Regulations kept in Check through Learning Management System (LMS)

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As a technical writer at O Company, I found a great opportunity for increased learning potential among employees. My task is to document processes of job tasks and create standardized procedures for workers to follow for departmental use. Although standardized procedures is an important part of helping employees do their job correctly, proper training will contribute to employee confidence and accuracy in their daily job functions.

 O Company is a business dedicated to the care of aging and disabled individuals to stay in their place of residence safely and comfortably. The main headquarters were management services and corporate operations are located in the Denver Metro area. Services take place in the State of New Mexico through their Medicaid program out of seven district offices. The district offices hire Caregivers to provide the home health care to consumers in the state. New Mexico allows consumers a Personal Care Options (PCO) in order for them to stay independent, free from institutionalization. To date the PCO program uses agency care of which O Company is a provider. A responsibility of the PCO program agencies is a plethora of government rules and regulations by the state of New Mexico in which to stay in compliance with, that are in a constant influx of change. The ever-changing rules and regulations led by the government makes the task of supporting these home caregivers even more challenging.

O Company's employees in the corporate office need to know the regulations in order to keep the district offices in compliance with the State of New Mexico in order to meet their goal of allowing aging and disabled individuals to stay in their place of residence safely and comfortably. Employees also need training of company standard procedures of daily operations for scheduling and communication in reaching their goal to increase quality of life for consumers by providing compassionate and continuous support. In order to provide support for their consumers in the field, all Caregivers and their district office support staff require training, for both care of consumers and to keep in compliance with government regulations. Each district's Caregivers must complete a New Hire Orientation (NHO) which includes a background check, CPR training and other requirements of the state. Paperwork from the districts needs to be properly filed, also in accordance with state regulations, processed by the district office and finalized by the corporate office. Both internal and government led audits are conducted on a regular basis.

Problem
Training of caregiver, district and corporate support staff is a constant area of concern in order to stay compliant. All administrative and support employees need training to be effective in

their jobs to avoid breaks in compliancy causing loss of certification and preventing business loss or government shutdown. Training needs to be clear, concise and easily accessed, as well as supporting procedural documents clearly titled and easily accessed. Training material updates are a constant occurrence.

Currently, trainers from the corporate office of O Company train district managers at New Mexico offices on a not-so regular basis. District managers lacking experience do not properly train the Caregivers from their office. Incomplete paperwork, filed in the wrong place according to state regulations, made access near impossible. According to a root-cause analysis published in a company-wide email by the President of O Company, untrained individual employees did not do their job correctly, the internal threat to regulations system went unattended and everything became uncoordinated. The entire company fell out of compliance as shown in an April 2011 internal audit. Additionally, a high turnover rate in both the district offices and the general population of Caregivers has left a dire need for training that has gone unmet. Lack of training brought frustration for all types of employees, as a handful of consumers left for care elsewhere. In June through August of 2011, temporary workers were hired to reorganize all employee and consumer records, make sure they were complete and filed in the correct location on the server. A new VP is retuning the company back to compliance, restructuring all employees' job descriptions. This restructuring of the company is a great time to update the learning department methods of training employees. Technology that was out-of-date or not there at all for training employees has failed to teach individuals how to do their job. Updating learning technology, creating a standard set of procedures and require all employees to be retrained or newly trained will ensure O Company to return to a state of internal and external compliance.

Planned intervention

As part of a new Learning Management System (LMS), the key to creating an instructional design for O Company will be the use of advanced web conferencing, creation of new online instructional content, and critical e-Learning tools to provide a learning environment to help meet critical company goals and stay in internal and governmental compliance. Drawing upon e-Learning experience that already exist in many corporate environments, the first step for O Company is to evaluate and select software to ensure successful training of all employees. This selection may be a team effort between the IT and training departments or an outside consultant with knowledge of elearning within a LMS may be required. Then once chosen tools acquired are ready for use, a documentation specialist needs to record all job tasks and create procedures. Then a technical writer creates standardized procedures, labeled according to tasks and filed on a server, easily accessed by employees and trainers. The technical writer is also in charge of updating documents as needed as changes in tasks or regulations occur. Once created, a learning specialist with an e-learning background creates an LMS with classes to train various employees in an elearning environment and through web conferencing. All training needed by O Company could be enhanced though an eLearning curriculum to allow the support personnel to receive consistent training which is easily modified to current regulatory changes and can be

quickly presented to personnel without having to print out reams of papers and incur shipping/traveling charges. eLearning is a cost-effective way to deliver task related training in a corporate environment (Duggan & Barich, 2011).

