the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (PSE). Rita had the idea of learning from an organization which had succeeded in adopting the PSE: the Chumphon Cabana Resort and Diving Center (Chumphon Cabana). Rita learned that the Chumphon Cabana went through a very difficult time of economic crisis, as well as a natural disaster, causing huge debts for the company. The resort is a profit-oriented organization, yet it could align its business strategy with the PSE smoothly.

Meeting with key persons of the Chumphon Cabana, who were believed to be one of the key success factors of the success of adopting the PSE, the concept of managing people working at the resort, and the relationship style among company's leaders, and employees, were revealed. A strong common understanding of the organization's objectives and direction, as well as virtue and ethics were also found to be important.

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It is important to keep in mind that nature of organizations in different industry could be different from the resort and diving center. Yet it is possible that what was from the Chumphon Cabana could support the adoption of the PSE at her company. Leadership style and characteristics of an organization which had successfully adopted the PSE can be decoded by taking a look at the characteristics of the Chumphon Cabana.

Keywords: Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, Leadership, Quality of Work Life

ภาวะผู้นำและคุณภาพชีวิตในการทำงานในองค์กร ที่ประสบความสำเร็จในการประยุกต์ใช้หลักปรัชญา เศรษฐกิจพอเพียง: กรณีศึกษา ชุมพร คาบาน่า รีสอร์ท และ ไดฟ์วิง เซ็นเตอร์

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บทคัดย่อ

ริตา เป็นผู้อำนวยการด้านการพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์และองค์การของบริษัทซึ่งบริหารงานในระบบครอบครัวของตนเอง ได้รับมอบหมายให้ริเริ่มโครงการเกี่ยวกับคุณภาพชีวิตการทำงานของพนักงานและโครงการพัฒนาองค์การอย่างยั่งยืนโดยประยุกต์ใช้หลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียง ริตา พบว่า ตนเองยังขาดองค์ความรู้และประสบการณ์จึงเกิดแนวคิดในการเรียนรู้จากองค์กรที่ประสบความสำเร็จในการประยุกต์ใช้หลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงในการบริหารจัดการ ได้แก่ ชุมพร คาบาน่า รีสอร์ท และ ไดฟ์วิง เซ็นเตอร์ (ชุมพร คาบาน่า) ริตา ทราบว่าชุมพร คาบาน่าประสบปัญหาอย่างมากจากวิกฤติทางเศรษฐกิจและภัยธรรมชาติ ส่งผลให้องค์การมีหนี้จำนวนไม่น้อย เป็นที่แน่ชัดว่าชุมพร คาบาน่าเน้นดำเนินการในรูปแบบของบริษัทที่หวังผลกำไร หากแต่สามารถเชื่อมโยงหลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงเข้ากับการบริหารจัดการได้อย่างกลมกลืน

ริตาได้พบกับบุคคลที่เป็นกุญแจสำคัญสู่ความสำเร็จในการประยุกต์หลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียง รวมถึงได้ทราบหลักการในการบริหารจัดการทรัพยากรคนของชุมพร คาบาน่า รูปแบบความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างผู้นำองค์กรและพนักงานอีกด้วย นอกจากนี้ ริตา ยังพบว่า ความเข้าใจร่วมกันเกี่ยวกับเป้าหมายและทิศทางขององค์การ รวมถึงการให้ความสำคัญกับหลักจริยธรรมนั้นเป็นสิ่งสำคัญยิ่ง

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สิ่งหนึ่งที่ต้องคำนึงถึง ได้แก่ บริบทขององค์กรในต่างกลุ่มธุรกิจอาจแตกต่างจากบริบทของธุรกิจการโรงแรมและการบริการ อย่างไรก็ตาม ชุมพร คาบาน่าสามารถเป็นตัวแทนขององค์กรที่ประสบความสำเร็จในการประยุกต์ใช้หลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียง ทั้งในด้านรูปแบบภาวะผู้นำในองค์กรและคุณลักษณะต่าง ๆ ขององค์กรและการดำเนินการ

คำสำคัญ: หลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียง ภาวะผู้นำ คุณภาพชีวิตการทำงาน

Prologue

It has been a while since Rita heard about the story of the resort and diving center surviving the financial crisis and still operating healthily with highly-engaged employees. She could hardly believe what she had heard about this organization. Despite her personal curiosity, she, now, has to take a closer look at this organization.

