

ATD Champions of Learning

Mercury Land and Sea - Emerging Leaders Program

Write a brief summary of your project/initiative. Please limit your response to between 150 and 200 words.

Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), was designed as an action plan after an organization wide employee opinion survey. Lowest scored subjects were targeted

The objective of the program was to improve the employee opinion survey scores of lowest scored questions, which were around; pay and benefits, innovation, growth & development, engagement and alignment. This initiative led to 24% increase in favorable response scores of lowest scored questions in 12 months.

This initiative led to \$1,250,850 in hard savings for the organization including reduction of turnover cost, reduction in workers compensation cost and improved job efficiency.

It involved weekly lunch and learn classes and activities led by volunteer employees during their lunch breaks.

Volunteers were employees, who were chosen to be the successors of certain positions in the organization. Leadership initiatives that they were exposed to were part of their leadership development plan. As they were aiming to improve self-leadership skills of employees, we were aiming to improve their self-leadership in other levels.

The classes and activities were inspired by the recent scientific studies on employee engagement.

The classes were live in corporate office while they were blasted off to 13 various locations of Land'N'Sea Mercury Marine simultaneously utilizing Adobe Connect technology.

The program targets all employees in every level.

No additional budget was needed to run this program. It was zero cost to the organization.

The program was carefully designed on the foundation of Lean Six Sigma principles. In other words, the program's influence on employees and income statement were quantified and tracked in various matrix (turnover%, turnover cost, pre and post test employee opinion survey scores, pre-post scores of mindfulness and attention etc.)

What was the business/organizational need that led to this initiative? Please limit your response to between 150 and 200 words.

2017 Employee opinion survey score was 47% favorable, 27% neutral and 23% unfavorable for lowest scored pay and benefit, innovation growth & development, engagement and alignment related 11

questions. The consequences of the low EOS scores were high turnover, increased employee errors, day dreaming, decreased employee performance, increased safety related incidents and reduced talent retention. We found a significant correlation between the employee opinion survey scores of certain locations and their turnover %. For example our night shift in a particular location had 81% turnover and this group had the lowest scored employee opinion survey in the organization. Our analysis showed that overall turnover % of the organization increased significantly compared to previous years for the organization as well.

In the year 2017, 39 critical business problems were worked on by the Land N Sea Lean Six Sigma team. 82% of these projects listed employee errors due to inattention as a possible root cause. Lack of attention led to significant increases in safety related recordable incidents. Both employee errors and safety incidents impact the efficiency of many departments, negatively affect morale and are costly.

It was recognized that our employees did not always have the efficient skills to do their jobs. A survey sent out to 337 office employees nationwide. 101 employees participated to the survey. It was discovered that employees rated their excel knowledge in average 4.91 on a scale of 1-10 (10 refers to advance excel knowledge). 47% of office employees are responsible of updating a repetitive daily or monthly excel report. Average of 9.07 hours per week per employee spent on excel reports with a limited Microsoft excel knowledge. This adds up to 117,910 hours at all LNS, which equals to \$4,1million in payroll expense. This was a major area of improvement for the organization.

What actions did you take that led to the success of this initiative? Please limit your response to between 400 and 500 words.

Employee opinion survey is a helpful tool to understand the overall opinions of employees in different aspects. Once these areas are identified there is a need for another survey to understand the root cause of dissatisfaction in these specific areas.

Intensive literature review was conducted on understanding the fundamentals of employee engagement on:

Neuroscience of engagement

Inspiration and motivation that leads to employee engagement

Proper job training and continuous learning

Sense of community that leads to employee engagement

A comprehensive curriculum was developed looking at the employee opinion survey results. Volunteer were trained on the basic fundamentals of the curriculum to be able to deliver them to employees.

The Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) fostered transformational learning that was designed to improve employee engagement from 3 holistic perspectives. Each of these perspectives had their own training series led by volunteer employees.

Neurological and Biological

Mindfulness and Attention training

Inspirational and Motivational

Women Leadership Development

Self- Leadership Development 101

United Nations of LandNSea

Knowledge and Skill Development.

Microsoft Office Training

Safety

Lean Six Sigma

Misc.

Mindfulness and Attention training was led by Alex Sipala, purchasing agent and Lean Six Sigma green belt. The curriculum was developed by replicating two scientific studies inspired by Mindfulness based stressed reduction program. The core 16 hours program continued for 8 weeks. Strategies and activities to improve attention, reduce day dreaming, increase self-awareness, improve communication and harmony in the workplace and reduce work related stress was promoted during this time.

