

How Leadership Training can Improve Company Culture



Nick Gioconda, Director, Human Resources/Learning & Development

1301 Perry Road, Suite 101

Plainfield IN 46168

1.317.838.8900

Introduction

Third-party logistics (3PL) providers, like most companies, are focused on results. However, all reputable 3PL providers understand that an investment in training its warehouse operations' employees is a necessary cost of doing business. Certifications for employees driving fork trucks, using RF guns to scan in product, and operating pick to light systems are mandatory to ensure the safety of employees and that the job is completed correctly.

Problem

Some 3PL providers resist making any further training investments specifically at the leadership level, failing to realize the positive impact on long-term business results. According to Carol J. Dell'Amore, Ph.D. and director of the National Leadership Institute at the University of Maryland University College, "High performing organizations have some kind of leadership development program in place, and the culture puts a high priority on managers developing the talents of the people that they manage¹."

David Witt, researcher with The Ken Blanchard Companies says, "better leadership practices can improve an organization's bottom line by hundreds of thousands-or even millions-of dollars, depending on the size of the organization and current gaps in management practices²."

The Leadership Training and Development Solution

MD Logistics invests in a leadership training and development program that exhibits the following high performance characteristics.

Create a Culture of Accountability

A culture of accountability is created when leaders are trained to admit when they've made a mistake, rather than to hide it. According to The Oz Principle, one of the top five best-selling books on leadership and performance, results are achieved through personal and organizational accountability³.

Treat People like People

Leaders are encouraged to get to know their employees as individuals. Training experts recognize that positive interactions among employees and leaders create the experience of more than just a job. Treating someone as an individual is a personal investment that will pay long-term dividends.

Engage People of All Levels in Conversation

A winning culture exists when people of all levels are encouraged to have face-to-face conversations. Communication is the biggest obstacle to developing leaders today and technology is exacerbating the problem.

Learn to Give and Receive Feedback

When training leaders it is important for leaders to know they need to ask for feedback as often as they give it. The result is the ability for any employee at any level to be able to raise an issue as soon as it arises without fear the recipient will not be open to receiving the information.

Lead by Example

All leaders and employees are given permission and encouraged to lead by example. Leading by example is a key element of a high-performing culture.

Create a shared piece of Community

Leaders are encouraged to create a sense of community within their teams; one where team members contribute to the same goal and feel connected, rewarded and fulfilled once it is obtained⁴.

Be Interactive

Seasoned leaders are paired with new leaders and training is delivered through a wide variety of channels. Games, media and interactions are designed to equip leaders with a new skill or enhance an existing one. Trainers don't want their leaders saying, 'I have to go to class', but instead, 'I want to go to class.'

Leadership Training and Development Doesn't End at Onboarding

Leadership training and development is an ongoing process that is never perfect and never done. At MD Logistics, the training team chooses a leadership topic every month and dedicates an hour and a half to training team leads, supervisors, managers, and directors. The team focuses on topics such as:

- Giving and receiving feedback
- Listening to others
- Compliance training
- The associate handbook
- Having difficult conversations

Leadership Training is Centralized within the HR Department

Leadership training, development and monitoring is conducted by the training department, which is a function of HR. Training and HR go hand in hand; from onboarding new leaders to staying in contact with them throughout their careers; both functions on the individual and their success within the 3PL provider.

Conclusion

MD Logistics believes in making investments in the training and development of company leaders. The return on their investment shows through the organization's positive culture and business results.

Resources

1. What Makes a Logistics' Leader, InBound Logistics Magazine, Feb. 2003, by Leslie Hansen Harps; Carol J. Dell'Amore, Ph.D., director of the National Leadership Institute at the University of Maryland University College, Adelphi, Maryland
2. Make Time to Develop Your Leaders <http://www.kenblanchard.com/Leading-Research/Ignite-Newsletter/October-2013>
3. www.theozprinciple.com
4. The Psychology of Communities – 4 Factors that Create a “Sense of Community”