case study

BUILDING INNOVATION CULTURE

INDUSTRY: IT SERVICES

written by

KHAIRUL ANWAR, MBA

BACKGROUND

The client is in IT services industry. As one of the industry leading in providing IT solutions, the company is facing challenges from various customers segment it serve. Due to this pressure, the company decided to take a lot of projects and hire more people, mostly young executives to ensure timely execution.

However, after some time, there's a lot of delay and caused some of the projects in the high risk status. The issue has gone at the very high management including the Boards.

PROBLEM

The senior managers felt the younger executives didn't put enough effort to get things done more effectively. There was a perception that the younger executives lack innovation and creativity skills during execution with the clients. It is an open secret that the younger executives are new in the business and lack of work experiences.

Because of that there has been multiple delays in clients delivery and the Board has recommended action to be taken to remedy this situation. The clients impacted is seeking explanation and it may cause financial compensation if it is not resolved.

The Human Resource Division (HRD) has been tasked to come up with action plan and fix this amicably and in lightning speed.

DIRECTION

The HRD hatched a plan that the younger executives need training on innovation and creative problem solving. After all it has been years they did not have any development on these skills.

After our discussion, we think training programs will not be effective, yet. We helped devise three key strategies to approach the Problem. There are:

1. Both parties need to have a mutual session to air grievances.
2. Generate ideas to make it work, no escape.
3. Use the company shared values as our guiding principles. Nothing else.

We convinced our client to run ideation labs to together with the senior managers and young executives to build scaffolding to achieve those objectives.

To our surprise, the labs generated hundreds of ideas and close to 50% ideas generated are something they could do together. They are still bonded when we brought in the shared values discussion. Great!

IDEAS CONSIDERED

1. The champions of culture are anyone from the organization. From non-executive to senior leaders. It used to be the champions were only Heads and senior leaders.
2. The champions role are rotated and on 6 months role appointment. As the attendance requirement as champion is at least 80%, the role shouldn't be a burden to anyone. Rotation allows others to participate and be inspired.
3. Recognition of ANY contribution is direct from CEO. Recognition is in certificate of contribution signed by the CEO and little get together quarterly.
4. Internal managers conference where best practices in the company are shared. What works in other company might not work in your company. Sharing them build trust and stronger cadreship.
5. Open innovation program for everyone to contribute ideas from all levels. Trending internal ideas will be discussed together with strategic business focus.