

Final Paper

Organizational Development Approaches and Considerations

For B. R. Richardson Timber Products Corporation

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MGT535: Organizational Development and Change

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February 28, 2021

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Method

In the first paper I composed for this course (due on February 2nd, 2021), I proposed a thought experiment of desired outcomes and traced steps backward to identify potential interventions that could lead to similar outcomes. I will continue to use those ideas, presented in part 3 of the mid-term assignment, for this paper.

Discussion

Individual / Group Interventions-Process

The goal of the individual intervention process is to capture and concisely communicate the perception and sentiments of the demotivated front-line workers of the Papoose Laminators Co. to the leadership team. The process for individual interventions will be a series of surveys administered to the entire Lamination Company (Lam Co.) This survey will be composed of questions about work-life balance, safety, and job satisfaction. There will be free writing space at the end of the survey to propose solutions to these concerns. (These free-writing responses can be used to populate the content of the workplace diversity intervention on page six of this paper, as well as analysis qualitative tool discussed on page eleven of this paper.)

Once the sentiment of the individual contributors has been collected, analyzed, and qualified it will be used to drive group-based interventions. These groups will be off-site sessions where all members of staff will be broken into small focus groups. Each group will be composed of a diverse team based on which functional crew they typically serve with. Members of leadership will be dispersed throughout each group evenly.

Once the survey results have been collected they will be analyzed and qualified into reports. These reports will be used in the group interventions to generate discussion around the concerns that lead to a lack of motivation. The goal will be to generate solutions to these issues and apply this content to a structural intervention that analyzes how conflicts are resolved.

The structure of this process will be realized by directing small groups to review the content produces from the survey and answer specific questions. The OD practitioner will facilitate these sessions. The questions will be focused on the structure of the teams and how lack of accountability affects the morale among the workgroups. There will also be a focus on

formulating solutions to improve the work conditions. The specific focus will be on increasing work-life balance, job satisfaction, and productivity.

The reason that all employees will be involved in the focus groups is that employee involvement will promote productivity. If the employees are included in the solution building process they will feel like their voices have been heard and they will have more buy-in to the solutions they helped generate. The secondary effects will be that the senior leaders will have an opportunity to hear, and hopefully listen to and understand, the voice of the workforce firsthand. Also, the front-line workers will be aware of how these solutions were created and will not feel like something was decided without them or behind their back.

If high-involvement organization restructuring is selected the workforce structure could be redesigned. There would be a need for training around general problem-solving techniques. Then, once an assessment on front-line workers identifies their primary area of specialty they become subject matter experts (SME) in that step of the process. A flat organizational structure can be implemented where nobody works outside of his or her assigned role but roles alternate on a cycle. The SMEs will provide training, on a set schedule (1 month or 2 months), to workers entering into that step and a rotation will occur. Ideally, this training would be based on hands-on/action mapping design to increase knowledge retention and promote deep learning. After four cycles, all employees will have been trained on all four workstations and then have had practiced the work at that step in the process. The cycle will continue to rotate indefinitely, and reinforcement training will only be provided as necessary. SME training will still be needed for new hires as they enter the company and start the rotation cycle. (This could be offered on weekends if the idea to create a weekend shift, from page seven of this paper, is enacted.)

This consistent level of change will support interest among employees while reducing the chance that a worker will be asked to conduct a job that they are not familiar with. This will improve the psychological condition of workers and reduce stress and boredom providing a strong return on investment (O'Neill, D, 2011). Besides that, there is a 75% chance that productivity and quality rates will improve across the company (Ledford G., 1992).

If the cycle rotation of SME training in the previous section is successful there is potential to improve this enhancement by introducing self-managed work teams. Once all of the workforces are proficient at all of the steps in the beam lamination production process, then they could be evaluated through a quantitative assessment that scores them on, productivity, quality, and safety. Once all members of the workforce have scores in these three areas they can be broken out into groups that each have varying levels of each. For example, a single self-managed work team should not have only members that score high in safety but must have a mix of high, medium, and low. This variance of score level should be seen across all teams for all categories. Once teams are selected they will start at the beginning of the beam creation process and then follow that beam through all of the steps of production. In this way, they will be able to apply specific knowledge from problems encountered in pre-glue to the gluing process. If the gluing process was not executed perfectly, then the team can apply that insight to the planing step in an attempt to compensate for that error (Sims H., Manz, C., 1982). In this way, the quality of the product can be increased while the social connection is increased and technical knowledge fully leveraged.

