

Leadership Alliance Project Report

Dennis J. Whitted

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1. Project

My project was to try to increase our Cafeteria usage here at The Village Retirement Center. Our daily customer count is lower than we feel it should be, resulting in a historical financial loss each year. We know of the many benefits to our residents if they can be convinced to frequent the café more regularly. This has been shown in many instances when residents have started using the café regularly. This lack of participation has been a problem for probably the last 40 years and many things have been tried through the years.

2. Benefits

The project ended up evolving to more of a leadership journey. As I began, I realized that even within the staff there was not the support that should be there. If the rest of the staff were not promoting the café, how could I expect the residents to support it? The focus turned to trying to improve staff commitment and focus. As I saw the needs among our staff, I backed off of the original goal for I saw the needs of our staff pulling together as a much greater need. Through discussion and education I feel that we are working closer together as a team now. As it turns out the actual cafeteria usage did not significantly change. Since there are so many factors involved, it is hard to determine if my efforts had any effect on my original goal at all.

3. Team

I needed all the participants to be working towards the same goal. To achieve greater participation in our Cafeteria, I needed everyone involved to be committed. Residents need to accept and feel a part of everything that is done. Staff need to be promoting the café positively in every possible way.

4. Communication

During this time I communicated through our weekly department head meetings, through our employee newsletter, through our resident Newsletter, through email, letters and resident meetings.

5. Challenges:

- a. Lack of commitment to established goals by key staff.
- b. Lack of buy-in to our organization's values statement by key staff
- c. Lack of resources to bring physical changes that would enhance the accomplishment of our goals

6. Solutions to Challenges

I have still not overcome these challenges but I am working towards that. I spent time with leadership staff going over the principles of leadership. I have tried to get everyone working towards the same goals. I have tried to help them understand and share the values of our organization.

I have tried to work with the Board of Directors to get funding to help bring about the physical changes needed. I have secured commitment for planning changes and have consulted with an architect and we have drafted plans for remodel that have been approved in theory by the Board of Directors. We are still waiting a funding plan.

7. Critical Leadership behaviors

- a. Paint a big picture
- b. Build consensus around organization's values
- c. Describe a compelling image of the future
- d. Challenge people to try new approaches
- e. Appeals to others to share dream of the future
- f. Express confidence in people's abilities

8. Implementation of Leadership Principles

It is probably more correct to say that my inability to implement these leadership behaviors effectively enough over the past year has hindered my ability to successfully complete this project. I feel I have improved in my ability to lead in these areas, but I still feel I have a long ways to go.

9. Future Leadership Development

My quest for leadership skills has only just begun. Through this program I realize that I have a lot to learn and to implement. I plan to look for ways to improve my skills through continued involvement with Leadership Alliance, through continuing education and reading. I hope to be able to implement what I learn each step of the way.