Driving
Organization
Improvement
Through
Social Media

A Performance Development Group Case Study

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DRIVING ORGANIZATION IMPROVEMENT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Opportunity

In the health care sector, communication is critical. But for a major hospital and healthcare group, communication between the levels of the organization had become difficult. The practitioners in the field worked with patients every day and often had the best ideas for improvements and innovations. But there were a number of barriers to sharing those ideas; employees were geographically dispersed, they had intensely busy schedules, and many were simply intimidated about taking a new idea up the ladder.

The client needed a way to drive innovative ideas from employees that was easy to incorporate into their schedules, did not require face-to-face communication, and removed the intimidation factor. The organization had already created an online Social Media portal but usage by employees was infrequent. The new Social Media portal needed to engage employees and be a safe place to share ideas and knowledge, as well as to collaborate with others across the organization. An effective governance system also had to be developed to allow ideas to be vetted and considered for implementation.

Ultimately, this was not technology challenge, but a behavior challenge. How could the organization get people to change their behavior? The company reached out to PDG to develop a strategy and implementation roadmap for communication and change management to empower their employees to utilize the Social Media portal and succeed in achieving their goals.

Solution

In order to analyze this situation, PDG gathered data by holding focus groups with key stakeholders and employees from across the organization. The goal was to get input from the process owners as well as those who were likely to be the greatest contributors. PDG also reviewed documents and research from a number of organizations that had implemented successful Social Media employee engagement portals.

Based on the outcome of their analysis, PDG created a comprehensive change management and communication strategy to increase awareness of the portal and its function. A technical rollout schedule was developed that coincided with communication and engagement touch points. Recommendations were developed that addressed the three key objectives for implementing the portal: ideation, knowledge sharing, and direct communication. PDG proposed a methodology for reviewing, filtering, and approving ideas generated on the portal.

Finally, PDG provided recommendations for the overall governance of the platform. If ideas submitted to the Social Medial platform seemed to go into a black hole, it was unlikely employees would continue using it. Who would review and vet ideas that were submitted? How would employees know that their ideas were received and being considered for implementation? How would the desired behaviors be reinforced or rewarded?

As part of the analysis, PDG conducted a Change Readiness Assessment to evaluate both employees and stakeholders. Issues identified in this step included:

Current State Analysis:

•   How are communities of practice being formed today?

•   How are people getting peer and performance support?

Future State Vision:

•   Where do employees currently go for information when they want to learn something?

•   What would support them in their learning process?

Change Readiness:

•   What is the audiences' and stakeholders' appetite, trust in, and knowledge of Social Media tools and their utility?

Organizational Factors that will likely influence adoption:

•   What are the benefits and rewards of using the tool?

•   What are the barriers?

•   What is senior leadership's perception and commitment?

Impact

The focus groups uncovered that employees were not consistently recognized for their contributions. Many employees operated in silos and did not share information, even with their own teams. Employees received too many emails that were not always relevant to their needs and interests, and were disregarded.

By utilizing the PDG design, the client adapted the Social Media portal to benefit employees by increasing the relevance of communications and decreasing the volume of email by using employee profiles to send targeted email. The portal also allowed interactive communication; information previously sent via by email was now posted on the portal, providing opportunities to instantly engage in online discussions and brainstorming, and the ability to search and find information as desired.

Employees received more public recognition through the Social Media portal. Employee discussions, ideas, and blogs were not anonymous—as such, everyone has an opportunity to have their contributions acknowledged and recognized by their peers. In addition, it is easier to

recognize the superior performance of employees in an already exceptional environment using the Employee Recognition portal.

Relationship building became easier with the portal. Using the Employee Profile Search functionality, employees were able to find people with similar interests and expertise with whom to share information and collaborate, regardless of where they sit within the hospital system.

Career development improved through increased knowledge and improved performance. The portal allowed easy networking with employees across the organization, connecting employees to subject matter experts in areas of interest. The more employees knew, the more they could contribute, and the faster they could grow within the organization.

Patient care and service delivery also improved. The portal made finding people and information faster, resulting in improved patient care, speed to delivery of services and improved processes that streamline care.

Lessons Learned

Changing how an organization communicates doesn't happen immediately; it takes time. Giving an employee a tool does not mean they will use it; they need to understand the value, to themselves and to the organization. And while all change involves risk, it is necessary to minimize risk as much as possible to encourage behavior change. Gathering data to determine the value of the change to employees and then integrating that information into the messaging helps lead to successful behavior change. Obtaining visible support from senior leaders, communicating the reason for the change, and the expectations of the employees helps with implementing the changes smoothly.