As a documentation specialist and technical writer for O Company, I can present the change proposal of an LMS to the VP for consideration, providing knowledge and persuasion of research on successful elearning corporate environments. Once decided upon, a plan would need to be implemented by an e-learning specialist who confirms the tasks to be carried out for future employee training. The path to innovation acceptance will follow Roger's Innovation-Decision Process Model (Surry & Ely, 2001). Using Surry's eight conditions of change would be the persuasion tool I use to show the VP the need for change allowing him to be the leadership of change. The eight Conditions of Change are:

1. Dissatisfaction with the status quo—show that lack of training brought about by incompliance within the organization
2. Sufficient knowledge and skills—present research from the World Internet Center on how elearning within an LMS could enhance employee training
3. Availability of resources—evaluation of current IT resources available and a selection of software tools presented to ensure successful training of all supporting employees
4. Availability time—one year to establish the new LMS and show its success
5. Reward or incentive—a certificate of completion for each training an employee undergoes and more customers based on word of mouth by current customers who are happy with their care.
6. Participation—once VP is on board, every department within O Company embrace the new LMS
7. Leadership is evident—the training department fully provides training to all the upper level managers and then to all the lower level managers and finally to the rest of the employees. Once trained, each manager knows their duties and leads their team in providing care giving to consumers within state and internal regulations. (Surry & Ensminger, 2001)

Evaluation Plan

In order to determine the plan's success, an internal audit conducted once a month after the plan's implementation will show the LMS success. This internal audit will consist of:

- Checking random consumer and employee files for accuracy and thoroughness
- On-the-job spot checks of Caregivers in the field for complacency
- Consumer survey evaluation of care provided
- PCO regulation quizzes by corporate employees

As part of the evaluation plan, employee surveys could provide valuable feedback for management to know how workers feel about their learning experiences, their knowledge of regulations both company and state, and any missing information not passed on from the LMS

that should have been. Feedback in the form of a survey presented on a 6 month basis would run the gamete of all the trainings, as the employees would have experienced all of the training at least once. The feedback could shed light on any kinks in the LMS that need improving and addressed as needs arise.

Expected findings

Once the LMS is in full swing, important documents will be handled properly from intake to final closeout. Consumers will enjoy their care from well-trained Caregivers in keeping with company goals. Corporate employees knowledgeable with PCO regulations will be able to keep the company within state regulations. Expected findings keep audits showing that all is well within state and company regulations for O Company to become a leading agency in the state of New Mexico home health care.

Organizational Changes

Beefing up the training department with an elearning design specialist will kick the project off. Another important member to this team would be a consultant who knows the PCO regulations inside and out. This might be a former member of the State of New Mexico PCO program. The consultant could be valuable in determining how to write and teach state regulations for employees to learn.

In all, the LMS is a great opportunity for change for O Company, in dire need of training as restructuring either could lead to victory or closed doors.

Progress Report

In late September I was given a promotion to Executive Assistant and have become less involved in training document creation for the Operations Coordinators. The new VP fired a lot of people and then moved many others around. I was involved in creating job descriptions and provided training recommendations for the new and altered jobs people found themselves in. A companywide president's report pinpointed further problems with the field offices in New Mexico and here at corporate.

- Failure to effectively communicate the importance of contractual compliance to overhead staff

- Failure to effectively communicate the importance of contractual compliance to our caregivers

- Lack of meaningful relationships with our caregivers so that they support us in our important project

- Field staff obtaining/scanning documents lack knowledge on how to check a document on receipt, to determine/ensure it is compliant

- Competing priorities over taking precedence over contractual compliance and maintaining our license to do business

- Not using the Calendar for **_all_** steps in this process (e.g. notifying, obtaining, reviewing, scanning, receiving, verifying, data entry)

The idea of a new Learning Management System (LMS) fell on deaf ears as the president would not consider training or lack of training a major issue within his organization. Company O decided to head in a different direction and continue to train with old habits, misinformation and "figure it out four yourself" for existing and new employees. One district shared their frustration:

