

Free case study about alternative courses of action

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Executive Summary

The current discourse presents an analysis of the problems encountered by Newlands, a hospital located Ireland. Case facts revealed that Newlands' staff had been accustomed to the way they do things and are reported to exhibit reluctance to change. However, recent developments in the external environment, including the Regional Health Board's requirement for level 4 qualification necessitate urgent improvements. As such, through the request of the CEO and the Board of Directors, the report details the problem encountered, the alternative courses of action, as well as the recommended changes to effectively address the identified dilemma.

Overview and Background on Newlands

In this regard, the current discourse aims to present a comprehensive report which clearly identifies the problem at Newlands. In addition, after the problem identification stage, alternative courses of action would be determined. These alternative courses of action would be analyzed in greater depth to determine which option is most viable and beneficial for Newlands. The proposed recommendation would then be selected based on the results of the analysis which generated the most validly supported course of action that would significantly improve Newland's status as one of the most innovative and advanced in the field of community and mental health.

Identification of the Problem

The symptoms which indicate that there are confounding issues at Newlands include the following: (1) demoralized staff; (2) high levels of absenteeism

and sickness among managers; (3) inconsistencies in application of performance appraisals; as well as (4) lack of transparency in career development plans.

Newlands is the personnel's resistance to change. From the video on organizational change, resistance to change was noted to be a "natural human reaction to disruptive events (fear of losing control)" (Using Learning & Development to support organisational change, n. d., p. 38: 44). Likewise, there are policies and procedures, especially those pertaining to performance appraisal, monitoring, training and development, career pathing, as well as a code of discipline which incorporates rewards and sanctions, that need to be changed and managed accordingly. It is relevant to emphasize that to ensure that Newlands would be kept abreast with the demands of the changing healthcare environment, the organization needs to make crucial transformation in its internal policies and processes.

The following are identified to be alternative courses of action which could potentially solve the problem:

- Status Quo: Do Not Change Anything
- Implement the Needed Changes

Analysis of Each Alternative

☛ Status Quo: Do Not Change Anything

Pros: The advantage of not changing anything is that the current personnel would not have to be exposed to stress and anxieties. Likewise, Newlands would not have to incur additional costs or invest in resources (time, effort and funds) to design new policies and procedures.

Cons: The disadvantage of status quo is that there would be continuous manifestation of the problems that continue to be evident at Newlands: demotivation, low morale, lack of career development, and inappropriate performance evaluation. As a result, there are greater potentials for decreased productivity which would eventually take a toll in the overall rating and image of Newlands as an innovative and advanced health care institution.

🛠️ Implement the Needed Changes

Pros: There would be improvement in morale as the staff would be more motivated to perform, as expected. Designing new policies and procedures in training and development, career management, performance appraisal, as well as conformity to RHB's criteria to gain a level 4 qualification in office administration, would be tantamount to higher productivity, improved corporate image, and greater financial success.

Cons: The foreseen disadvantage of proposing implementation of needed changes is the resistance to change. Likewise, Newlands would have to be prepared in terms of money, time, effort, competencies of management, to implement and manage the change process.

Proposed Recommendation

Based on the analysis of the alternative courses of action, the best option is to implement the needed change and to manage it accordingly. Change management has been evaluated by various human behavior experts and practitioners. Several change models were proposed to implement change. One of the most famous and has been considered effective in implementing

change is Kurt Lewin's Three Step Model (Martires and Fule, Management of Human Behavior in Organization, 2004). According to this model, implementing organizational change should undergo the following steps: (1) unfreezing; (2) moving; and (3) re-freezing (Learning and Development: BLDE702 Session 6: Change Quality, 2012). Likewise, another change model is Kotter's 8 step change model.

- Establishment of a Sense of Urgency

Management should communicate to the entire staff that change is needed and that urgent measures need to be implemented to enable Newlands to continue operating according to expected standards of professionalism. Management should disseminate the requirement of the RHB of the need to attain a new level 4 qualification in office administration by the end of 2014. Noncompliance of attaining the required level would mean that the RHB would recall the hospital's license to operate. As such, the rationale for recommending changes is effectively justified.

- Creation of a Guiding Coalition

The creation of a guiding coalition is an important step to counter resistance to change. As emphasized in the case, " many of its staff have become very used to their own ways of doing things and are reluctant to change their behavior" (Case Study – Newlands, 2014, p. 1). Thus, aside from communicating the urgency and the need for change, a guiding coalition should be created through a small task force who has acknowledged that Newlands must implemented proposed changes. The small task force would be composed of supervisors (unit managers or nurse managers) of each department that would clearly communicate new policies and procedures

pertinent to the set of changes that are to be implemented, as required.

- Development of a Vision which should be Shared

The development of a vision is consistent with the model originally developed by Nadler and Tushman (Learning and Development: BLDE702 Session 6: Change Quality, 2012). According to the model, a mission and vision statement needs to be clearly developed to enable management and personnel to work collaboratively towards attainment these targets. In the case, the vision is to sustain its “ reputation for being one of the most innovative and advanced in the field of mental health and community health” (Case Study – Newlands, 2014, p. 1). To achieve this, the organization needs to comply with RHB’s requirement to upgrade standards of professionalism and qualify to the new level 4 qualification in office administration.

