

# Effective Project Team Planning to Meet Customer Needs Implementing Performance Initiatives

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# Major Presentation Points

Being on the “right track” to meet customer needs:

1. Our goal is to meet customer needs
2. Effective project team planning and management...a management approach to meet customer needs.
3. Generating/gathering...Input/ideas
4. Put ideas into action

# Management Approach

- Re-think your current approach to planning and managing your project teams
- Try new behaviors
- Be disciplined & loyal to the operating framework for effective planning

# Applicability of Project Planning Principles

- Interdepartmental teams
- Direct management teams
- Individual project planning

# Presentation Outline

- Define opportunity or initiative with examples
- What initiates the initiatives
- Value and benefit of project teams
- Individual vs. group decision making
- Why teams miss expectations
- 8 step structural blueprint: performance initiative project phases
- Idea generation, evaluation, implementation

# Examples of Improvement Opportunities & Initiatives

- New mover acquisition
- Stop reduction
- Increase apartment circulation
- New editorial or advertising section
- New technology vendor selection
- Strategy & tactics sessions

# Results of Needs Satisfied

- Grow circulation
- Increase readership
- Grow revenue
- Increase profits
- Product integrity & acknowledgement
- Internal customer satisfaction

# Primary Circulation Functional Areas: Umbrella to Classify Initiatives

- Acquire new customers
- Retain and service customers
- Delivery and distribution
- Database that describes customers and their behaviors
- Promote and communicate our value to our customers

# Why Project Teams: Value and Benefit?

- Organized and structured decision making process
- Different specialty groups cooperate and communicate as teams
- Opportunity to share and create ideas
- Team driven and focus: instills teamwork and participation
- Saves time and maximizes resources

## Sound Familiar?

- “Our project teams meet but don’t seem to make any progress.”
- “I don’t think that is what we are here for.”
- “No one asked me. I have that information already compiled.”
- “We are making the changes on Monday???”

# Why Do Teams Miss Expectations?

- Poor project leadership
- Management buy-in
- Organizational culture
- No clear goals
- Initiative not attainable
- Lack of direction
- Team size
- Wrong team members
- No team performance criteria
- No structure
- Team dynamics
- Premature decisions
- Lack of valid, reliable, verifiable data/reports

# Performance Initiative Project Phases

1. Establish opportunity target based on feedback/data/analysis
2. Background homework
3. Project team kick-off meeting
4. Team analysis & reframing
5. Create ideas & evaluate ideas/tactics
6. Implement ideas/tactics to reach target
7. Design measurement tools to track performance
8. Make adjustments/evaluate/institutionalize

# Project Management Process-Planning & Background Homework

- Data supporting creating project team
- Top management support
- Make resources available
- Define the opportunity
- Select team leader
- Establish goals
- Timetable & milestones
- Task list & key responsibilities
- Identify team participants

# Identify Team Participants

- Cross-section of staff
- Affected areas
- Heterogeneous vs. homogenous
- Expertise is exchanged
- Overcome limitations of one frame of reference
- Objective observer—fresh pair of eyes
- Resource experts

# Project Initiative Team Kick-Off

1. Structure, purpose & guidelines
2. Team member roles
3. Team member rules of conduct

# Team Structure

- Situation/background
- Team purpose
- Target-desired performance objectives
- Timetable
- Meeting schedule
- Agenda/meeting summary
- Attendance is required

# Team Member Roles

- Generate ideas
- Create plan to implement initiative
- Do the assignments
- Contribute
- Real work
- Avoid premature solutions
- Analysis & Methods:
  - Data review
  - Review current processes/flow chart
  - Interviews
  - Benchmark
  - Brainstorming
  - Weighing/rating tactics

# Team Rules of Conduct

- Everyone participates
- Listen
- Not dominate
- Constructive confrontation
- Stay focused on goals
- Not resolving issues that affect team
- Status is level-stripes at door
- Confidentiality-agree what stays in room

# Brainstorming Ideas for Initiatives- Specific Tactics

- Reduce stops
  - Monthly billing
  - More credit card
  - Invoice messaging
- Real estate growth
  - Add pages
  - Saturday section
  - Free tab
- Younger Demos
  - Concise stories
  - Free tab
  - New section
- Market Diversity
  - Column
  - New section
  - Partnership

# Why Team Milestones?

- Operationalize goals into measurable tasks
- Provides meaning and guides for action
- Reduces team conflict
- Must for assessment and evaluation
- Tracks progress and successes for motivation

## Examples of Team Milestones

- List of vendors for review by 10/1
- Vendors reviewed by 12/1
- Credit card rates created by 4/14
- Bill messaging scripts due 9/18
- Poor vending box locations by 5/23

## Initiative Measurement Criteria

- Reduced suspensions 10% by 12/1
- Grow single copy accounts 5% by 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter
- Reduce sellouts percentage to national average
- Increase NIE school participation by 20 classes
- Increase credit card percent of base to 20%

PROJECT PLANNING EXERCISE

Establish initiative/opportunity for project team\_\_\_\_\_

Supporting data\_\_\_\_\_

Performance target\_\_\_\_\_

Team leader\_\_\_\_\_

Key responsibilities/task list

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Team members

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Team milestones(examples)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Initiative measurement criteria(examples)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Timetable\_\_\_\_\_

# Aramini's Project Management Survival Basics

- Do your homework: prepare & clarify objectives
- Pick the right leader
- Be an obsessive communicator
- Who feels the “ripples?”
- Be disciplined & loyal to framework
- Conduct project update meetings with effected areas
- Do test
- Don't assume you have the answers
- Drilling down is good-focused vs. broad-based