> *Training for this should have taken place immediately when compliance started. I do not believe the district office was aware of the importance of compliance and did not realize the repercussions of not having the necessary documents in hand while the Care Givers were there. (internal email)*

The Plan Moving Forward without an LMS for 2012
- The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) finalized 2011 year-end forecast and continued work on the 1st draft of the 2012 Strategic Plan. The ELT held 3 meetings to identify 11 potential strategic focus areas for 2012. The ELT will be meeting individually with each Operations Team Leader by the end of the month of October 2011 to present overall focus for next year and present these 11 potential strategic focus areas. A series of questions have been crafted for leaders to answer to help narrow the 11 potential strategic focus areas down to the few specific initiatives we will focus on in 2012.

Operations department OWNS District Full Program Compliance
- *District Full Program Compliance* continues to move forward. The final push to get all caregiver documents in compliance has hit some roadblocks. Currently, 806 compliance documents are considered "missing". Operations requested a one week extension to finalize Phase I Compliance. The CPR/First Aid training direction for all districts was presented to the ELT in September from HR and Operations with a plan to achieve full compliance for all districts. ROWDI continues to be enhanced and modified to ensure this critical tool for Operations and all departments fully supports monitoring, measuring, reporting and achieving caregiver and consumer full program compliance. Phase II Compliance will be rolled out on 9/23/2011 with the first training taking place on 9/30/2011.

Caregiver Compensation Analysis
- The ELT has approved additional compensation plans for two districts. The new compensation model for delegated caregivers will go into effect on October 1, 2011.

Customer Satisfaction Scorecards

- The President met with the ELT to obtain feedback on customer satisfaction scorecard process. He personally refined the Scorecard to focus this valuable tool on positive and constructive feedback from throughout the company for the sole purpose of assisting management and identify the support activities that best help Operations perform their work.

Telephony

- The ELT discussed the utilization of Telephony within Options for caregivers who are currently considered "exceptions" to the timesheet process. The ELT will work with Operations Leaders to identify what is the best approach for these caregivers and is that approach the caregiver faxing in their timesheet, utilizing Telephony to report their time or some other answer. Operations Leaders will present a recommendation to the ELT on 10/13/2011.

Final Findings

The final findings are based on a lack of implementation of this project. The negative attitude toward change and what I see as a fear of technological growth will prevent Company O from moving forward. The long road back to compliance has suffered many potholes of focusing on anything but training by the executives. Important documents may continue to be handled improperly from intake to final closeout. Consumers will continue to deal with un-trained Caregivers and corporate employees remain unknowledgeable with PCO regulations. The expected findings never reached their full potential, demonstrating that in the health care business ran by state and company regulations, Company O may end up, as do many similar agencies, out of business.

I did discover that at Company O, they have a monthly prescription to WebEx. The Quality department uses the conferencing tool for monthly meetings between three people and that is the extent of their usage. I have asked and am obtaining my own User ID for a small additional monthly fee and will hold large meetings with employees both here and in New Mexico. Once WebEx becomes a familiar entity, I wish to ease Company O into seeing WebEx as a training tool for the Packet Admins in the field to provide a short training on entering forms into LibertyNet properly. The idea is to grow the usage of WebEx and slowly demonstrate to the President the usefulness of online learning.

Conclusion

With a lack of initiative on training, newly hired individual employees throughout Company O, from the front line of Care Givers to the higher-ups of management, errors continue to be made. Morale is low and some consumers as well as employees are leaving Company O for better future. As for my outcome at this organization, I will stay the next two years and pay for my Masters program. During the course of school work, I will continue to learn different tools that

could help Company O get out of the hole they are in. Projects for classes will be based on this company and I will offer what I create to them, it is not known whether they will accept the help or not. When my degree is complete, I will make one attempt to work within the training department to help them desire a LMS. When nothing comes of the effort, I will seek employment with a company that uses the latest technology and who desires the best in training for their workers. I learned that working within government autocracy is challenging and there are not enough scissors to cut through the red tape. Perhaps WebEx will be the door that opens their world into the idea that online learning is beneficial and cost effective, as WebEx optimizes an educational experience for learners (Brusilovsky, 2001). The future of Company arrives at two possibilities, only time will tell the future course of this company.

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