

EXPLORING CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES: Rapid Achievement of Productivity for New Employees

UCSD EPSE-LAMP Student
Research Assignment 2006-07;
Combined Findings

THE ASSIGNMENT

- Understand the challenge – behaviors, processes or tools that achieve productivity for new employees more rapidly
- Interview at least two individuals
 - one manager with a reputation for quick assimilation of employees
 - one new employee
- Document findings, give personal analysis
 - Specifics – behaviors, processes, tools, experiences
- Provide summative insights/recommendations

INFORMATION RECEIVED

- Fifty-one papers
- Twenty-three companies
- Variety of approaches to the interview questions and methods of integrating analysis

COMBINED FINDINGS

- Organizational/Managerial Performance with Regard to the Challenge

- Doing well 25%
- Doing OK, but areas to improve 55%
- Poorly done 20%

- Organizational/Managerial Responses to the Challenge:

- Hiring/Selection/Pre-"Work" 35%
- Training/Mentoring 60%
- Knowledge Transfer Tools/Processes 5%

COMBINED FINDINGS

■ Hiring/Selection/Pre-"Work"

- Think through the position carefully beforehand; know what you are looking for (and how to assess it)
- Not just technical knowledge, but "fit" with both the organizational culture and the needs of the specific project/program team (e.g., fit affects the speed of becoming productive)
- The environment for work affects the speed of becoming productive (work station, co-workers, access to systems and information, etc.)
- Seems to be an increasing preference for outgoing, self-initiating people
- This becomes more important the more experience or ability you are looking for in a new employee

COMBINED FINDINGS

■ Hiring/Selection/Pre-“Work” Ideas

- Seldom find a perfect new employee (meets all the requirements), always a “gap” or two; don’t assign (early) tasks in the “gaps”, fill the “gaps” with help from work associates,
- Big difference between integrating an experienced engineer and a new college graduate – prepare accordingly
- “Pre-employment” efforts can make a big difference – student internships, college partnerships
- Best way to get quick integration is to get someone fully qualified and experienced – aggressive recruitment, thorough assessment process
- Have recent new hires help with new employee hiring interviews

COMBINED FINDINGS

■ Training/Mentoring

- People learn best by doing
 - “real” tasks, short-term deadlines and feedback, progressive complexity
 - long classes or lots of reading are not effective
- Must have someone to interact with
 - “buddy”, “mentor”, “peer”, “pair”
 - accessible and responsive (more important than formal workplace relationship – assigned mentors seldom work)
 - social/informal also very important (workplace colleagues)
- New employees like structure but managers like flexible, self-directed solutions

COMBINED FINDINGS

■ Training/Mentoring Ideas

- One manager gave "homework"
- "Take an engineer to work" day
- "Associate Engineer Program"
- Two levels or orientation – corporate and program
- Scheduled feedback sessions with someone outside of the employees department
- Have new employees participate in customer or other types of meetings (even though they can't contribute much)
- "New Hire Integration Plan"
- New employee networking group
- Have new employees use the company products and attend product review meetings
- Use Instant Messenger for quick questions
- Pay attention to employee's learning modality; tailor their integration plan
- Work group and corporate culture are different; need different orientations and integration activities

COMBINED FINDINGS

■ Knowledge Transfer Tools/Processes

- Transition planning is valued, but seldom done well
 - Documentation (including timely updates)
 - Backup/transition training and assignments
- Knowledge databases are “hit and miss”
 - Sensitive to the type of work/industry?
- Ironically; the more rapidly the company/industry is changing, the more need there is to record and share knowledge, but the less opportunity there is to do so
 - Structured processes break down
 - Internal wiki
- Routine cross-training is almost impossible