Rita is taking the new position of human resource and organization development director of her family-owned company. Her very first project is to launch a project about the quality of work life for sustainable development in the organization. The top management prefers the organization to be able to stay strong in the rapidly-changing business climate. The management team believes that adopting the Philosophy of the Sufficiency Economy into the organization would bring about a better quality of work life for the employees and can lead to sustainability of the organization.

The organization is in debt due to the over aggressive manufacturing line expansion. The situation has gotten worse under the economic crisis and the company has experienced a high turnover rate. The more people that leave, the greater is the workload that remains. The exit interview performed by the human resource department reveals that the top reason for employee resignation is poor quality of work life. The top management is now reconsidering the management approach to cope with the company's current issues. The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (PSE) was considered as the new management approach because of its focus on managing with moderation, reasonableness, and the self-immunity mechanism of the organization. The top management was interested in the PSE as implementing the PSE would not destroy the aesthetic of modernization. The organization could still make a profit, while being self-immune. However, in the view of the majority, it is difficult to bridge the concept of the PSE with the mission of a profit-oriented organization. The concrete picture of bridging the PSE with the mission of a profit-oriented organization was quite difficult for many people to imagine. However, that does not mean that it is impossible.

Believing that the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy can lead to the sustainability of the organization, the top management developed a new position called human resource and organization development director to be in charge of this project. That newly-hired person was Rita's ex-boss, who resigned from the position after six months. It can be said that her boss

had failed to launch this PSE project. The employees refused to participate in any activities related to the project. They considered their quality of work life even worse having the PSE project launched, and they felt that the extra work was put on their shoulders. Rita was appointed to take the position and carry on the project soon after her boss's resignation. Rita has no idea what she should do to lead this project to its success, so she starts to search for organizations that have succeeded with this kind of project. Eventually, she finds one, the Chumphon Cabana Resort and Diving Center.

She is now standing at the lobby of the resort by Thung Wue Land Beach in Chomphon province, Thailand. She is looking at the sign, "Love the sea, be with us," asking herself whether she is going to have the answer for her project.

Background

The Story of the Chumphon Cabana Resort and Diving Center

Chumphon Cabana Resort and Diving Center (Chumphon Cabana) was founded in 1982 in Thung Wue Land Beach in the city of Pratill, located about 50 kilometers from the center of Chumphon province, located along the Gulf of Thailand coast about 450 kilometers south of Bangkok, by a couple, Mr. Sukum Sadakorn and Ms. Atchara Rakphan. Sukum was assigned to work in Chumphon province, his hometown, as a head of provincial education officers. After they had visited the beach and fell in love with the beautiful and peaceful scenery, they decided to spend most of their savings on buying a piece of land, with a total area of 4.8 hectares, aiming at building a resort. Additionally, Thug Wue Land Beach is located opposite Ngam Islands, one of Thailand's top dive sites. At the age of over 40, the couple also decided to start scuba diving, so they ended up establishing the resort and diving center.

About seven small villas were built on sand and they started their service in 1983. The resort was, then, the first resort and diving destination in Chumphon province. With the concern for a harmonious relationship among the resort, local environment, and local communities, all of the employees were hired from local communities via a referral system. During the first few years of service, as a diving center, the resort joined the fishermen in the area and rented their ships for diving trips. Afterwards, due to the instability of the time management with the ship owners, the

resort bought its own ships, but a good relationship with the fishermen has still been maintained. Furthermore, since the beginning, every morning, all of the staff members, including interested guests, would join the local people in cleaning the beach.

