

HOW ABOUT ...

Overhauling and re-energising the total staff body at a unionised national courier company

By Paul Lange, Director WOW Enterprise Performance Solutions



Overview of WOW Enterprise Performance Solutions plus a typical case study for a 2,000-staff recognition and reward programme for a well established service company operating at 34 sites across South Africa (courier company)

WOW Enterprise Performance Solutions: a full service design and implementation agency for human resource, marketing and strategic projects.

WOW believes that all business challenges can be solved in part by changing individual human behaviour. WOW runs both staff recognition and channel incentive programmes.

WOW follows a well-tuned and proven process for developing successful initiatives. WOW first forms a project committee, with the client, to establish which behaviours need to be changed.

With the guidance of this committee the WOW project team then educates themselves about the specific landscape in which the client's business operates. This is done in order to fully understand the client's business goals (hard needs) and their values (softer needs). WOW conducts extensive research on the industry in which the company competes, looks at the existing reward, recognition and loyalty programmes as well as gaining an understanding of the existing internal communication strategies. Included in this research are dipstick surveys and in-depth interviews.

WOW develops an innovative concept solution, based on feedback received, for a recognition-cum-incentive-cum-communications based programme solution. The solution is work-shopped with the client project committee. The solution is fully documented, budgeted and time-lined. This solution is then owned by the client company.

If the client decides to give the responsibility of implementation to WOW, the company will train supervisors on their role in the programme, inform middle management and keep the senior management abreast of planning and implementation progress... comprehensively.

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WOW Implementation also includes:

- Launch activities and sign-up of the target participants
- On-going administration
- On-going saturation communication
- Awards and fulfilment
- Measurement and reports
- Audits and yearly reviews also take place in order to ensure appropriate risk management and the on-going effectiveness of the modules can be measured
- This case study will deal specifically with WOW's development of the courier company's
- Improved business performance
- Reduced absenteeism, staff turnover, property losses and malicious / accidental asset damage and loss
- Improved referral-new-business sales and better customer service
- Internalisation by the staff of the full gamut of the courier company's company values.
- More motivated staff- creating an atmosphere of celebration and fun as appropriate.
- An independent, reliable view of how their customer's value the service provided.
- Simple effective tools to facilitate professional performance management of staff and managers by the human resource department.

CASE STUDY

Problems

Surveys conducted by WOW have indicated that there was a break-down of trust between the courier company's directors and employees. The staff felt that they were not being effectively communicated with they weren't being given a clear vision of the company's future, they only received negative feedback, they felt disrespected and felt that the directors were emotionally volatile and could not be trusted. These findings are based on the notes from conversations with employees.

The courier company wanted an independent review on their customers' experience of their service in order to establish a reliable measurement of the effectiveness of staff. This would also allow management to target specific areas that needed improvement.



The courier company had high levels of absenteeism, staff turnover, vehicle damages and insurance losses and wanted a cost-effective and low-risk solution rolled out speedily.

After following a period of intensive research and interaction with all levels of staff and management, WOW were well prepared to submit a recommendation with full costs, risks and issues documented.

Recommended Solution

WOW recommended implementing 10 different modules to be run simultaneously under the single unifying banner "High Five: Recognising Excellence"

Scratch cards- this module allows the directors and senior management to provide instant recognition within the ambit of the overall recognition programme, in such a way so that there's instant excitement and little or no administration required by the directors and senior management themselves. The process is public and completely transparent.

Tatamachance- this module creates excitement as it gives staff the opportunity to enter the courier company internal lotto draw, provided they are complying with key personal, performance indicators.

Nominations- allow peers in the company to nominate each other for awards in a controlled, safe environment. This encourages a strong team work ethic and generates internal goodwill.

Monthly performance targets (Celebrate)- allows staff (divided into small functional teams) to be awarded for achieving set targets to drive very specific improvements in performance.

Monthly Manager Surprise- on a monthly basis team supervisory managers award the performing members of their team with a small, largely symbolic, personalised prizes.

Referral of leads- this module encourages drivers and crew to pass leads onto the sales team.

Birthdays- makes staff members feel appreciated by giving them personalised birthday cards which the staff can share with their family members.

Suggestions- encourage staff to come up with new ideas and think outside the box. All ideas are considered, each participating individual receives feedback and recognition



Holidays and Name Days- creates a fun, purposeful environment and a sense of the company's directors taking the Nation's celebration days and the State's developmental programmes seriously.

Tip-offs- This module allows staff to report any non-compliance in a safe environment.

Implementation

After approval was given for WOW's proposal above to be implemented, the project's team was re-cast as a management oversight committee and the timetable for implementation was approved. Following this, hype and anticipation for the launch of the project was created by hosting events, such as road shows, and distributing various items, such as posters, key rings, badges, cards and personalised, relevant SMS/email communications.

The pre-launch phase commenced and was primarily involved in training supervisors and informing line management of how they could use the programme to drive the business measures for which they were responsible. During the pre-launch phase, WOW was setting up the various administrative functionalities which were required for this programme to succeed.

The pre-launch and launch phase lasted 50 days which included staff events, prizes and the programme website's launch. After the launch was complete, the modules got underway, simultaneously, delivering results over the course of the next calendar year.

The Celebrate module has been particularly successful in driving improved performance which can be measured. It served as the means to introduce the basics to the staff of working within a Balanced Score Card environment.

Tatamachance has also enjoyed considerable popularity with the courier company's staff. Prizes have been diversified and requirements for being in the draw have been strengthened.

Results

The courier company has experienced almost immediate positive results because of WOW's staff recognition programme. The launch of the courier company's recognition programme was complete by 5 January 2010. In January 61% of team targets were met but by April 2010, 81% of team targets were being met. By rewarding employees and teams directly for their performance, productivity and efficiency were increased. This increase has partly driven the courier company's continued expansion in the South African market.



Communication between the directors and staff is now far more effective and the atmosphere within the company is far more pleasant and calm positive, constructive working environment. Staff turnover has consistently fallen with the number of employees leaving in January 2010 (68) falling to 43 in June 2010 notwithstanding a 15% increase in net staff complement.

Absenteeism not only improved immediately after the launch, but has been consistently dropping. For example in June 2010, the courier company was down to 26 instances of absenteeism but by November, there were only 18 instances in the month.

Information obtained by WOW about customer service has been instrumental in the courier company's restructuring and development.

In conclusion, WOW's staff recognition has been highly beneficial for the courier company, while remaining cost effective with all costs running well below 1.5% of wage bill.

A comment from one recent winner

"I appreciate the confidence the company has placed in me and I look forward to providing the company with the best possible service in the future. Thank you for the encouragement! I will continually put more effort into my work to build the foundation of our success."

Johannes Mokopudi: Control Room Operator

For more information visit: www.wow4results.co.za