Women Leadership Development and Self-Leadership 101 series were led by our sales assistant Shanna Caison Ruiz. She is in training to be a Lean Six Sigma black belt. The aim of these series was to improve self-leadership qualities for all employees. This training program involved book clubs and various discussions on different subjects. The curriculum was inspired by recommendations of employees.

Under the same roof, we have employees from 29 different nations at Land’N’Sea. United Nations of Land’N’Sea was inspired by the diverse employee portfolio of the organization. Nina Vorobeva, our e-commerce data analyst and Lean Six Sigma green belt runs this program. Nina gathers employees who originated from same country and help them organize event where employees proudly introduce the cultures to others in the organization. Events involved live cooking shows, tasting the traditional food while listening to authentic music of that culture, watching short videos about the history of the country and the touristic sites.

Microsoft Office training was led by Alejo Tenutta, e-commerce data analyst. Alejo is training to be a Lean Six Sigma black belt. The goal of the program is to improve excel knowledge of employees from self-score of 4.91 to 7, and reduce time spent on excel per employee per week to 5 hours.

The main success factor of this project was that employees enjoyed participating to activities and training programs that were led by their peers. This created a casual environment where employees bonded.

What outcomes resulted from your initiative and how did you measure them? Please limit your response to between 250 and 300 words.

- We were able to increase the average favorable % score of select employee opinion survey questions from 47% favorable to 71% favorable. The details of the scores are as below.
 - Alignment score improved from 47% to 81%
 - Engagement score improved from 59% to 67%
 - Growth & Development score improved from 57% to 81%
 - Innovation score improved from 26% to 48%
 - Pay and Benefits score improved from 26% to 48%
- A pilot group of employees were given the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale test (MAAS), their average scores were 60 in mindfulness and 22 in paying attention. After the Mindfulness and attention training, the pilot group was tested again. As predicted by Stanford and Harvard University Studies, MAAS Mindfulness and Attention Scores before and after the training overall 18% improvement on Mindfulness score and 17% improvement on Attention score were achieved. Estimated workers compensation cost reduction due to attention training was \$144,000 compared to previous years. The number of recordable incidents reduced compared to previous years in the facility of the trained employees. Common Themes from the employee interviews regarding to impact of the training was below:
 - Reduced Stress
 - Improved Communication
 - Improved liking the job
 - Increased compassion to others in the workplace
 - Sense of community
 - Self-Awareness
 - Improved relationships at work and home
 - Being more understanding to others
 - Increased happiness
 - Increased awareness to surroundings
- Microsoft Excel training is an ongoing training. Estimated savings from this project 104,910 hours of labor, which could be utilized in other tasks, eliminate over time and eliminate seasonal hires. Employees were taught advance skills where they automated the repeated excel spreadsheets. Overall estimated reduction in payroll expense is \$941,850 by the end of year 2019.
- The employee retention in our particular location's night shift seasonal employees improved from 19% to 36%. This led to \$165,000 in turnover reduction cost.
- Overall estimated financial benefit of the Emerging Leaders program was \$1,250,850. We consider this as a great saving as no additional expenses were incurred due to this program.

What information would be vital for other organizations to know if they wanted to replicate your initiative? Please limit your response to between 250 and 300 words.

Follow these simple steps to replicate this project in your organization.

- Have a quantitative approach to measure the success of the program. We started the program with Employee Opinion Survey scores, turnover %, turnover cost, Mindfulness and Attention Score, Self-rated excel knowledge score and number of hours employees spent on utilizing excel in a given week.
- Employee Opinion survey gives clear directions to areas of improvement that the program can focus on. Get ready to prepare another survey that dig deep to investigate the root cause of the problem in those specific areas.
- Emerging Leaders program was led by employees. These volunteers were chosen due to their unique talents. Knowing the strengths of employees, understanding who can lead these kinds of programs is the key to the success of this program.
- We offered volunteering opportunities to those who are in our radar to be developed to upper management positions in the next 5 years. Leading a section of the emerging leaders program was a great growth opportunity for our emerging leaders.
- The most successful classes or events were the most casual events. United Nations of Land’N’Sea was the most liked event of all.
- Be the advocate for recent scientific developments in organizational psychology