Financial Administrators Forum: Change Management Exercise

Case: Infrequent Tasks

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CASE: INFREQUENT TASKS

-current state:
  - It is March 1\textsuperscript{st} and you have been informed that all staff members in Research Finance are leaving in two weeks as they won the lottery

-desired state:
  - You have been asked by your Department Chair to complete financial statements for all your Department’s Tri-Council accounts by April 15\textsuperscript{th} (no exceptions)
Change Management
Strategic Levers

Managing the Change Process

Project Governance
Gap Analysis
Action Planning and Transition Management
Measuring the Change

Describe the Future State

Leadership Capacity
Communications
Training & Learning
Recognition & Rewards

Enabling & Sustaining People
Step 1: INITIATING the CHANGE

WHAT FACTORS HAVE CREATED THE NEED FOR CHANGE? WHY IS CHANGE REQUIRED?

• Crisis situation – staff have given 2 weeks notice as they have won the lottery
• Need to hire new staff and or train current staff
• Deadline has to be met – no exceptions
• Consequences – researchers will not get their money; the University’s reputation may be affected
• The timeline for the crisis is 2 weeks
Step 2: GAP ANALYSIS

WHAT SPECIFICALLY NEEDS TO BE CHANGED?

- Need to develop strategy to complete form
- Where to locate the form
- Understand the form that needs to be filled out and who needs to approve them
- Someone different than before needs to complete this form
- Locate if anyone knows how to complete this form (Ex. Your equivalent in another department)
- Delegate those who have the experience and knowledge
- Obtain research policy and procedure manual and the web-site(s) of the granting
- Documentation and Training / Cross-training
- Business process mapping / find efficiencies
Step 2: GAP ANALYSIS

WHAT ARE THE DRIVING FORCES FOR CHANGE?

• Inflexibility of the funding agency – deadline must be met
• Staff are leaving – won the lottery
• Department Chairs have assigned the responsibility to Department Administrators
• Maintain McMaster’s leadership in Research
• Legal implications – soft funds cease that covers admin costs
• Students on these research grants will not get paid
• Recruitment deadline
Step 2:
GAP ANALYSIS (cont.)

WHAT ARE THE RESTRAINING FORCES AGAINST CHANGE?

• Resistance amongst staff being asked to complete the form
• Collective agreement
• Lack of knowledge
• Structure of the system itself
• Volume of work
• No procedures binder
• Lack of access to financial reports / significant amount of red tape to obtain access
• Will create significant pressure/stress that is overwhelming
• Current workload
• Cross training staff does not have the required time due to their own duties
• Time restraints
• Parallel recruitment process
Step 3: ACTION PLANNING AND TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE ACTION PLAN?:

WHO?

• Senior officials in the University
• Granting agencies
• Individuals performing the tasks (Department Administrators)
• Researchers
• UTS
• Union
• Bring in support staff
• Students
Step 3: ACTION PLANNING AND TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE ACTION PLAN?:

WHAT?

• Training on the process
• Historical data
• Instructions for completing the forms
• Information gathering
• Access to systems – IT
• Workload redistribution
• Overtime
• Creation of an automated Form 300
• Set-up project management spreadsheet
• Find a Champion
• Quick decision making
Step 3:  
ACTION PLANNING AND TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE ACTION PLAN?:

WHEN?

• March 1\textsuperscript{st} to 14\textsuperscript{th} (before staff leaves)
• Month of March  
  • Gather information  
  • Give people access
• First week of April  
  • Complete form and get researcher approval
Step 3:
ACTION PLANNING AND TRANSITION MANAGEMENT (cont)

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE ACTION PLAN? (cont)

WHY?

• Assumption that the staff does not want to stay is asked
• To meet Tri-Council deadline
• Legal and financial ramifications
• Need a proactive measure
• Documentation for future reference
WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE ACTION PLAN? (cont)

HOW?

- Step-by-step guide from those who are leaving
- Identify which grants/accounts we need to complete forms for
- Formal training sessions using previous year’s forms
- Develop standard operating procedures
- Identify experts elsewhere in the University
- Arrange UTS support
- Review granting agency web-site for information
- Develop plan to cover of duties of staff
- Network with other Universities
- Assistance from Tri-Council
THE ACTION PLAN – How Specifically does your action plan consider and manage the four critical areas required to sustain people through change?

BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

- Working together in crisis builds relationships
- Opportunity to highlight leaders amongst staff
- Identify new competencies/leaders amongst staff
- Reach out to people with experience
- Determine priorities
THE ACTION PLAN – How Specifically does your action plan consider and manage the four critical areas required to sustain people through change?

TRAINING

- Training on form, training on system
- Develop training modules/trainers
- Create a working group/lab facilitated by another finance office from an external University
- Read Tri-Agency Policy and Program Guide
- Learn from mistakes
- Create a network of individuals to help answer questions
Step 3: ACTION PLANNING AND TRANSITION MANAGEMENT (cont)

THE ACTION PLAN – How Specifically does your action plan consider and manage the FOUR critical areas required to sustain people through change?

COMMUNICATIONS

- Department chairs
- Researchers
- Amongst staff involved
- Union
- Helpline / Contact List
- Meetings
- E-mails to staff and granting agencies
THE ACTION PLAN – How specifically does your action plan consider and manage the FOUR critical areas required to sustain people through change?

REWARDS & RECOGNITION

- Determine appropriate reward for staff performing function (lunch, President’s Award)
- Financial compensation, perks (Ex. Membership to the gym)
- Staff retreat
- Free parking
- Start our own lotto pool
- Party funded by all the lottery winners!
Step 4: MEASURING THE CHANGE

HOW WILL YOU KNOW YOU HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL? HAS THE CHANGE BEEN IMPLEMENTED AS PLANNED? WHAT ARE YOUR SPECIFIC MEASURES OF SUCCESS?

- Forms completed and delivered to Tri-Council on time
- Staff that worked on the form feel a sense of satisfaction
- Staff involved apply for postings for new positions
- Team building
- Hired replacement staff
- Developed training and documentation
- Are forms have been completed and are accurate
- Maintained the reputation of the Department and the University
Step 5:
CELEBRATING!

HOW WILL YOU CELEBRATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS?

• Wine and cheese party
• Letter from the President
• Luncheon (staff appreciation)
• Thank all that helped us get through it