If It's Not Broken, Why Change? Changing Workplace Culture With a Deep History

August 28, 2016

Hennepin County

- Hennepin County Core Values
  - Employee Engagement
  - Workforce Development
  - Diversity & Inclusion
  - Customer Service
  - Continuous Improvement
- Employee Engagement Survey
- Formal Complaint Process
- Union Grievances
Hennepin County Transportation Operations

Today’s Objectives:

• History of HC Transportation Operations
• Who we are
• Workplace Culture Challenges and Changes
• Successes
• Panel – Q & A

Overview of Hennepin County Transportation Operations

• Traffic
• Road & Bridge
• Asset Management
• Right of Way Use
• Administration
County Highway System

Includes...
- 571 centerline miles / 2204 lane miles
- 148 bridges
- 790 traffic signals
- 55,000 signs

Hennepin County Transportation Operations Dept.

Director
Chris Sagsveen

Deputy Director
Teresa Jepma

Road & Bridge Operations
Traffic Operations
Finance/Business Support
Right of Way Use
Asset Management
Truck Stations
- Bloomington
- Medina
- Minnetonka
- Orono
- Osseo

Union perspective – 49er’s

- Represent city, county, private organizations
  - Competitive between employees
  - Egos
  - Stronger language
  - Predominately male
  - Challenges in recruiting needed
Union Leadership

• History of grievance on everything
• Lack of respect
• Goal to improve working relationship with management
• Assist in making work place culture better

Major Concerns

• Survey & Assessment Results
  – Trust issues
  – Accountability
  – Lack of respect
  – Lack of transparency - processes
  – Inconsistent treatment/responses
  – Behavior and communication issues
Change was needed

Change before you have to. -*Jack Welch*

Goals

- Improve morale
- Improve the workplace
- Change communication styles
- Management to lead by example and
- To stop living in the past.
What we changed and how

- Observations
- Workforce Development (training)
- Employee engagement
- Organizational Structure
- Relationships
  - Union, departments, external

Observation Period

- Observed meetings and staff interactions
- 1:1 meetings – front line supervisors
- Listened to the history
- Interpersonal interactions
  - Communication styles
  - Interactions
  - Behaviors
- Shop visits and job site visits
Workforce Development

- Started with Foremen and Managers
  - HR related topics
  - SME; FMLA, Finance, Labor Relations
  - Leadership training
- Employee training/conferences
  - Provided more options
  - Asked what was valuable

Employee Engagement

- Increased ways to engage staff – started with shop visits
- Quarterly meetings with HEO & Leads
- Revised the Lead Worker process/test
- Communication and Improvement Group
- Created Workgroups
Organizational Structure

- Direction of department from all aspects
- Changed structure to support new direction
- Balance workload and responsibilities
- Team approach

Relationships

- Relationships with others
  - Other departments that we work closely with
  - Union leadership
  - Constituents
Challenges

• Significant amount of change in short period
  – Various degrees of acceptance
• Letting go of the past
  – Forgive and forget (difficult to move on)
• Lack of Trust
• Behaviors – set new standard
• Roles/responsibilities changed for some

Successes

• Relationship with Union is healthy & positive
  – Labor Management established
  – No grievances / very little discipline issues
• Recruiting process – involved Union BA
• Incorporated ideas from staff
• Improved attendance
Successes

• Skilled management and staff
• Employees engaged in process improvement
  – Kaisen Event (process improvement)
  – Call out system
• Lead Worker and HEO processes changed
• Less tension and attitudes improved
• Confidence to offer ideas

Panel Members

Chris Sagsveen, Director
Mike Olmstead, Supervisor
Dave Bramwell, Foremen (previous Union Steward)
Tom Mullowney, HMO (Union Steward)
Teresa Jepma, Deputy Director
Questions for the Panel

In your opinion, what change had the most impact and what was your role?

Questions for the Panel

What did you feel was the turning point in changing the workplace culture?
Questions for the Panel

What was the biggest struggle that you experienced or heard about from others?

Questions for the Panel

How has these changes impacted your union role?
Questions for the Panel

What questions do you have?

Final comment

There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction. -Winston Churchill