



CASE STUDY:

Government Performance Planning and Development

The Client

The city government of one of the largest manufacturing cities in the U.S.; more than 17,000 employees and 48 collective bargaining agreements.

The Situation

After years of researching, planning, and organizing, city officials began implementing a benchmark by which the city could measure its progress toward satisfying both its citizens and its employees. The process, called Performance Planning and Development, was designed to help the city achieve its core service priorities focused on the following:

- Neighborhood stabilization and improvement
- Improve public safety
- Strengthen internal services
- Improve supervisor and employee communication through training and coaching

The Challenge

To incorporate a top-down cascading process, beginning with the Mayor, to change the work culture where peak performance and customer satisfaction become the collective bottom-line by providing:

- Clarity of performance expectations and outcomes
- Continuous supervisor and employee feedback
- Building effective work relationships
- Regular conversations regarding performance
- Alignment between employee performance organizational goals and employee development



The Solution

The Performance Planning and Development process consists of three separate yet integrated systems. These systems are: Communication, Training, and Performance Coaching. Each system is designed to work in an integrated manner with the others, as the process is cascaded down from one managerial level to the next, and then to all employees.

The Results

During the implementation phase, an initial three-hour orientation was provided for all employees. Within a 60-day period, 10,000 employees attended 156 sessions and generated more than 25,000 comments about the process. The comments were analyzed and indicated that employees overwhelmingly identified leadership skills as the key issue that could make the process work in their department or interfere with making the process work. The human resources department used this information to determine the types of training and development activities supervisors required.

Two-day training sessions for every city supervisor were conducted through the second tier of the process. Within six months, 2,000 supervisors attended 66 training sessions to prepare them about how to successfully conduct performance meetings with their employees. Additionally, all supervisors were invited to attend one-on-one, skill-building opportunities following the training sessions.

The most unique aspect of the process is the Performance Coach role. This new role was filled by city employees who provided initial and ongoing support of the process. Performance Coaches were assigned a “service group” comprised of several departments. The coaches’ primary responsibilities were to assist in every phase of the process and are considered “subject matter experts.” They were responsible for documenting that every city employee participates in at least one performance meeting by the conclusion of the implementation phase.

According to the city’s human resources director, “Quality standards and accountability is nothing new to the city. However, quality standards and accountability organized around clearly-defined goals and focused service measures is radical realignment. The synergy reverberating across the organization is, in effect, being reaffirmed within each department because of the momentum generated by a shared vision.”