

Experiment Description

CONTACT INFORMATION

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PROBLEM STATEMENT – What specific problem (gap) did you address?

84% of ESD's employees are disengaged. 80% of ESD's supervisors and managers are disengaged.

EXPERIMENT – Describe the details of the experiment

Objective:

Change the culture of the agency to one of engagement.

Hypothesis: If we help leaders 1) understand how their actions impact others, and 2) create personal action plans to behave in ways that more positively impact others, then more leaders and employees will be engaged at work.

Measures:

Progress will be measured by survey.

Plan to address the root cause and achieve the objective: (you may paste a Word table or Excel action plan below)

Prior to engaging in this effort, the agency and the union made a conscious decision to enhance their partnership and have been working closely together to demonstrate the collaboration and trust necessary to create an environment where changing the culture of the agency can be possible.

The plan started with several focus groups led by a consultant. The purpose was to identify the problem and describe the root causes.

There are several root causes why the culture of the agency became one of disengagement, and not all the causes have been identified. One cause is management style. A passive defensive or aggressive defensive style will disengage employees. These two management styles can be seen as command and control.

As a first step toward change, a plan of action was created that included several phases:

1. Agency leadership participated in a Leadership Impact exercise to determine the impact they have on each other and their subordinate staff. The results have been communicated and there will be action plans for each of them to assist them with recognizing how they can adjust their impact.
2. Business Management Concept training is being conducted agency wide beginning with managers and supervisors. Agency staff and union staff have been certified to provide this training utilizing the maturity model, and they are partnering to provide the training in teams.
3. HR staff is being trained as well, and will assist supervisors and managers with implementing change.
4. As groups are trained, they are challenged to develop a Personal Plan of Action and begin incorporating new concepts into how they conduct business.

Results/Progress and Learning:

The leadership impact assessments have been completed, and the leaders have been briefed. They are developing action plans. **LEARNING:** Many were surprised by the results of their assessment. And, for many their impact on their peers was significantly different than the impact on their subordinates.

Several BMC training classes have been conducted. **LEARNING:** The groups have been very different - there are sub cultures within the agency culture depending upon division and geographic location.

Challenges experienced and how they were addressed:

There have not yet been challenges - other than a small bit of very visible resistance, and the realization that there are some managers who are simply not ready for this change.

Considerations for others adapting this experiment:

This all takes time. Once staff are included, which in our case was in the very beginning, it is important to provide regular communication regarding status. In our case, we did not begin with communication, and some staff became discouraged thinking this was just another one of those things that would be put on the shelf and never implemented.

Having the various phases taking place concurrently raises an air of anticipation, and increased the energy behind the effort.

SCOPE & CONTEXT

Employee Group – describe the group of employees on which this experiment focused

Size of group: Currently 350 supervisors and managers

Nature of their work: All areas of the agency

Primary customers served: At this point, the customers we are considering are the internal staff who are impacted by their supervisors/managers

Other important characteristics: These are the individuals who can lead the change and sustain the energy

Resources – describe the resources involved to conduct this experiment

Role of point person: Currently the "point" is transitioning from a consultant to a manager within ESD. That person will oversee the training, provide training, coach managers and supervisors, and spearhead future projects. The point person is responsible for coordination, communication and execution.

Roles of other team members: The members of the Goal 4 team provide direction to the point person on the strategic efforts of the plan.

Why these roles were chosen:

External resources or assistance (if any): External consultant and culture assessment tools

Resource 'intensity' / FTE equivalent:

Timeline – describe how long the experiment took to complete, by phase if possible

Start to Finish: on-going

Plan:

Do:

Check:

Act: