

The Impact of ODIs on Employee Commitment, Employee Motivation, Job Satisfaction and job Performance: A Case Study of Udon Mastertech Co., Ltd. in Thailand

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Abstract

This action research identifies and investigates the impact of Organizational Development Intervention (ODI) on employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction, and job performance in an organization in Thailand. The respondents were the one-hundred and ninety-nine employees of a company specializing in the distribution of a wide range of electronic parts. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilized and data was collected using questionnaires, on-line assessment, focus group interviews, and observation. The action research was conducted from January 2009 to March 2010. The results indicate that employee commitment and motivation and job satisfaction and performance improved after the ODIs which included formal and informal meetings, leadership classes, communication training and reward programs. The improved affective commitment of the staff was enhanced by the employees' desire to remain with the company. This was reflected by the reduced turnover rate and increased team dynamic. This also translated into direct financial benefits to the company as the cost of recruiting and training new high skilled staff was lowered. In addition, improved normative commitment helped the staff and company understand and support their goals and the company's goals.

Key words: OD interventions, Employee commitment, Employee motivation, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance

Introduction

This paper is based on the action research conducted by the author to complete his doctoral dissertation. The focus of the research was to identify and investigate the impact of Organizational Development Intervention (ODI) on employee commitment employee motivation, job satisfaction and job performance. The informants were the one-hundred and ninety-nine employees of Udon Matertech Co., Ltd. (Udon Matertech), a sub-contractor specializing in the distribution of a wide range of electronics parts.

Faced with a difficult economic situation in 2008 and early 2009, Udon Matertech saw its sales decline by about 60 percent; which caused the management team to be very concerned about employees getting discouraged since, in

response to the crisis, overtime (OT) was not available. For this reason, the management team wanted to focus on employee motivation. As the turnover rate of highly skilled employees increased, employee commitment clearly became an issue that needed to be addressed.

With the world fast changing and economic and technological developments affecting organizations' life cycles, Udon Matertech management realized that it needed to change and adapt in order to survive in the midst of all the global changes.

To address the 60% decline in sales that led to the non-OT policy and the increased employee turnover rate, an action research was designed with the aim to investigate the effects of employee commitment and employee motivation and increase job satisfaction and job performance. Its objectives were determined as follows: (1) to describe and analyze the corporate growth of Udon Matertech (2) to assess, analyze, and determine the level of

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employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction and job performance; (3) to develop and implement appropriate ODIs based on the analyses; and (4) to identify the impact of before- and after-ODIs on employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction, and job performance.

A research was thus conducted between January 2009 and March 2010, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The data was collected utilizing questionnaires, focus group interviews, on-line assessment, and observation.

The respondents, both managers and employees of Udon Matertech, were asked to address a range of questions designed to ascertain the levels of commitment, motivation job satisfaction and job performance from an employee perspective before and after ODIs, which were managed by the researcher as an ODI practitioner.

SWOT Analysis

Udon Matertech utilized SWOT and other tools to identify problems and potential challenges for change and development operationally.

Strengths:

The company's main strengths lie in its providing high quality products and on-time delivery. The company received ISO9001 on 11 January 2002 from BSI for the quality of its management system. Udon Matertech also has had a strong long-term relationship with its customers (more than 13 years). In addition, the company has acquired new machines that can produce quality products in large quantities and require very low maintenance.

Weaknesses:

The company suffers from high risk anxiety having only one customer in a sub-contract arrangement. Also, most of the managers do not speak English and do not have much experience in international business. Besides, the management team does not have much knowledge in terms of creating its own branded

products and marketing them. And the executives have little experience in terms of entrepreneurship. Another issue is that, being a small and flat organization, there is no clear career path for managers. The MD decided to continue his PhD. in Development Strategy. The turnover rate of highly skilled employees increased with the change in OT policy as employee compensation amounted to their base salary, resulting in low employee commitment, employee motivation, and job satisfaction.

Opportunities:

The company's opportunities were identified as: (1) doing continuous business with the contracting company due to their long term relationship (2) keeping local labor cost 25 percent cheaper than in Bangkok; (3) competitive labor and welfare as compared to other companies around the area; (4) the opportunity to invest in new products and new markets as Udon Matertech brand with the support of the main factory in Ayuthaya; and (5) with Thailand as a gateway for trade with southern China, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Burma (Indo-China), the company has a very good opportunity to expand its market.

