

Transition Seminar Design

TIP

10 or More, Split Up

If the group is larger than 10, or has several branches or functions, split them into functional groups for the team relationship image.

Introduction

- A. Manager Opening: thank you; purpose of transition/building teams is. . .
- B. Facilitator Opening: introduce self, review agenda, icebreaker (fears, expectations for the day), guidelines for running the meeting

Team Relationship Image and Member Resources

- A. Individuals draw creative symbolic pictures (no organization charts, minimal text, no stick figures) on chart paper of “how you see yourself in the context of this group”.
- B. Round robin sharing of images and responding to:
 - The thing(s) that is most important and really counts for me personally is...
 - The thing(s) that really motivates or drives me day to day are...
 - My unique contribution to the FAA mission is...
 - If you want to see my hot buttons get pressed, just...
 - The bottom line: We get measured by... and are expected to...
 - The aspect of my job/function that gives life to the organization is. . .

Manager-Team Member Expectations

- A. Split group evenly to brainstorm and then develop:
 1. What do you need/expect from your new supervisor/manager in order to do your best work?
 2. What is working well in your organization that you'd like to see continue and not change?
 3. What would you like to see your new supervisor address (problems, issues or concerns)?
- B. As the groups work, the manager/supervisor and the facilitator leave the room to review the manager's prepared briefing of their management philosophy and style.

Facilitating Groups

- C. Manager presents his/her management style for at least 30 minutes. Group can ask questions for clarification at the completion of presentation.
- D. Groups report out their answers to question 1. The facilitator should capture any common themes that may show up. Whole group discusses/clarifies/negotiates the management philosophy/style/needs. Action items (what, who, how, when) are captured if appropriate.
- E. Groups report out their answers to questions 2 and 3. The facilitator should capture any common themes that may show up. Whole group discusses/clarifies/negotiates the management philosophy/style/needs. Action items (what, who, how, when) are captured if appropriate.

Critique and Closure

What worked? What didn't work? What are the next steps?

Transition Seminar Leader Prework

TIP

Passage = Feelings

There are specific feelings associated with a new job. Leaders are likely to feel lonely, unclear about their role and creative about the possibilities.

TIP

Ask About Their Passage

If the leader is relatively new, try to find out about their transition to their new job. This will help to assess how well the leader is coping with transition. Ask: How have you managed this transition? What have you done to help yourself get comfortable? Did you have time to visit the new site before moving in? How did you learn more about what this position entailed?

Ask: What was the former leader like? Do you have a mentor and if yes, how is that working? How involved are you in your profession? How do the job demands compare to what your profession demands?

TIP

Fewer Models, More Stress

The leader in transition can expect more role ambiguity, stress, negotiation, and innovation if their personal characteristics are very different from their predecessor and there are few role models.

With little or no support, they are more likely to turn to their own creativity to solve problems.

Helping Leaders Develop Their Management Style

Have the manager or supervisor write out their responses to the following questions. Talk them through the questions to help stimulate their thinking.

Ask them to incorporate their role model's qualities into their own management style, even if they believe they do not have all of those qualities. Point out that this should be a stretch for them, something they aspire to be; that they should report this style as if they are this way.

Encourage them to commit to an approach they believe in. After they've finished their first draft, let them see examples of what other managers and supervisors have written so they can polish their statement. Full paragraphs or bullet statements are acceptable. Writing out their philosophy or style will help them articulate their approach clearly to their employees.

Let them know that: You will review their draft and will suggest changes if appropriate; They will be expected to speak for at least 30 minutes, no less; How they communicate this to the group will be modeling behavior, so the more open and honest they are up front, the more likely they are to set the tone for openness and honesty in the future.

Questions for the Supervisor or Manager

1. Looking back over your career in the FAA and in your careers prior to this:

- Who were the managers and supervisors you admired the most?
- What was it that inspired you to work for them?
- What qualities did they bring to the job?
- How did they treat you as an employee?

2. Looking ahead in your new position:

- What are your expectations regarding: teamwork; timeliness; performance ratings and reviews; communications (internal and up the chain); surprises; professionalism; general operations; working with other divisions/branches; personal development opportunities?
- What other expectations do you have of your employees?
- What are your hot buttons? What will set you off?

Supervisor Philosophy/Style Example 1

Communication

I want to have less, rather than more, restrictions to communication. I wish it to be known that peer-to-peer, agent-to-staff-specialist, staff-specialist-to-headquarters specialist, branch-manager-to-headquarters communications are encouraged. The drawback to this freedom on communication is that informal communication can be mistaken as authority to deviate from policy. I want to rely on a high level of professional behavior among our agents and staff. They need to keep their managers and supervisors informed of the things they hear, especially those things that seem to vary from what they know to be the organizations practice or what they have heard from their managers. Managers must work to keep the lines of communication open to encourage questions, ideas, even differences of opinion to make this work. Gossip and misunderstanding will occur in any organization. Keeping lines of communication open and operating will help to address concerns and correct misunderstanding as quickly as possible.

Open-Door

I have an open-door policy. Any employee, supervisor, or manager can bring any issue to me. I do believe in the chain of command, however and expect that any issue brought to me has been discussed with supervisors and this will likely be the first question asked.

Discipline

I want our organization to be self-disciplined and professional. I want to spend as little time as necessary embroiled in dealing with bad behavior. I think it is the supervisor's role to coach employees in what is expected. This means that while I dislike being forced to deal with misbehavior, I get irritated with discovering that supervisors have either not communicated expectations or have been inconsistent in requiring compliance so that employees are misled concerning management expectations. I want inappropriate behavior discussed at the earliest reasonable time in a manner that assures employees retain their dignity but understand management's needs. If need, I can be a strict disciplinarian. The employees I enjoy working with the most are those who have a higher standard of conduct for themselves that I do.

Teamwork

I believe I bring many things to this organization. Most have to do with the way I address problems and work with people. Saying this, I do not plan to tell you how to do your jobs. I do not have the ability to be a star on my own. I will treat each of you and each of your folks as an expert with a unique view of the problems we face. My goal is to be the coach of the best team in the country. Our successes will come from working together. I resent turf battles and view them as needless consumption of energy that could better be applied working problems. We must succeed as an organization for any of us to succeed individually.

Although this is true of all of us, it is especially true of the field program. These folks are part of an organization that appears to be separate from us. Nothing is further from the truth. We must ensure the field programs success since they have a critical function involving safety. They are so important that success can be great enough to reflect well on all members of the our team. Failure to support each other can easily result in consequences adverse to all of us.