In 1996, Mr. Varisorn Rakphan, the only son of Sukum and Atchara, took the management position of the Chumphon Cabana. With a degree in hotel management, together with his passion and ambition, young Varisorn not only carried on his parents' desire, but also decided to dramatically expand the business. He made a decision to borrow money from the bank to invest in the construction of three new low-rise hotel buildings, with a capacity of 100 rooms in total and an approximate 3,000 square meter convention hall, in order to level up the resort to be a full 3-star hotel. Unfortunately, before finishing of the construction, in 1997, Thailand faced a financial crisis. Due to the government's decision to change the foreign exchange system, the Thai baht was devalued dramatically, from about THB 25 for a US dollar in June 1997 to THB 52 for a US dollar in January 1998¹. The company's debt was doubled overnight. Moreover, during the rainy season of 1997, Chumphon province was attacked by a series of typhoons and the number of customers dramatically dropped. The resort was in a serious financial crisis and went into bankruptcy. However, that was not the end of the Chumphon Cabana. In October 1997, in order to prevent the city of Chumphon from deluge, His Majesty the King assigned his Personal Affairs Division to coordinate the construction of a water highway and a water reservoir, currently named the "Nong Yai Royally Initiated Development Project." While His Majesty King's Personal Affairs Division set up its operation center at Chumphon Cabana, Varisorn had a chance to witness His royal grace. He was inspired by the group of people that were working day and night according to the King's initiations and started to reconsider his resort's financial problems. One of the members of this His Majesty the King's Personal Affairs Division's team was Mr. Wiwat Sunyakumthron, director of the Royal Development Projects Board and a person that had followed the King during his royal visits for more than 10 years. When Varisorn had an opportunity to discuss with Wiwat about Chumphon Cabana's situation, Wiwat introduced Varisorn to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (PSE). The draft implementation plan was initiated with the goal of self-reliance. The resort had to cut its operation cost down 75% without employee layoff. Led by Varisorn, the employees started

producing cleaning products for use inside the resort, such as liquid soap, shampoo, detergent, and many more. All of the employees were intensively trained to understand the concept of the PSE and natural agriculture by Wiwat. They insisted on and supported the use of their free land to plant rice, vegetables, and fruit to sell to the resort. Used oil from kitchen was used as raw material to produce bio-diesel for the resort's cars and vans. Fresh garbage from the kitchen was used to produce fertilizer for use in the gardens. In addition, Varisorn supported local communities in practicing the PSE and natural agriculture in order to be able to be self-reliant.

Currently, under the program named "Our Economy," the resort buys only natural agricultural products, including fresh meat, eggs, vegetables, and fruit from its employees and local communities. Under this program, while the resort gets chemical-free and fresh raw materials for the kitchen, employees and local communities can earn more money. This approach eliminated the problem of middlemen compromising the raw material prices. In 2000, the resort established the "Plearn Garden" as a learning center for the PSE. The word "Plearn" itself is derived from the word "play" and "learn," as Varisorn believed in the concept that learning should be fun. In addition, the word "Plearn" in Thai also means enjoyment, amusement, being relaxed and happy (The National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, 2009). The "Plearn Garden" can serve up to 150 participants. It provides knowledge and practice opportunities for the participants about the PSE and natural agriculture. Some of the learning stations teach how to produce natural fertilizer, how to produce cleaning liquid, how to burn charcoal to get pesticide, how to plant trees, etc. At present, more than three hundred participants visit the "Plearn" learning center every week.

Nowadays, the resort serves twenty bungalows, a hundred standard rooms in three low-rise buildings, one main convention hall, and the PSE learning center with about ninety employees. The resort is still operating its dive center together with the hotel business. The resort provides visiting divers with full-scale dive operations, using the resort's own dive boats and experienced dive leaders. The resort won the "Thailand Tourism Kinnaree Award" in 2002 and achieved the "Standard of Green Leaf Hotel" in 2003. In 2004, the resort earned the "Green Globe Award." Recently, the resort was recognized as one of the successful private organizations in adopting the PSE in its operation by the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board in 2007.

At present, Varisorn works as a volunteer director of the Institution of Sufficiency Economy (ISE) and the Agri-nature Foundation. Both organizations hold the mission of disseminating H.M. the King's wisdom and knowledge. Partnering with the Agri-Nature Foundation, the Chumphon Cabana is now a learning center, welcoming those that are interested in the PSE and the agri-nature concept.

The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy

Knowing so little about the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (PSE), Rita decided to find out about the concept. She went to what would be called by researchers, literature, to get an answer about what exactly the PSE was and its concept.

Rita found that the PSE was not a new concept in Thailand. The philosophy was first initiated by His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej in the 1970s as a guideline for developing the country. The philosophy was about leading people to live an ordinary life on existing resources and to prevent themselves from overindulgence in luxury (Krongkaew, 2003). It was not until 1999, however, that the working group of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) compiled royal remarks on various occasions and constructed a definition of the PSE.