Threats:

The threats were only two sub-contracts and the constant pressure for the company to keep up its standard of quality. Given the worsening economic situation in late 2007 and 2008, orders dropped, forcing the company to find solutions that could hurt it. In addition, the unstable political situation in Thailand remains a threat to the level of orders as is the steady increase in oil prices, which affect production and delivery costs

Literature Review

The ODI Process

This refers to the change effort planned organization-wide and managed from the top to increase the organization effectiveness and health through designed activities involving

organization's processes using behavioral-science knowledge (Beckhard, 1969).

Organization Development is a response to identify the need of change, using an education strategy to the normative change such as the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organizations so they can adapt to the new technologies, markets, and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself (Bennis, 1969).

Most people in the OD field agree that OD involves consultants who try to help clients improve their organizations by applying knowledge from the behavioral sciences, psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, and certain related knowledge. Most of them also agree that OD implies change, and if we accept the improvement in organizational functioning means that change has occurred, therefore, OD means organizational change (Burke, 1982).

Organization Development needs to have a top-management supported long-range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal process, through a more effective and collaborative diagnosis and management of organization culture. Organization Development should work with special emphasis on formal work team, temporary team, and intergroup culture and also with the assistance of a consultant-facilitator and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including Action Research (French & Bell, 1990).

Organization Development is a system wide application and transfer of behavioral science knowledge to planned development, and reinforcement of the strategies, structures and process that lead to organization effectiveness (Cummings & Worley, 2005).

The Corporate Life Cycle

Dr. Ichak Adizes, a renowned business guru and theorist, and founder of the Adizes Institute stated that there is ten-stage corporate life cycle model which is an elegant way to learn and understand the typical life-cycle stages that

many businesses pass through, from conception to cessation. There is no pre-set timescale for this corporate life-cycle, and many organizations do not fit this model. However, the life-cycle stages that Adizes describes in his model provide a useful basis for understanding a fundamental perspective of organizational change, and the principle that organizational ageing, with all that this implies, is inevitable.

The 10-life cycle stages are: 1) Courtship is the initial development or creation of the proposition /model /business /formation/etc), 2) Infancy is after launch stage and start of active trading, 3) Go-go is frantic energetic early growth and sometimes chaos, 4) Adolescence is the stage that is still developing, but more established, and defined, 5) Prime is the business or organization at its fittest, healthiest and most competitive, popular and profitable, 6) Stability is when the company is still effective, popular, can still be very profitable, but beginning to lose leading edge - vulnerability creeping in maybe, 7) Aristocracy is when the company is strong by virtue of market presence and consolidated accumulated successes, but slow and unexciting, definitely losing market share to competitors and new technologies, trends, etc., 8) Recrimination is when the company doubts, problems, threats and internal issues overshadow the original purposes, 9) Bureaucracy is when the company inward-focused administration, cumbersome, seeking exit or divestment, many operating and marketing challenges, 10) Death is when the company is closure, sell-off, bankruptcy, bought for asset value or customer-base only.

Employee Commitment and Motivation

In relation to the issues of Employee Commitment, the attachment of an individual to an organization involves the affective commitment, the continuance commitment and the normative commitment. *Affective Commitment* occurs when the employees wish to remain with the organization because of their emotional attachment. The employees are happy with their job condition and met their

expectations. They strongly identified with the goals of the organization and want to be part of organization. *Continuance Commitment* occurs when a person have to remain with the organization because he or she needs the benefits and salary or cannot find another job. Therefore, when there is a better job offer to them, their commitment will disappear. The employees keep working with the organization because they had to. *Normative commitment* is from the values of the employee. The person believes that he or she owes it to the organization to remain because of a sense that this is the right things to do. Normative commitment occurs when the employee's personal values and from the obligations the person feels toward the employer. The obligations may derive from favors that the organization has done such as paying for person's school expenses. The employee stayed with the organization because he/she ought to (Meyer and Allen, 1997; and Mowday et al., 1979).

Ways to achieve employee commitment are through 1) *Formal Meeting* among researcher and change team. 2) *Informal Meeting* between small group of supervisor and employees. 3) *Leadership Class* for managers and al supervisors. 4) *Work shop* for employees „vision for every 2 months.

Employee Motivation is the set of processes that moves a person toward a goal. Thus, motivated behaviors are voluntary choices controlled by the individual employee. The supervisor (motivator) wants to influence the factors that motivate employees to higher levels of productivity (Steer, R.M. & Porter, L.W. 1991).

Factors that affect work motivation are individual differences, job characteristics, and organizational practices. Individual differences are the personal needs, values, and attitudes, interests and abilities that people bring to their jobs. Job characteristics are the aspects of the position that determine its limitations and challenges. Organizational practices are the rules, human resources policies, managerial

practices, and rewards systems of an organization. Supervisors must consider how these factors interact to affect employee job performance.

Herzberg found, if the motivators are missing, employee will probably not be satisfied with their work. Factors associated with the work itself or motivation factors include (1) the work itself, (2) achievement, (3) recognition, (4) responsibility, and (5) opportunity for advancement (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Ways to achieve employee motivation are through 1) *Formal Meeting* to set up “The Best Employee Award of the Month,” and increase bonus. 2) *Special Activities* - the company provided sport day, community service, field trips to make merit, and field trip once a year.

Job Satisfaction and Performance

Job Satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job; an affective reaction to one's job; and an attitude towards his or her job (Robbins, 1997). Job satisfaction is extent about people who like their job. However, job dissatisfaction is extent about people who do not like their job. Job satisfaction affects with employee absenteeism and turnover. Employees with positive self-esteem tend to have better job satisfaction. Employees who have less absentee tend to stay with the organization longer. There are six determinants of job satisfaction which are personality, work itself, compensation, growth and upward mobility, coworkers and management. Job satisfaction can be changed based on personality and perception. If people have positive perception about their job, they tend to be more satisfied with their job.

There are many studies have shown that dissatisfied employees quit their jobs. Also turnover or quitting the job has relationship with job satisfaction (Tett et al., 1993). There are some correlations between job satisfaction and turnover that interpreted as the effects of satisfaction on behavior. Most turnover studies are predictable. Job satisfaction is assessing in a

sample of employees, and can wait for some period to see who quits. The predictive nature of the job satisfaction studies gave the conclusion that dissatisfaction is one of the main factors that leads employees to quit their jobs.

Job performance is defined as the quality and quantity of tasks accomplished by an individual or group at work. Performance is what company need from an employee to achieve their business goal or objective. It could help the company to improve the production quantities, achieving quality, customer satisfaction, and employee moral (Rudman, 2000). In addition, Schermerhorn (1997) describes that performance of every job should add value to the organization's production of useful good and services.

Wright and Noe (1996) stated that job satisfaction is related to high job performance through an influence on motivation. The major source of this satisfaction was benefit and relatedness or affiliation needs is the next one. Moreover, it also means for satisfying need for security, power, or esteem (Sakuna, 2000).

Drafke and Kossen (2002) described that there are many factors that affect individual level of job satisfaction which are: 1) Work itself, 2) Job variety, 3) Autonomy, 4) Goal Determination, 5) Feedback, 6) Recognition. As mention before, Herzberg found that the motivation factors include (1) the work itself, (2) achievement, (3) recognition, (4) responsibility, and (5) opportunity for advancement (Herzberg et al., 1959). There is an overlapped area between motivation and job satisfaction including work itself and recognition.

In addition, Sukuna (2000) studied of leadership styles and job performance of the middle managers. This study focused on the turnover of middle manager level who works in the organization for 5-6 years. This research indicated that there are the relationship between demographic profile and leadership style, job satisfaction and job performance.

OD Interventions

To pursue the action research, the ODI activities were designed based on the identified problems during the diagnosis stage which are as follows:

OD I for Employee Commitment

As mentioned in the theory above, the employee commitment contained affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997 and Mowday, 1982). The researchers and the change team (including the manager and the managing director) organized the formal meeting, informal meeting and the special training and employee vision workshop.

Formal meetings were conducted between the researcher and the change team. The main purposed of formal meetings were to have a clear job description, and to help the employees set up their goal to match with the company's goals. In addition, the change team and the employees were making sure that all the expectation was met.

Informal meetings were conducted at least once a week among the small group of supervisors and the employees. It could be conducted anytime when the employees have at least 5 employees and set up the informal meeting with the supervisors. These would help them to share their interest and interact freely.

Special training was conducted in the leadership class for the managers and all supervisors. The class was conducted to improve their leadership skill, the confident of public speaking and communication effectively to employees. All the managers and the supervisor used their knowledge from this class to lead the employees to work more efficient and effective.

In addition, employee vision workshop was conducted for the employees to share their common vision to increase their commitment every 2 month started in August 2009. Employees saw things different. They took time to develop their common vision. Through the process of the team and workshop, it helped employees to develop a clear vision statement

for themselves. Therefore, from the clear vision helped employees to know what direction they were making an efforts and what interest they got from the company. It was mainly help them to identify their personal interest.

ODI for Employee Motivation

The employee motivation was mainly purposed to encourage the staffs to work more effectively for the company and for their personal growth. There were motivation that related to enriching job, empowering, allowing involvement, and crafting job (Hackman and Oldhwas 1980; Herzberg, 1974; Nelson 2000). There were also rewarding recognition and raising pride involved with motivation. The linking pay to performance and gain sharing were also involved with motivation (Hatcher and Ross, 1985 and Nelson 2004). The OD interventions conducted in formal and informal meetings, and activities.

Formal meeting were conducted between the researcher and the change team. The main purpose was to increase the motivation of the employees by improving the job design (including enriching job, empowering, allowing involvement, crafting job), and increase the financial incentive (including rewards recognition, linking pay to performance, and gain sharing) by increased bonus based on company performance and set up “the best employee award of the month” started in August 2009.

Special activities developed to increase the employee motivation. The activities were included the sports day within the company and with the other company around the city, the community service, field trip to make merit in Buddhism holiday, and also the field trip to other city once a year.

ODI for Job Satisfaction and Job Performance

Job Satisfaction mainly helped to improve organization performance. It included work itself, job variety, autonomy, goal determination,

feedback, and recognition (Gomez-Mejia, 2004; Herzberg et al., 1959).

Job performance could help the company to improve the production quantities, achieving quality, customer satisfaction, and employee moral (Rudman, 2000). In addition, the performance of individuals could be measured by quantity and quality of output, absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover (Robbins, 2005; Schermerhorn, 1997).

Therefore, the OD intervention that conducted to improve for job satisfaction and performance were reward activities and special communication training class.

There were rewards program beside the best employee award of the month, there was also the “time attendance rewards program” or “good time attendance paid.”

The employees who won the time attendance awards would also get the scholarship award for their children in the New Year party. In addition, the communication training lesson was included for the new employees on the orientation class. And for the current employees that want to attend this session could apply to attend this class.

Research Methodology

This action research was designed to investigate and to identify impacts of ODIs on employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction and job performance. Informants were 2 groups of 7 managers and 199 informants from Udon Mastertech. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. Instruments for data collections were questionnaire, on-line assessment, focus group interviews, and observations. The research was conducted during January 2009 to March 2010. There were three stages in this research, namely, (i) the assessment stage, (ii) the development or the implementation of the organization development stage, (iii) the evaluation stage.

(i) *The Assessment Stage:* This stage determines how the company was currently working both jobs function and employees

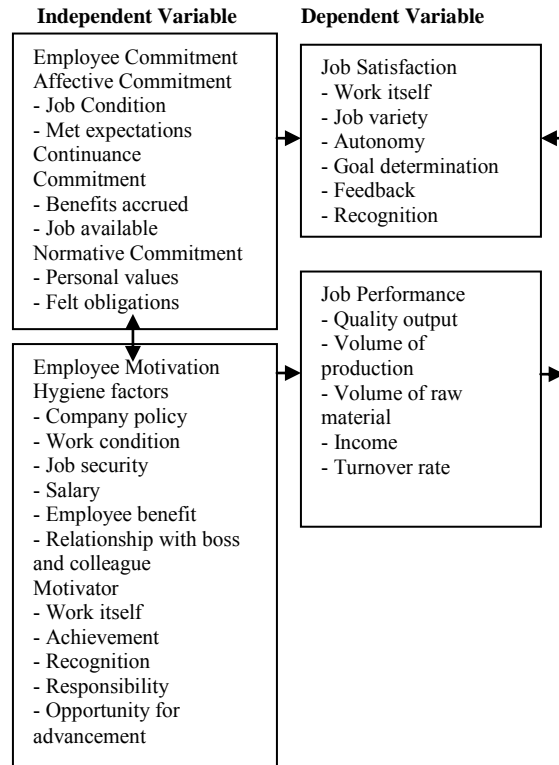
perspective. It involved with collection all the information about the current operation and opinion of employees. The data we received was analyzed to determine the potential change to improve the company. In addition, this stage was also identified the weakness and threats and to find an appropriate ODIs for these weakness and threats to improve the company performance (Cumming and Worley, 2005; and Hatch and Culiffe, 2006).

