



Professional Development

July/August 2009

What is a High Performance Organization (HPO)?

One of today's buzz words in the business environment is "HPO". HPO is an acronym for "High Performance Organization" and many organizations are beginning to implement strategies associated with being an HPO into their workplaces.

So what exactly does HPO mean? What does it take to become an HPO? An HPO is an organization that concentrates on bringing out the best in people. An organization that positions itself as an HPO designs itself to produce sustainable results. The organization embraces specific qualities attributed to high performance, possessing some or all of the defining characteristics that follow:

***People as assets.** Many companies treat their employees as liabilities and not as the assets they are. An HPO perceives employees as assets and treats them accordingly. Thus; they find their employees are happy, productive and engaged in the job. They give employees the tools to empower themselves to make valuable contributions to the organization. They respect and encourage diversity, as differences foster innovation and creativity, which add value.

***Mobilize teams.** Cohesiveness and teamwork are at the heart of the HPO, providing a nurturing environment where teams can collaborate and work together in harmony. This type of environment allows employees to have a "say" and offer input on decisions, regardless of their position in the company. Fostering teamwork is vital to high performing organizations. A hierarchal structure can be present, but emphasis is not put on title or prestige, but rather on the good of the organization and the contribution of the team to the whole.

***Integrates current technology.** Technology greatly enhances productivity to free up employees to focus on more important tasks. This increases productivity and cuts costs, which contribute to a positive return for stakeholders.

***Focus on employee development.** The HPO environment thrives on training and development as a way to prepare them for advancement. Organizational studies show that employees who are given autonomy with room to grow in their jobs are happier and higher performing than those that are micro-managed and limited in growth opportunities.

***Goal orientation.** HPOs are dedicated to meeting goals and fulfilling a well defined mission. This is accomplished through vision and shared values with stakeholders.

***Focus on quality.** HPOs implement quality management practices such as TQM, lean six sigma, etc. which promote continuous improvement. These practices support corporate credibility, employee commitment and enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty.

A business that achieves HPO status has a competitive edge in their respective industry by meeting the needs of both internal and external stakeholders and standing out above the competition. As organizational behavior theories continue to evolve, the HPO is one model for success in the global business environment.

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