“Sufficiency means moderation, reasonableness, and the need of self-immunity mechanism for sufficient protection from impact arising from internal and external changes. To achieve this, an application of knowledge with due consideration and prudence is essential. In particular great care is needed in the utilization of theories and methodologies for planning and implementation in very step. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen the moral element of the nation, so that everyone, particularly political and public officials, academic people, businessman at all levels, adheres first and foremost to the principle of honesty and integrity. In addition, a way of life based on patience, perseverance, diligence, wisdom and prudence is indispensable to create balance and be able to cope appropriately with critical challenges arising” (Piboolsravut, 2004, p. 128).

Adopting and adapting the PSE can lead to harmony, security, and sustainability of the individual, the organization, or the economy (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). The PSE focuses on six issues: creating awareness of dynamic changes, preparing for those changes, creating a balance between short-term and long-term goals in order to be sustainable, recognizing moderation through self-analyzing and self-understanding, seeking knowledge and maintaining ethics and virtue, and being self-reliant and sharing for collective interests (Kusumavalee, 2008).

While many people interpret that the PSE is the antithesis of the current capitalism mainstream economic concept, it has been argued that the PSE focuses on the “middle path” (Krongkaew, 2003). Focusing specifically on the business sector, the PSE can be used as an organizational development tool or/and a human resource management approach. Kusumavalee (2008) synthesized the PSE with the classical concept of organizational development and found an alignment between them. Both the PSE and the concept of organizational development focus on humanism and participating in creating change. Humanists believe that humans should be proud of ourselves, should create value, and fully exercise their highest potential. In addition, participatory processes require participation from every participant at every developmental step. Kantabutra (2008), Kusumavalee (2009), Sasin (2010), and Wilbulsawadi, Piboolsravut, and Pootrakool (2010) have supported the idea that implementing the PSE in a business organization could create self-immunity in terms of coping with changing conditions. An organization could have a well thought-out business plan and could be more cautious about its business expansion.

Learning from the Chumphon Cabana

After Rita gathered the information about the PSE and the Chumphon Cabana, she decided to pack her luggage and take off for Chumphon as soon as the weekend came. Before doing so, Rita decided to make a phone call to the Chumphon Cabana to book her room, as well as frankly telling the information center about her purpose of visiting the resort. She was not sure what she was thinking being so straightforward about her intention to learn from the resort. As surprised as she could be, the information center not only booked her room, but also passed her to the operating manager at the resort to get her an appointment with someone that could share their knowledge about the adoption of the Philosophy of

Sufficiency Economy. Rita had heard about the concept of PSE; she was just not familiar with how it could be bridged with the vision and operation of a business organization. She barely had an idea about how to do so.

For five hours of driving, Rita kept reminding herself about her purpose in coming to the Chumphon Cabana. Rita wanted to learn about what had made the Chumphon Cabana so successful in adopting the PSE in the organization. She also wanted to know about the consequences of adopting the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, such as how the PSE leads to a better quality of work life for the employees. She would be content to learn how the Chumphon Cabana created a good quality of work life for its employees through the PSE. She really wanted to see how an organization that had adopted this philosophy looked.

There she was, in front of the check-in counter, where she met with the customer service manager, Taii. Taii was waiting for Rita to take her to her room and informed her that Varisorn would meet her at the restaurant in the evening, and Atchara would meet her the next morning. Rita could not believe what she just heard. She was just thinking about talking to Taii and some other employees, maybe walking around a little bit, and she ended up meeting the founder and the top management of the resort.

Taking a Grand Tour

It was almost four o'clock in the evening when Rita finished settling herself in her room. She decided to walk around the resort before going to the dinner with Varisorn. Rita noticed that the Chumphon Cabana took the PSE very seriously. It seemed to her like everyone in the organization had truly accepted this concept. She also noticed that the concept of virtue and ethics, including having a mind of giving, cohesion, honesty and integrity, as well as the ten virtues of the King², was spread around the organization. Rita found a sign in the Plearn Garden that communicated the meaning of having a mind of giving, as well as the meaning of cohesion.

Exhibit 1: Picture of a sign containing the statement “The more you do, the more you earn. The more you give, the more you have.” And “Exploding from the Inside”



Rita also learned that everyone working for the Chumphon Cabana had a common attitude toward His Majesty the King. Not only was the image of H.M. the King around the report area, there were also signs mentioning the faithfulness of the Chumphon Cabana people to H.M. the King. They were all holding the same pride of performing according with the PSE to respond to the royal speech. They were proud of being part of the PSE implementation, and they felt delighted that they could do something for the King. Rita was thrilled from what she had experienced about how the Chumphon Cabana people had strong faith and true love for His Majesty the King.

