The Organization Chart Project

Bringing Information Access to Employees

My passion for this project started when I realized I was in one of the few departments (Public Information) with access to information about other departments and management structures. This made it very difficult to obtain resources or to collaborate with other areas. Knowing this problem, I volunteered to take on the task of publishing and updating a booklet called The Blue Pages, which provided lists of departments, their function and contacts with phone numbers, usually a manager and a secretary. It also provided a list of our products and business units, with internal and external phone numbers for each. I was delighted to provide the company with this mundane but useful reference, and our department was committed to keeping it updated.

However, the vice president we reported to at the time decided against it, because she said we would be having a merger in a couple of years anyway.

It was about ten years later, and we were still having the same problems with information, except now we were part of Health Care Service Corporation, several times larger, located in four states. There was an opportunity to provide company improvements, and I led the group working on a solution to the organization chart situation.

Although updated technology was a priority for the company, there was no provision for updating information about departments and making that available. There was an online directory, but it was necessary to know the person’s name and spell it correctly to use it.

Many areas had need of organization charts. If we had only been able to print or even hand-draw organization charts with a reasonable expectation of accuracy, and update them monthly, we would have been heroes.

It took two years, but we were able to connect priorities, reconcile legal and security issues, and work with HR and IT to provide something of value for the company. We purchased software from Aquire Technologies, OrgPublisher. This was excellent as a basic product, but it had to be adapted to the many needs within the company to make it fit the technology and the culture.

As of this writing, the product is in use, having been taken on board by the Human Resources Department. It provides organization charts and contact information for 20,000 employees with photographs, updated nightly. Changes appear automatically as soon as they are made by HR.

This is a far cry from the Blue Pages, but it all starts with wanting to provide employees with the resources to do their jobs.

Links: sample pages

Communications Plan

Executive Summary