Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement

MSBA Annual Conference
September 28th, 2014

Outcomes / Purpose

♦ Participants will list at least two requirements of a continuous improvement approach
♦ Participants will identify at least one performance measure that is applicable within their district
♦ Participants will list two strategies for creating a culture of continuous improvement

Outline

1. Culture
   - Definition
   - Frameworks for examining
2. Continuous Improvement (CI)
   - Requirements
   - Approaches
3. Application – Strategies for creating a culture of CI
   - District Alignment (Purpose, Principles, Performance)
   - Performance Management (Results, Actions, Consequences)

1. Culture

♦ Definitions:
  - Wikipedia: Organizational culture is the behavior of humans within an organization and the meaning that people attach to those behaviors. Culture includes the organization’s vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, beliefs, and habits.
  - Organizational culture affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders
  - “The way we do things around here”
  - The way that people prefer to behave
  - The way we treat one another (Aubrey Daniels)

Bearden’s “Bi-Culture Disorder”

♦ Professed cultures
  - What we say we do
♦ Actual cultures
  - What we actually do

Examining Culture

♦ What is written
♦ What we do
♦ What we measure
♦ How we change behavior
Leaders Define Culture

ên “the leader’s role is to establish conditions under which all performers will choose to execute the mission, vision, and values of the organization.” (p. 4)

ten Effective leaders “simplify the requirements for success to a minimum set of actions” and deliver “frequent, positive consequences to those responsible for carrying out the mission.” (p. 14)

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2. Continuous Improvement

Requirements
- Ongoing – keep getting better
- Acknowledgement of room to improve
- Measurement
- Change
- Alignment of efforts

Some Major Approaches

- Lean Six Sigma
  - Focus on the customer
  - Identify & understand how the work gets done
  - Manage, improve and smooth the process flow
  - Remove non-value-added steps and waste
  - Manage by fact and reduce variation
  - Involve & equip the people in the process
  - Undertake improvement activity in a systematic way

- Total Quality Management (TQM)
  - Customer focused
  - Employee involvement
  - Process-centered
  - Integrated system
  - Strategic & systematic
  - Fact-based decision making
  - Communication

- Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence
  - Leadership
  - Strategic Planning
  - Customer Focus
  - Measurement, Analysis & KM
  - Workforce Focus
  - Operations Focus
  - Results

- ISO 9001
  - Customer Focus
  - Leadership
  - Involvement of People
  - Process Approach
  - System Approach to Mgmt
  - Continual Improvement
  - Factual Approach to Dec. Making
  - Mutually Beneficial Supplier Rel.

Commonalities

Common Principles:
- Leadership
- Customer
- Workforce
- Processes
- Results

Common Difficulties:
- “Too much” Focus on antecedents
- Alignment

Performance Management

- Based on an application of the science of behavior analysis (“Applied Behavior Analysis”)
  - Performance-based, analytical, technological, socially important, contextual, accountable
- “the branch of Applied Behavior Analysis that focuses on the workplace”
- The goal of Performance Management (PM) is to “create workplace that brings out the best in people while generating the highest value for the organization.”
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3. Application
   (Strategies for Creating a Culture of CI)

   ✧ District Alignment (“bottom line” – mission-related)
   ✧ Performance Management (incremental improvement – shorter-term “results”)

District Alignment

Plan

Priorities / Performance Objectives
Practices & Programs
Professional Development

Performance*

Principles

Processes
Policies

Purpose (Mission)

Purpose

✧ Strategies for identifying purpose (Key questions)
   – Why does the district exist?
   – What is the key (most important) service that we provide?
   – Does our purpose identify an outcome?
   – Does our district have control over this outcome?

Principles (Values)

✧ Guidelines for development:
   – Not too many!
   – Try to define what they might look like in practice
   – Communicate these to stakeholders
     • Seek stakeholder input periodically

Performance Monitoring

✧ Performance Monitoring is a key aspect of the work of the board
✧ Critical Performance measures should be based on Purpose and Principles
✧ Performance measures should be aligned throughout the district
Alignment: Performance Measures

Performance Management

Plan
- Processes
- Policies
- Priorities
- Performance Objectives
- Practices & Programs
- Professional Development

Performance* Principles Purpose (Mission)

Results: Reverse Engineering (Backward Design)

- "Writing and using measurable performance objectives is something upon which almost all performance improvement authors agree." (p. 7)
- "It is vital to focus on useful ends before deciding 'how' to get things done." (p. 8)

Consequences

- **Positive Reinforcement:**
  - In behavior change, this consequence is always the preferred strategy
  - Captures “discretionary effort”
- **Frequency**
- **How is feedback used?**

Discussion

- **Application in your setting**
  - Consider your role as board members
    - District purpose
    - Performance measures (key results, effectiveness)
    - “Artifacts” (tools, what is written, what you do / how you do it)
    - Performance Management (what things are you looking for to provide positive reinforcement?)

Final Thoughts/Review

- Strive to see continuous improvement as a way of doing things (not another “thing”)
- **Key requirements** of continuous improvement
  - Ongoing – keep getting better
  - Acknowledgement of room to improve
  - Measurement
  - Change
  - Alignment of efforts
- **Focus** on the things that matter most (purpose, principles)
- **Monitor** the things that matter most (performance analysis)
- Provide **positive feedback** when you see people taking action that is aligned with desired results

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Actions: What we do

- **Strategy-Culture Gap:**
  - “the difference between present cultural practices and the operational practices necessary to produce desired results”
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