BoldFLASH Mobile Division Training Plan and Guidelines

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The first step to effective communication is to know your audience. Failure to understand your audience or its goals can lead to miscommunication and repeated work. For these training sessions, our primary audience is the Technical Mobile Division management team and our secondary audience is the rest of the company. Because management is typically a low tech audience, our training methods need to take that into consideration while also not losing sight of the fact that our secondary audience is very diverse. Because of this difference in expertise, we need to choose effective communication channels and collaboration techniques that BoldFLASH can use to improve internal business processes.

**Communication Strategy**

A corporate communication strategy is the architecture for planning how a company communicates with various internal and external audiences and helps businesses to leverage their influence (Linton, n.d.). The tone, methods, and channels of communication depend on the company's core values and customer base. For example, an information security company whose primary customers are corporations would structure the voice of their communications much differently than a handmade children's shoe company whose customers are primarily retail boutiques. Because this communication represents the company, it's important that the business strategy and communication strategy be aligned (Linton, n.d.). To this end, there are 3 main questions to address: who the target audience is, what information the audience needs, and how the audience will receive the information (Root, III, n.d.).

The primary audience for these training materials is the Technical Mobile Division management team. This audience is a low tech audience, being familiar with BoldFLASH and its product line, but they will still need clear, concise information in their training to be effective communicators. Because management is responsible for the running of the Mobile Division and they will communicate with a wide variety of audiences, it's important that their training be thorough and effective. For this reason I believe that both verbal, interactive training combined with written documentation in the form of a company wiki will be the most effective.

A traditional presentation as most corporate employees know it is considered passive learning with only about 20% of the information retained by listeners (Moorsom, 2014). Adding active and exploratory learning can increase retention by 70% (Moorsom, 2014), compared to traditional training methods (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008). Interactive training also provides the trainees opportunities to practice and improve their collaboration techniques, which helps cultivate the culture of collaboration that is the responsibility of today's managers (Lash, 2012). Such a presentation can also be recorded or otherwise preserved for sharing with separate audiences or to assess the effectiveness of the training.

**Collaboration Strategy**

Collaboration is responsible for the majority of a company's positive growth (Gerson & Gerson, 2013), and ineffective collaboration can cause significant losses of time, money (Lash, 2012), and credibility (Larson, 2011). Collaboration helps improve communication by exposing other points of view (Johnson, 2010), so it's no surprise that today's management has a responsibility to promote collaborative efforts (Lash, 2012). A collaboration strategy is simply a framework within which employees can collaborate on projects.

To effectively train management, encourage collaboration among all employees, and share the training or new processes with other audiences, I would recommend an internal company wiki where employees can access the information at their own pace. Websites are a fantastic tool for sharing information internally as they can be updated as information becomes available, and wikis are particularly effective in this case because they are a form of active learning and engage the user in the construction of knowledge (Parker & Chao, 2007). A wiki can also serve as a refresher for trainees or as a framework for improving processes, and, if the company practices single sourcing, the information within it can be used in other channels. An internal wiki can be made available to all employees even off-site with the use of usernames and passwords, and would encourage employees to collaborate and participate in active learning outside the office. Wikis can also reduce the costs of collaboration (Lash, 2012)

**Conclusion**

The communication strategy and training plan must encourage collaboration, be available to all employees, and provide opportunities for active learning to be the most effective. Management has a responsibility to "encourage and foster a culture of collaboration" (Lash, 2012) because collaboration is one of the most crucial contributing factors to a company's growth (Gerson & Gerson, 2013). A company wiki is an excellent collaboration method because of its availability, its clear topical organization (Parker & Chao, 2007), the ease with which information can be updated, and the positive psychological benefits for participants (Parker & Chao, 2007). An effective communication strategy relies on the active participation of all parties (DeLoatch, 2012), and a company wiki that is available offsite via secure login gives employees freedom of participation. Training sessions with active learning components increase comprehension and retention of a topic (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008; Moorsom, 2014), give trainees control over the learning process (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008), and offer collaborative opportunities for participants.

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