(ii) *The Development or ODI Implementation stage*: This stage was the plan of action to help the company improve their work effectiveness. The intervention helped the company to change to be more effectiveness. The implementation of the organization development intervention need to focus on (1) employee commitment in the areas of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment by intervening with career development opportunity which were clear job description, clear goal setting, attempting expectation met, fair evaluation, consult with experts and organize an effective training; (2) employee motivation was involved motivation through enriching job, empowering, allowing involvement, crafting job, rewarding recognition, raising pride, linking pay to performance, and gain sharing and (3) job satisfaction and job performance were involved with reward activity, employee training and development program (*Ibid*).

(iii) *The post ODI or Evaluation stage*: This stage applied through questionnaire, in-depth interview key personnel, observation, and some company data output. The evaluation was the last stage after the company assessment, and the company development or the implementations of the organization development intervention stage were conducted. After the evaluation was measured, analyzed the feedback and then the measure of long-term effects was conducted in the evaluation feedback stage and return back to the first stage again (Cumming and Worley, 2005).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research was designed as follows:



Data Analysis

This research main objective is to describe and analyze the corporate growth and current function of the corporate as family business; to assess, analyze and determine the level of employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction and job performance; to develop and implement an appropriate ODI based on the analyses; and to identify the impact of ODI on employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction, and job performance before during and after ODI. In addition, the research questions attempted to support the objectives of this research. The findings of this research are detailed in Chapter Four. Part I (Employee General Information) and Part II (Level of

Opinions) was presented in term of the average (x-bar) and the researcher also used a five-point Likert scale to find the relation to employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction, and job performance. The Arbitrary level given below and Descriptive Rating were used in defining responses into levels.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative method that applied for data collection is the group interview, in-depth interview, and focus group technique for the employees in the factory, office staffs and management team. Data will be analyses in mean to be used.

Quantitative Analysis

The questionnaire technique applied by using the Liker-Scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 is Agree, 3 is Uncertain, 2 is Disagree, and 1 is Strongly Disagree.) and open-ended question. Data analyses in means were used with employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction, and job performance. T-test was used to test relationship among variables. Moreover, SPSS was used in processing data.

Summary of the Findings

Employee Commitment and Motivation, and Job Satisfaction and Job Performance Levels.

Conducting the ODI with employees and management showed positive results in turns of employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction and job performance.

Appropriate OD interventions conducted with regard to employee commitment were as follows: a formal meeting conducted between the researcher and the change team determined clear job descriptions and helped employees set up their goals to match with the company goals.

Informal meeting were conducted at least once a week among the small group of supervisors and employees to share their interest and interact freely.

Special training conducted as leadership class for the managers and all supervisors to improve their leadership skills increased their self-confidence in terms of public speaking and effective communication with employees. The managers and supervisors used the knowledge acquired in this class to lead their employees to work more efficiently and effectively.

An employee vision workshop was conducted for the employees to share their common vision and increased their commitment. It helped them develop their clear vision and give them a sense of direction. This workshop also helped them identify their personal interests.

As the result, the total x-bar of employee commitment on the Pre ODI was 3.82 and the Post ODI was 3.90. The x-bar improvement was 0.08. Therefore, the significant Employee Commitment average was less than 0.001.

OD interventions conducted with respect to employee motivation were as follows: A formal meeting held between the researcher and the change team had as its main purpose to increase the level of employee motivation by improving the job design (including enriching job, empowering, allowing involvement, and crafting job), improving the financial incentives (including rewards recognition, linking pay to performance, and gain sharing) by increasing the company's bonus based on the company's performance and setting up "the best employee award of the month."