The performance management model could be implemented by leveraging the SME training mentioned before and implementing an appraisal team structured and regulated by John Walton. It would be most beneficial if the teams could set their own performance goals (J.

Riedel, D. Nebeker, and B. Cooper, 1988). Then teams would be fed their performance data as it compares to other teams on a weekly or even daily basis. Raising performance would be the primary objective and would be managed by the team itself (Mohrman, A. M., Mohrman, S. A. & Worley, C. G., 1988).

Part of this performance management business strategy would be a reward system that honored the highest performing team, or teams, with additional nonpayment incentives (such as gift cards, fishing lures, fishing poles). Teams with the lowest scores could be awarded pink safety helmets, safety glasses with gemstones, or Hello Kitty stickers (Mydans, S, 2007).

If the decision is made to move to a flat self-managed teamwork structure, then individuals will be required to remain consistent with what role was assigned to them in the beam laminating process. This creates a need for additional workforce members who will be available to cover for team member's absence. This provides an opportunity for existing members of the workforce to be promoted to a higher earning role based on their experience and proficiency. There is an opportunity to have part-time "cover" staff members enter the workforce and only become certified in one of the four workstations. When they make an effort and attend training for all four workstations and are certified as proficient in all then John Walton could assess them and have them promoted to the senior level role. At this time Dirk Vorhees can schedule them into a team for full-time employment. As new employees enter the workforce they will be assigned to the workstation that has the fewest recently hired staff members on that station. In this way there will be a progression for development and succession planning will be instilled while the concept of working groups is reinforced.

Workforce diversity could be addressed in several ways. The survey that is presented to all staff members could ask if there are any specific needs that the worker has that are not

currently being supported. This information can be shared with Richard Bowman and John Walton to formulate a plan to better accommodate that need so that the worker is reaching their full potential and productivity while feeling more included as a valued member of the team.

Another difference among the workforce could be specific scheduling needs. This could also be addressed in the survey. Perhaps there is an entire team-worth of employees that would be interested in working a night shift or 10-hour weekend shifts. This would increase productivity and terminate the need for mandatory overtime permanently. This would also provide additional part-time opportunities for those who only have 20-hours a week that they want to contribute to the company, or those entering the company who are only certified in one or two workstations. With this information, Dirk Vorhees would be better equipped to generate an inclusive and comprehensive schedule that better serves the organization, speaks to the needs of the workforce, and minimizes the risk of having missing team players.

There are people in the workforce who were standing next to an employee while they gave their life serving the organization. The response from leadership was to remove the body and continue working. This is perceived as a devaluation of the needs of the workforce and sends a message that they are not appreciated as human beings. The stress from injuries and the experience of witnessing a team member's death could be better addressed. Professional counseling could be offered either on-site or in private. Training on coping with stress or stress-management could be implemented. Reducing the need for mandatory overtime and strictly enforcing safety regulations are also sustainable measures that would manage the stress-level of the workforce. This in turn would reduce the absentee rate; increase productivity, and lower health insurance claims (D. Allen, 1990).

Re-structuring of tasks would streamline the process and improve efficiency. For

example, the business strategy could be improved by focusing on the most cost-effective beams to produce. Another solution would be creating a rigid system to organize the beams as they are being produced. According to Rolf, large architectural beams “take three times as long to process” and represent up to 12% of the output (Cummings, T. G., and Christopher W. G., 2016). Having multiple types of product outputs causes confusion as well as costly mistakes. Rolf added that as much as 20% of the work hours are spent un-sorting the beams that have been produced (Cummings, T. G., and Christopher W. G., 2016). The ROI on the architectural beams should be evaluated and if they are found to produce adequate increased profit then a system should be implemented to store them in a separate location than the standard non-architectural beams.