Exhibit 2: Picture of the sign referring to faithfulness to H.M. the King



Walking around the resort area, Rita found it a little strange, in her opinion, for the resort to have a swimming pool and wastewater treatment system located next to each other. The Plearn Garden itself was located in the middle of the resort. “Aren’t they thinking about being luxury at all?,” Rita posted a question to herself, as she thought normally, a hotel or resort would love to be as luxurious as possible to impress guests.

Rita learned that the resort was still in debt; therefore, it still needed to make a profit to pay off the debts. This organization is still a profit oriented one, and she found out that the Chumphon Cabana was going well, earning a profit and paying off the debt. It was clear to her now that adopting the PSE was not only for a non-profit organization, but was possible for all kinds of organizations. Rita had heard the saying, “Business for All.” At first, she did not think she understood the term; it just came to her afterward that every employee of the resort understood and agreed with the concept, that anyone that visited the Chumphon Cabana should earn something back, whether what they preferred to have was relaxation, peace, knowledge or wisdom. The people of the Chumphon Cabana insisted that they would be happy with their work if they could be part of an organization that gives something back to the society and the country. Rita took it in her own words that the Chumphon Cabana had the aim to be a social enterprise. Moreover, the Chumphon Cabana, as well as its employees, preferred to make the Chumphon Cabana a model and learning center for the PSE, and they would be proud to educate and share knowledge regarding the implementation of the PSE with others. It was clear to Rita that everyone there had the same understanding about the organization’s objectives, and they seemed to agree with those objectives of being a social enterprise and a PSE learning center while making a profit.

Taking a walk around the resort area, Rita noticed that not every guest staying at the Chumphon Cabana was happy and satisfied with the resort under the PSE concept. Some were complaining that this resort looked more like an agricultural area, than a resort. Some mentioned that they could not believe that this resort was seriously adopting the PSE. It could have been just another marketing strategy. Rita took a note for herself that the Chumphon Cabana needed to convince not only employees, but also quests and other groups of stakeholders. Adopting the PSE without proper communication system could have affected customer satisfaction and eventually the business performance of the resort. Rita found that

it was very challenging to make people understand and accept the concept of the PSE in profit organization, especially in tourism and hospitality industry. Another difficulty that Rita felt about was the sustainability of the PSE implementation. It was clear that adopting the PSE took long-term effort. If the management had not strongly engaged to the concept and the implementation, the adoption could have been just a fads.

Probing with People

At the dinner table, Rita got a chance to talk to Varisorn, the top manager of the Chumphon Cabana. She was interested in what he shared with her. Varisorn mentioned the time that he led the Chumphon Cabana before and during the crisis. He also shared his experience in adopting the PSE in the organization. Rita shared with him her project back at home as well. He suddenly told her that her project was possible, yet she needed to influence people properly. Varisorn said that he would do anything he could to ensure that everyone at the Chumphon Cabana had the same vision and common purpose of adopting the PSE in their work. Once they had a shared vision, they would be willing to work together in the same direction. Moreover, he had his employees sharing ideas and doing things together. If anyone got new ideas about work, he would like them to share it with others and try it together. Varisorn also said that if he would like to do something new, like adopting the PSE, he would involve people, not forcing them. He said that he needed to be a role model for his employees and he encouraged everyone at the Chumphon Cabana to be role models for others in adopting the PSE in their work and lives. Rita got the idea that Varisorn took personal action in adopting the PSE by bringing ideas to the group, encouraging discussion, and doing things together. He also encouraged his employees to do so as well. Lastly, about influencing people, Varisorn said that he needed to adapt his perspective and his work concepts to fit with the employees, who were the majority of the organization. The adoption of the PSE could not have been successful if he had acted alienated.

