

Kelley's Corner

Last month we were left dangling in the breeze with three questions regarding a bad driver experience:

- Why did the driver have so much trouble receiving a warranty repair?
- Why was the driver put at risk to his/her personal safety?
- Why did the company handle the situation poorly and lose the driver?

The employees at the company spent a lot of time trying to evade responsibility for the myriad problems arising from the incident. Management initially tried to hold the operational staff accountable and some employees started to dust off their resumes. To the credit of senior company management, a decision to analyze existing policy and procedures was undertaken, instead of a headhunting mission.

The analysis revealed an astonishing fact:

There were no documented policies and procedures

The staff did not have the tools to guarantee their job success. Any existing procedures were verbal hand-off legacies without reference material. As well, a significant percentage of the staff had not had any transition training. They were hired after their predecessor was promoted, fired or had quit.

How does an organization approach such a large problem? The existing staff were fully tasked and did not have the skills to author policies and procedures. Does it make sense to start with high levels policies and then drive the detail. Perhaps the reverse? Eventually, outside help was engaged.

The next few articles will provide the detailed improvements undertaken to reduce the possibility of driver turnover due to maintenance issues. The following recommendations are guidelines for managing third party process change to ensure value:

- Whenever possible approach the solution as a project. Projects have goals, deadlines and progress reports. Cost control is very difficult without these three basic elements.
- Be candid with your staff. The role of a stranger in their midst should be explained as an opportunity to make their jobs more enjoyable. Studies have shown that positive management recognition of staff is the most important component.

Well, we answered the questions at the high level. Enough of this touchy feely stuff....

Next month we will look staff roles and responsibilities and how they help to prevent maintenance issues. Remember, the key word is prevent, not react.

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