In the text, Dirk Vorhees states: “Joe does too much. He keeps it all in his head. He is efficient. It would take two people to replace him. He’s overworked, he doesn’t like the hours, and he’s just trying to keep his job.” (Cummings, T. G., and Christopher W. G., 2016). The process (or lack of process) that Joe has around sourcing raw material with his secretary, Susan Lyons, is not efficient. This task would be better suited for Dirk Vorhees. Dirk has the mindset, education and is driven to enter the world of sales. This would also provide a channel for growth for Dirk, who represents top talent and a severe flight risk.

There are two options to either create workgroups that specialize in a single job or create groups that work as a team throughout the entire process. If workgroups specialize in a single job then it might be cost-effective to leverage Dirk Vorhees's training in glue science to develop a strategy of alternating glue teams. The gluing process is the most complicated and has the highest margin of error. Having alternating teams who clamp beams into glue would reduce fatigue, which would diminish the margin of error and decrease process bottlenecks. If self-managed teams move throughout the entire process then it could be beneficial to have additional

help at the gluing workstation to ensure this process runs smoothly and does not cause work to stop.

The human resource practice of recruiting would benefit from over-hiring or having potential candidates ready to enter the workforce. HR, Richard Bowman, and Joe Bamford, in this case, could support the process of feeding new staff into the tier 1 position where there is a need for “cover” staff. Then as new employees progress and become certified in all four workstations by SME training they can be promoted to full-time staff to join a work team.

The newly streamlined process can track the effectiveness and quality of each team. This data can be used to identify teams that are top performers and reward them with nonpayment incentives. In, addition it was reported that production levels and quality are tracked by three separate entities. This process should be evaluated and streamlined in a more unified and synchronized method. The implementation of a simple personal computer intranet would greatly improve the internal communication around data.

The nature of the industrial task of laminating beams lends itself well to *assume* that a more mechanistic organizational design *must* be implemented. While innovation in beam storage and gluing station practices is needed, the future state seems to require an environment of precision and control. The mechanistic concept largely overlooks the human needs of the workforce that the organic design would offer. The mechanistic design does not incentivize skill development through a tiered ability-based pay system. The mechanistic design does not provide enriched jobs that are adequately supported by training and development practices. These job enrichments would be powerful to drive worker engagement and reduce the danger of boredom and complacency.

The organic design would implement a transparent system that provides a clear

illustration that efficiency, self-improvement, and safety lead to rewards and career advancement. This process implements the ladder of inference (D. Miller and P. Friesen, 1984). The data about productivity and efficiency are used to validate and add meaning to work performance. Having team-based awards would cause team members to conclude that working as a team is valued and this would generate a belief that working as a cohesive unit is in their best interest and they will take actions toward that end.

There is potential for Papoose Laminators Co. to merge with another organization. Considering that the demand for production is increasing and the current facility is incapable of meeting the demand without structural enhancements this option could be a viable one. A merger with a larger and more organically structured organization would be ideal. The Lam Co. would require significant structural and managerial enhancements before considering a successful acquisition of another company.

The current identity of the Lam Co. is that it is a dangerous work environment that does not value its workforce or their needs. The organizational culture would benefit from implementing OCEA guidelines and restructuring the organization to eliminate mandatory overtime. Placing values on these topics would benefit the identity of the institution and move the needle on the company's reputation from being *a place where everyone in town has worked there when they had a bad year toward, if you are driven and focused you might have a chance to land a job at that organization.*

A Content Analysis can be utilized to analyze and simplify data. Two key questions can be formulated around safety and work-life balance. These questions can be presented in interviews to all, or randomly selected populations, of the workforce. The answers can be reviewed and categorized to develop themes around safety or work-life balance. Lastly, answers

would be reviewed again to place them into one of the themes and the themes would be tracked for occurrences.

