CRUISING WITH TECHNOLOGY IN A TRADITIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM

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"Transporting Today for a Safer Tomorrow"

INTRODUCTION

How to Introduce New Company Technology to Employees

Implementing new technology within an organization can become very complicated if not done the proper way or perceived to be a waist to employees. There will be some potential users who feel that it is a waist of money or not user friendly. As result, you could even gain resistance from potential users. As I was putting a plan together, I had to figure out a method to present to top level decision makers and employees the potential benefit that arise for the new technology implementation.. Our agency has computers, but the dispatching system we have is done on paper as well as a big white board. Dispatcher would have to print each sheet of clients manifest and drivers would sometimes have 10-20 pages of paperwork stabled each day to serve as a guide of who and where they would be transporting. Add on client pickups caused problems especially if a driver called out or did not receive the documentation. It was time to decrease the no-shows, late pickups and double scheduling of clients.
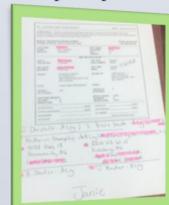

MAJOR STEPS TAKEN

- Identify the Need: Make sure it's something everyone , not just you, will benefit from
- Research Solutions: Do massive research on the various types of technology that will assist you in providing the benefits desired
- Incentivize The Technology Use
- Break it Up Into Small Steps: Make sure you do not try to put the implementation of plan from step 1 and skip to step 9.
- Host Dinner and Learn Sessions: Have meetings to inform them of your plans and involve them from the beginning to the end
- Provide Training and Encouragement: Make sure you have training and allow one on one and hands on training to allow them to feel comfortable about the use
- Help Employees See the Value For Themselves and the Company: Employees want to see how will this make my job task easier
- Engage Employees Every Step of Implementation: Once you have made plans to carry out plan, include employees in every step, it help makes the transition easier
- Follow Up On Initial Tech Training: Allow employees to continue to obtain additional training if needed even if its one on one.
- Make It Interactive: Allow feedback from employees
- Give Employees Room for Failure/Complement Their Effort: Everyone will not perform 100% during the first stage of use. Encourage them by complementing them on putting forth an effort.

GOALS AND IMPLENTATION

From day one of becoming Executive Director, my goal was to improve the operation of the agency and boost employee moral. Over the years, I have learned that employees work better if you express to them that you not only look as them as an employee but a team member. You have to illustrate that you are not only looking out for the organization but them as well. I always try to include them on my ideas on how I'm trying to improve operation of the agency and appreciate everything that they do. I asked, "how would they like to illuminate those 3-7 sheets of paperwork that have to fill out each day?" Of course everyone was excited about that; however, when they were told we about to start using tablets, many became skeptical especially those that have been at our agency for over 10 years and those who still used flip phones. I ensured them that they were not expected to catch on all at once and we would offer one on one training if needed. The addition of utilizing tablets and a routing software would not only save trees from all of the paperwork that is being printed for each driver, but also eliminate clients not being dispatched, no show pick ups or late pickups. I was able to work with Mississippi Department of Transportation to choose a statewide routing systems that would connect with agencies over the state who provide public transportation. Once the routing system was selected, I began training with office staff first and later drivers via computers and PowerPoint presentation. The dispatcher began printing manifest from routing system, which decreased scheduled route documents from 5-20 pages plus the written pickups to 2- 3 pages and no written add on pickups. Afterwards, the tablets were ordered and assigned to drivers; included intense dinner and trainings to sessions to ensure everyone received hands on training and notified them that one on one training will be available. We have started using tablets and dispatching software. The big white board will be eliminated as of May 31, 2019. Today its serves as a backup view for dispatcher. The clients have began to sign the tablet as proof of ridership. Our next movement is to implement an app for clients to use to schedule ridership, set up payment via prepaid cards or credit apps such as google and apple pay and drivers to clock in and out instead of paper timesheets turned in bi weekly.
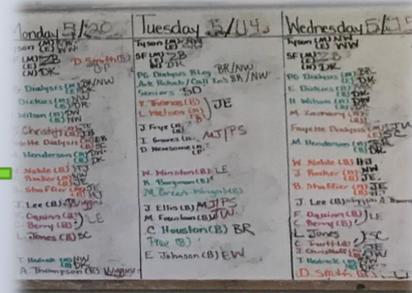
RESULTS

- Many were skeptical about the change and had negative views of utilizing tablets
- One Employee Resigned
- After trial for a month, majority can not wait till the next features are added
- Trips that were mistakenly left off printed or handwritten documents have decreased to the upload and input of trips being assigned through routing systems
- Client's late pickups have decreased due to routing systems helps with time frame of client pickups and steps to pickup each clients.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Although many are afraid of change, once they see the benefit of how it not only enhances the agency's operation but eliminates the some of the issues they may have incurred during their daily task as well. As leaders we can't assume that our team members will have the reaction and understanding of our goals that they should. We should include them on every step of implementing an project to ensure that the transition is made easier.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend before any big change that you are about to implement in your organization, that you involve those who will be utilizing the equipment or carrying out the plan from the beginning to the end. It helps them communicate the goals and expectations.

RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Mississippi Department of Transportation/Public Transit Division : mdot.ms.gov

Qryde at HB Software Solutions: hb@hbssonline.com

www.selectonellc.com

CTAA Emerging Leaders Academy