Special activities were developed to increase employee motivation. As mentioned, these were the company sport day, community service, field trip to make merit during Buddhism holidays, and a field trip to another city once a year.

OD interventions conducted to increase the level of job satisfaction and job performance included reward activities call "time attendance rewards program" or "good time attendance period," which led to scholarships for the employees' children in the New Year party. Moreover, communication training lessons were included for new employees on the orientation

class. However, current employees could sign up and attend this class.

As the result, the total x-bar of employee motivation on the Pre ODI is 3.75 and the Post ODI one 3.89. The x-bar improvement was 0.15. Therefore, the significance of employee motivation average was at less than 0.001.

Employee Commitment Relationship with Job Satisfaction and Job Performance.

Employee commitment has a relationship with job satisfaction and job performance.

The total x-bar of job satisfaction on the Pre ODI is 3.76 and the Post ODI one 3.89 with an x-bar improvement of 0.13. The significant job satisfaction average is 0.001. The total pre-ODI x-bar job performance is 3.84 and the Post ODI one 3.96 with an x-bar improvement of 0.12. The job performance significant average is 0.001. It can be concluded that after conducting the employee commitment OD interventions and comparing the pre-ODI and the post-ODI, both job satisfaction and job performance have improved.

Employee Motivation Relationship with Job Satisfaction and Job Performance.

After conducting employee motivation ODIs, employee motivation improved and so did job satisfaction and job performance as both increased. Employee satisfaction is related with job satisfaction and job performance as the level of significance is less than 0.001.

There is a relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. After conducting ODIs on job satisfaction and job performance with the same methods, which were reward activities called “time attendance rewards program” or “good time attendance period,” and the communication training lessons for current and new employees, job satisfaction and job performance increased. Therefore, there is a relationship between job satisfaction and job performance which have a level of significance less than 0.001.

The OD interventions had an impact on employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction and job performance. From this action research, after applying the OD intervention on employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction and job performance, the level of all these variables had increased. The grand total average x-bar of the pre-ODI was 3.80 and the post ODI one 3.91, showing an x-bar improvement of 0.12. The overall employee commitment, employee satisfaction, job satisfaction, and job performance significant average is less than 0.001. The OD intervention has had an impact on employee commitment, employee motivation, job satisfaction and job performance.

Unexpected findings

As the company had to face external forces that cause sales to decline by more than 60%, the researcher and the change team supported a plan to pay employees only on their salary base. Many male employees were allowed to become monks for a couple of months and some employees volunteered to take some leaves without paid. Surprisingly, many employees understood the impact of the crisis on the company and the resulting situation. Many of them gave interviews in which they indicated that it had happened before and that they try their best to be with the company in crisis time. They have a great commitment with the company and many of them felt a sense of ownership and belonging to the company.

Informal meetings between supervisors and employees were one of the best methods for them to share their point of views. Many employees felt great to have somebody to listen to them talk about their work and also about their personal lives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introducing ODIs to Udon in this Action Research, starting in early 2009 turned out to bring many benefits. One of the greatest impacts

has been the enhanced employee commitment and higher employee motivation, higher job satisfaction and greater job performance. It shows it has a significant impact. The average turnover rate in 2009 was about 2.98 percent compared with the average one in 2008 at 3.53. In other words, it went down by about 15 percent in one year. Incidentally, the net income also increased by about 1.1 percent after the OD intervention.

Recommendations

1. The leadership training class, employee vision workshop, and the communication lesson have had a great impact on ODIs. Several managers, supervisors, and employees have since requested more classes in order to further enhance their personal growth.

2. Employee commitment should be implanted in both the new and current employees. The change management team is still looking for ways to create a positive impact on employee commitment.

3. In the future, Udon Mastertech should have executive coaching from OD practitioner experts since its executive admitted to have little experience as an entrepreneur; another area for further studies.

Recommendations for Future Studies

1. Since the company is a sub-contract company, it is looking forward to having its own branding and looking for new markets. And the main company is supportive of this initiative. Therefore, future OD interventions with the future new marketing department would be an interesting topic to study.

2. In the future, the owners or the managing directors will expand the company and reorganize its structure. The company plans to have a special training department. Therefore, a new OD intervention could be proposed in the near future in terms of a clear vision or future search for a managing director. It would help the company move forward in this rapidly changing world.

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