

Build Cross Functional Team Collaboration in a Retail Chain Conglomerate

Situation

The Sales and Operations team of the Food Department in this Retail Chain Store had been experiencing a lot of conflicts. The dysfunction teams had created negative impact on customer satisfaction level and started to risk business continuity. The company had organised outdoor team building workshops before to build trust and communication. The result was not prominent. There was a slight increase in communication after the workshop but since it was one-off event and lack follow up to the real issues, the teams slipped back to the dysfunction mode.

Set Improvement Goal

We were asked to assess the situation again and recommended ways to help the teams move towards a collaborative environment. After discussion with key stakeholders, we agreed the goal of this project was to get the two teams design for themselves the future working relationship and align responsibility and accountability. The outcome was that both teams agree on a 'performance contract' and all members be accountable for the required actions.

Implementation Strategy

The "Team-Building" roadmap was 4 month in duration separated in 3 phases.

Phase 1 Preparation work for a Off-Site Get together

We set up a meeting with the Head of Sales and Head of Operations to define the desired state of how a collaborative team would look like and established clear measures of success for the programme. We also invited participants to complete Behavioural Profile Assessment (MBTI) in advance. This is a tool for members to understand themselves, and one another, in a deeper level.

Phase 2: Initial off site

The 2-day session acted as an anchor of the team building effort and served as the formal kick off of a new approach to teamwork. It included a review of the team's assessment, activities to build trust, dealt with conflict resolution obstacles, and clarification of team and organisation principles. Another clear goal was to create a culture of accountability, team members learnt to provide one another with direct feedback, both positive and constructive, around their behaviour and performance. We also established a team scorecard indicated what has agreed upon and resulting actions that must be taken. Open discussions were also focused on what needs to take place to make the team contract a living one. Immediately after the off-site ends, we distributed important notes to team members as a confirmation of the

commitments they made and for their on-going reference and use during months to follow.

Both the teams Head co-led a meeting to review the commitments they made in the weeks that follow the initial off-site.

Phase 3: Second off site

This was a one day session which took place 1 month after the initial off-site. The teams reviewed the commitments together, and discussed about what had been achieved, what's not working and how to close the gap with actions. There were activities to review the Team Effectiveness as well. A key outcome of the session was the participants co-created a continuous process to re-evaluate team effectiveness and constantly address areas of improvement and problem solved together.

Results/Impact

The different facilitated sessions created a new way of work practice i.e. both teams meet regularly to resolve operational issues. One great impact was that the teams have embedded this approach to their daily routine to resolve areas of deficiency by themselves and be able to step back to assess progress. This communication practice was not possible before the facilitated team sessions. And, through those sessions, the team members implemented operational changes that both teams had committed upon and carried through. The Team Scorecard was a great tool to ensure commitments are implemented and was agreed as an effective tracking tool.