Rita was still curious about how Varisorn had driven the adoption of the PSE; she did not see the concrete picture of how he did it. Varisorn was patient enough to continuously share with her the idea that successfully adopting the PSE required changes in the organization. He mentioned three elements of changes. First was changing from the inside. Varisorn share with Rita that “Leading people is about changing their perspective, and then, that

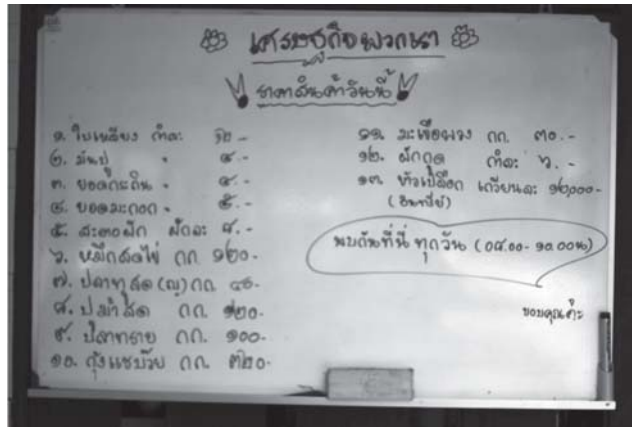
can lead to any other changes.” To make the PSE lives in the organization, people needed to truly understand what they were doing and truly accept the concept; then their actions would explode from the inside. Second, there was a need for a sense of challenge. It was believed by the employees and him that they were change agents who shifted the organization to another pace of resort and hospitality business. Third and last, learning by doing was important. All of the employees were provided with opportunities to learn by getting their hands on the job. It can be said that learning by doing was one approach of change adopted by the Chumphon Cabana. After the dinner, she thanked Varisorn for sharing his ideas and went back to her room. She started to see something come out of the conversation with Varisorn, yet she still was not sure what it was.

The next morning, Rita went to the restaurant again to meet with Atchara, Varisorn’s mother, one of the founders of the Chumphon Cabana. By the time she got there, Atchara was sitting at the last table on the balcony, looking out to the sea, looking at one fishing ship. Rita said good morning and joined Atchara at the table. Atchara suddenly said “I wish I could make that ship go away”. Rita understand right away that Atchara did not like it when they did the fishing too close to the dive sites. The net could harm the coral reef. Rita could sense Atchara’s care for everything around her from their conversation. Atchara said she heard from her son, Varisorn, that Rita was searching for an answer to successfully adopt the PSE in the organization. Atchara told Rita that at Chumphon Cabana they took care of each other as if they were relatives. Rita could sense a family-like relationship among the leader and followers. Atchara herself cared for all of the employees as if they were her own children. She even cared about what they ate. She always urged them to have vegetables, and not have too much soda or soft drinks. Atchara even reminded Rita about the danger of drinking too many soft drinks, making Rita start to feel the same care Atchara had for the employees working in the resort. Atchara also told Rita that she did her best to have everyone respect each other. She also mentioned that under her supervision, it was unacceptable to be untruthful to each other. Gossiping and back stabbing would always be unbearable. Another unacceptable thing was being dishonest and stealing. She fostered the idea that everyone could be a leader in certain situations. She would be happy to follow what the youngest employee told her to do if the situation demanded it. She posted an example of herself going diving. She would do what that young

employee suggested, as he was the dive master (the professional diver that led and navigated a group of divers under the water). According to Atchara, the Chumphon Cabana's people management style was unique. The management team took employees as family members. Working at the Chumphon Cabana was like working with family members. Therefore, in adopting the PSE, they had a sense of togetherness and they encouraged each other to share ideas about how to adopt the PSE in every part of the resort. Whoever could think of anything, they could speak up. Yet, in every family there must be discipline. If there was a case that people lacked discipline, corrective actions must be performed. Atchara admitted that it was difficult to reach the stage that everyone was fully disciplined, but the situation could, at least, get better and better. Rita had an insightful breakfast listening and talking to Atchara. She believed she saw some kind of charisma from Atchara while listening to her. More importantly, Rita felt the compassion from Atchara. In the sense of giving of the Chumphon Cabana, forgiveness was one thing that one can offer to others. Atchara was ready to offer forgiveness when her subordinates made mistakes and to feel sorry about those mistakes.

On the same day, there was a group from Bangkok visiting the Chumphon Cabana to learn about the adoption of the PSE. Taii came to Rita, telling her that Atchara and Varisorn would like to invite her to join the sharing session in the meeting room. Rita had no hesitation at all. During the session, Rita listened to Atchara, Varisorn, Taii, as well as some of other employees sharing their experiences with the PSE as a part of their work and their lives. Rita found that as an organization that had adopted the PSE, the Chumphon Cabana holds a certain set of characteristics. These characteristics could be an answer to her questions about what the organization could be by adopting the PSE. First, the Chumphon Cabana has the awareness of self-reliance. Awareness of self-reliance is when people realize that you cannot be completely dependent on external sources or others; it is important for individuals and organizations to be able to rely on themselves.