- Communicate the Identified Vision

Communicating the identified vision at Newlands means scheduling an organization-wide general meeting. The meeting is to be attended by department heads and authorized point persons representing each department. The agenda is the proposed changes to be implemented at Newlands starting immediately. The series of changes starts with the mission and vision statement, as well as organizational goals. It includes complying with the criteria set by the RHB to elevate to the level 4 qualification in office administration. To do this, management would update and improve policies and procedures pertaining to leadership development (through training), career management, as well as performance evaluation.

- Empowering Personnel to Act towards Attaining the Vision

Strategies should be developed by management to empower personnel towards attaining the vision. The strategies include learning and development strategies which emphasize the need for the HR department to design and develop a series of professional training courses for the entire workforce at Newlands (Learning and Development: BLDE 702: Session 5: Strategy, 2014). The strategies would also be consistent with career management. As defined by Martires (2004), “ career management is the pathing, planning and development of one’s work schedules and activities in relation to the individual’s abilities, skills, competencies at the initiative and with the assistance of management in order that (the personnel) can take greater job and personal responsibility for (their) future” (p. 294). When each and every personnel at Newlands is accorded with opportunities for career development, they would be more motivated to perform delegated responsibilities. Likewise, the progressive training and development courses would assist in preparing the personnel to future career paths through regular promotions according to performance appraisal results.

- Creating Short Term Wins

The creation of short-term wins means designing departmental goals, targets, and standards which could be achieved in shorter time frames. Upon attainment of these targets, the personnel who exhibited excellence in the performance of duties which contributed to attaining the set goals should be aptly rewarded. The rewards and sanctions systems would likewise be developed through updating Newlands’ code of discipline and code of conduct. Likewise, the performance appraisal system would be structured and implemented consistently across the organizational hierarchy and to be

conducted on a regular basis. A more comprehensive evaluation of results would be patterned from Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation (Learning and Development: BLDE 702 Session 11: Evaluation, 2014). Through the model, the personnel who underwent training and development are accorded with the chance to relay their reaction, learning, behavior, and results. These tools would assist management in measuring the effectiveness of the strategies in achieving targets and goals. As such, short term wins are rewarded according to the motivational program and employees' career development exemplified from their service at Newlands.

- Consolidation and Building on the Achieved Gains

The step manifesting consolidation and building of achieved gains promotes a positive stance for further development and improvement through continuous change. A regular implementation of performance monitoring and evaluation would result to the identification of strengths and weaknesses of each personnel; as well as components in the organization's policies and procedures that require updating. All inputs and information are collected and used. The integration of learning and development as well as improvement in HRM functions (job organization, acquisition, development, maintenance, and research) contribute to knowledge management (Learning and Development: BLDE702: Session 3: LD HRM, 2014).

- Institutionalizing the Change

The final step in Kotter's 8 step change model is synonymous with anchoring the change in the organization's culture (Hartzell, 2013). Through the use of a competency based performance management process (PMP), Newlands would determine the specific training needs of each personnel based on job

descriptions (Learning and Development: BLDE702 Session 7: Competency, 2014). Likewise, the training modules would be designed to prepare them to promotions in their respective career paths. The performance evaluation should be conducted regularly and consistently to ensure that employees are accorded with fair and equitable assessment of competencies based on their strengths and weaknesses. The weaknesses noted should be corrected and would be the basis for proposing training modules in the future.

One strongly believes that Newlands' weaknesses include the provision of effective motivational programs, as well as learning and development programs that would acknowledge and promote their personnel. The effective development of motivational programs would depend on an accurate assessment of the needs and drives of their personnel. Given that their current workforce is made up of three different generations (baby boomers, Gen X and Gen Y), this means that appropriate research must be conducted in addressing their motivational needs (Kane, 2014). As emphasized, " the diverse perspectives, motivations, attitudes and needs of these four generations have changed the dynamics of the workforce. A little insight into the differences among the generations can help better understand the needs and expectations of colleagues in an age-diverse workforce" (Kane, 2014, p. 1).

Concurrently, Newlands also lack a structured system of communicating the organization's policies and procedures, as well as the code of conduct and discipline. As such, managers could just be consistently absent from work without being sanctioned. Likewise, managers were also reported to be inconsistently implementing performance appraisals. With improvements in

the policies and procedures, as well as the code of conduct and discipline, these managers would be provided with guidelines to follow and adhere to. The same set of policies and guidelines should be communicated to the staff so that conduct and behavior would be consistently applied.

Conclusion

In sum, the proposed courses of action would solve the identified problem. Kotter's 8 step change model would significantly assist in minimizing and even eliminating resistance to change. Likewise, through the successive steps, management would be assisted in developing strategies that would institute learning and development through progressive training programs. In addition, the updating of policies and procedures, as well as designing an effective motivational program would provide rewards and sanctions that would govern expected behavior in the health care setting, as required. The recommended steps in implementing changes at Newlands would definitely assist in enabling conformity to RHB's level 4 qualification in office administration. With the instituted leadership training and development programs, as well as career management and performance evaluation, Newlands' standards of professionalism would be raised considerably. Likewise, providing opportunities for the staff to be promoted and rewarded for exemplary performance would create high morale, high job productivity and satisfaction. More importantly, all of the stakeholders would work collaboratively in achieving the explicitly identified and communicated mission and vision statements of Newlands. In the end, Newlands would sustain their positive corporate image and reputation as one of the most innovative and

advanced health care institutions in the field of mental health and community health.

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