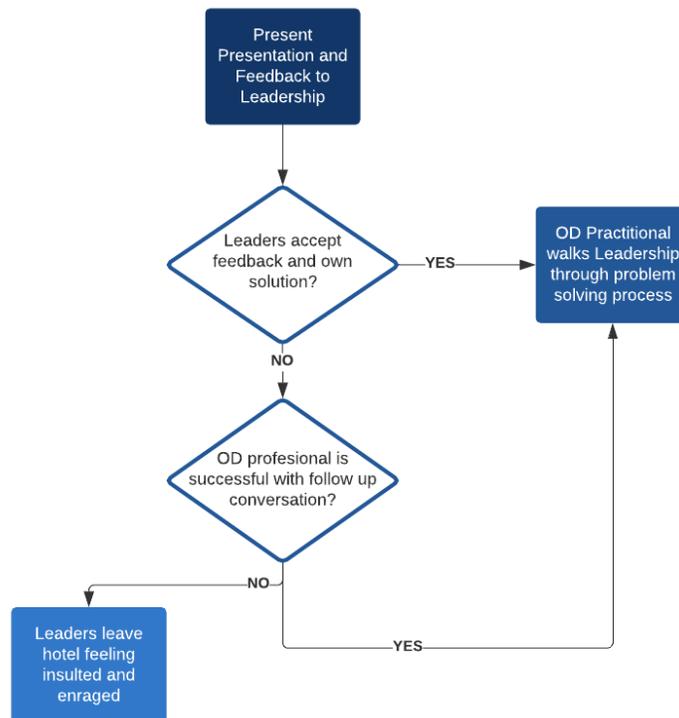
Next, a “force-field analysis” could be conducted with the work-groups to analyze qualitative data. This process would group responses to questions around work-life balance and safety into two categories either forces that drive change and those that resist change. Then the forces from each category are itemized into levels of strength. Identifying ways to decrease the forces that resist change is normally the more productive choice as opposed to increasing the forces to drive change (Lewin, K., 1951).

Quantitative feedback could be produced by collecting production reports created by Dirk and extracting data by scanning it into a laptop computer on site. The outputs from these data sets would include the means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions; scattergrams and correlation coefficients; and difference tests. These mathematical outputs are standardized in most computer software that is used to produce quantitative data. A difference test could be applied to compare the data to other samples to identify how the data compares to common averages from other companies producing the same type of laminated beams. This could be used to determine reasonable production levels and benchmark decreases during the change event and increases after the managed change is complete. (Armenakis, A. and H. Field H., 1987) This information would be especially useful to present to B. R. Richardson to paint the picture of success.

The initial feedback of the data from the surveys on work-life balance and safety will be shared in a safe environment off-site, preferably at a quiet conference center in town. Only members of leadership will be invited including B. R. Richardson, Richard Bowman, and Joe

Bamford. Joe Bamford's direct reports would be optional at this meeting. However, Rolf Dunbar should not be invited to this event.

Possible effects of sharing this information are presented in the flowchart below.



A round table discussion will start with a formalized presentation that facilitates a correlation between improved work-life balance, safety and safety standards with improved morale, productivity, and decreased absentee rates. Analyzed survey feedback data will be presented in graphs in the PowerPoint presentation. Also, the responses to questions will be shared anonymously in printed packets. The OD professional will lead a structured conversation about potential solutions, problem-solving, and ownership.

The process proposed for individual intervention relates to two main functions of the individual. First, the types of work done will be decreased initially. The ability for workers to be moved around as needed supports the symptom of worker's lack of accountability. If an

employee calls off from work then it will be manageable because someone else is capable of covering for his or her work.

Second, the amount of time spent working in a single day will be decreased. Work will not end when the quota of production has been met. A worker will be held responsible for a specific job while reporting to a standardized 8-hour shift and when that shift is completed that worker will leave the job site. Productivity and quality assurance will be regulated by a series of controls as well as positive reinforcement for desired outcomes. Mandatory over-time, until the quota has been met, supports the symptom of a lack of planning, poor scheduling, and inadequate training.

At the group level, the intervention process relates to the development of teams, which represent a shift. Each team contains at least two workers who are experts at a specific step in the laminated beam generation process. These teams will alternate shifts between a morning shift and an evening shift every week. In this way, no group will always be working in the morning shift (6 AM to 3 PM) nor always be working in the evening shift (3:30 PM to 10:30 PM).

Thirty minutes before the end of each shift, beam production will stop. Finalized beams will be placed in appropriate containers and workstations will be cleared of trash and scrap into localized dumpsters and tools will be replaced into organized containment facilities. A workplace/workstation audit should be conducted after each shift and work teams will not be permitted to leave the site until the audit is passed. The time needed to clear up and organize a workstation after the 30-minute clearing stage will be hours deducted from the pay of every member of that entire shift. This will support clearing trash and organizing tools while work is being completed.

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