Exhibit 3: Picture of the Board of Our Economy representing the awareness of self-reliance



Rita noticed the board, showing the prices of raw ingredients that the resort needed for cooking. The board, called Our Economy, showed the offered prices for each kind of ingredient, which Rita found a little higher than the price in the fresh market in the area. In the same area, there was a chef checking on the ingredients sold by local people that lived in the surrounding communities.

Second, the Chumphon Cabana has the awareness of value of natural resources. The Chumphon Cabana clearly exhibits one clear characteristic: being environmentally friendly. It was declared that the Chumphon Cabana and employees were highly concerned about environmental issues, and there have been activities done by everyone at the Chumphon Cabana to conserve the environment, such as cleaning the beach and the conservation of fish in the surrounding sea areas. Rita found signs and posters regarding energy and environmental conservation in the resort area.

Third, the Chumphon Cabana retains harmony and collectivism in the organization. The employees of the Chumphon Cabana are concerned about cohesion, the concept sharing and collective implementation, the employees having a mind of giving, and a sense of a supportive work environment. Fourth, the Chomphon Cabana has a certain level of employee engagement. Rita could see that the employees (1) were happy at their work and were glad to come to work. The employees also have the (2) feeling of being at the right place. People here felt that the Chumphon Cabana was the right place for them to work and live their lives. They feel fulfilled

working with this company. Moreover, Rita saw (3) pride of being with this organization from the employees of the Chumphon Cabana; they showed that they were proud of being part of an organization that performs the sufficiency economy project and were proud of working for His Majesty the King. Lastly, Rita found what her family-owned organization was in search for at the Chumphon Cabana: sustainability. Rita truly understood that sustainability needs long-term and multi-dimensional consideration. What Rita could find from her short visit the attitude of people that were working there was, which could be considered as a great potential of sustainability: the attitude of implementing the PSE is an endless project. Rita heard from the employees of the Chumphon Cabana that adopting the PSE was an endless effort, as there would always be new problems to be solved. Moreover, people at the Chumphon Cabana understood that what they needed to do was to keep developing” better results.

Rita listened to Varisorn and Atchara, still trying to find the answer for herself, what it would take to adopt the PSE successfully and get a better quality of work life for employees. She went back to the things she learned from wondering around the resort and from talking to the people there. Rita was not sure if she got the answer she was coming after, but she knew that she had opened her mind to the PSE and to learning from those that really believe in the PSE. The implementation plan needed to be designed by herself to fit with her organization.

Epilogue

Rita was packing and getting ready to check out. She felt that she had gained new insight into adopting the PSE in a profit organization. She now had a clue for her quality of work life project. Little by little, she felt like she was different from the Rita that had arrived at the Chumphon Cabana a couple of days before. She was thrilled by the spirit of the Chumphon Cabana people. She not only got the answer for her questions about what could support and lead to the success of adopting the PSE in the organization and getting a good quality work life for employees, but she also got a clearer picture of what adopting the PSE could lead to. Rita understood that the nature of her family-owned organization was different from the Chumphon Cabana, which is in the tourism and hospitality industry. What she needed to think about was how the experiences of the Chumphon Cabana could be adapted to stand the differences among industries. Different approaches to

adopting the PSE might be needed, yet there must be something that could be a firm foundation for those different approaches. Rita was driving home smiling to herself. She had not gotten the perfect formula from the Chumphon Cabana, but she got something better, she got inspiration. Of course, she had a lot to work to do in order to adopt the PSE in the organization, and it could be extremely challenging, but at least, she knew where to learn from. She was on the way home, yet thinking about going back to the Chumphon Cabana Resort and Diving Center sometime soon.

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Endnotes

¹ <http://www.oanda.com/currency/historical-rates/>

² The ten virtues of the King consist of: Giving, Noble Behavior, Sacrifice, Honesty, Gentleness, Persistence, Emotional (Anger) Management, Nonviolence, Patience, and Justice
Source: <http://www.dgr.go.th/transparent/pdf/oja.pdf>