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PURDUE JOURNAL OF SERVICE-LEARNING AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Nonprofit Student Consulting Project: Tippecanoe County Child Care

Claire Adams, College of Management

In spring 2014 I participated in a semester-long group project for Professor Christine Jackson's Introduction to Organizational Behavior (OBHR 33000) course. This project involved providing consultation to a local nonprofit organization facing important organizational behavior (OB) challenges such as how to best manage and sustain a motivated and committed workforce to maximize retention. My group was assigned to conduct a "live" case analysis on Tippecanoe County Child Care (TCCC), a nonprofit organization located in Lafayette, Indiana. TCCC operates four child development centers in the greater Lafayette area that care for children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years.

Our group's objective was to design effective and feasible solutions for the nonprofit's organizational behavior challenges using concepts and principles from the course. In order to complete this project, we conducted an on-site informational interview with Marilyn Redmon, the executive director of TCCC. During this interview, we asked many questions to help us gain an understanding of her company and how their operations were affected by organizational behavior challenges. After the interview, we analyzed Redmon's responses to determine which course concepts were most relevant to her company. We then identified possible solutions that could address the challenges TCCC was facing.

Through weekly meetings and research, we learned that TCCC's most significant OB challenges stemmed from

a lack of unity between each of their childcare centers, which was impacting employees' effective attachment to the organization as a whole. After considering all viable solutions, we identified two solutions that we felt most effectively addressed these OB challenges. Our first recommendation was to start a company newsletter to help keep current employees aware of what was going on in all of the different sectors of TCCC. Secondly, we recommended implementing a rotational program, which would bridge the communication gap between the different centers and unify one team directly supervised by Redmon. Implementing these two solutions helped with the motivation and commitment challenges with which the company was faced. As the program continues through the years, we feel this will be a crucial aspect of team building for TCCC.

The finished project resulted in a 10-page written report submitted to the course instructor and an executive report and presentation delivered to Redmon that formally presented our ideas to improve TCCC's commitment and reduce withdrawal behaviors. This "live" case study was one of the most beneficial projects I have been a part of during my time at Purdue. My group was able to take the concepts we learned in class and actually apply them to a local organization, which made us incredibly motivated to offer the best possible advice to TCCC. It was extremely rewarding knowing our hard work would make a difference in the lives of not only the volunteers and employees at TCCC, but also the people in our community. Hopefully, our ideas helped Tippecanoe County Child Care implement greater motivation and organizational commitment initiatives and can better serve the community with motivated, dedicated employees.