

HIGH ROAD TO WORK ORGANISATION

CASE STUDY

Arriva



TNO Work and Employment

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Abstract

After four years of working with self managing teams the bus drivers of the bus company like the challenge of getting more customers on the bus.

HI-RES Case Study: Arriva

Sector: Transport Storage and Communication

Key Words

Self managing teams; star roles; transportation (bus) company

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1. Background Information

The bus company (I.60) has started out as a small regional transportation company. The company started in one province in the Netherlands with five bus lines and 37 drivers. The company once was part of an other bus company but has changed its owner. Today it counts 4000 employees and 1566 busses in The Netherlands. It operates in three provinces in The Netherlands. In Europe this company employs 21.000 people and has 8.200 busses. This cases describes the use of teams in a part of this company that focuses on one province in The Netherlands.

2. Drivers for Change

There were several reasons for starting with the use of teams at the bus company. The main reason was to improve the quality of the product for the customers. Besides that another driver was to improve the quality of work of the drivers. The drivers should have more freedom to optimise their work so that the quality of the service as well as the safety can be increased.

3. Characteristics and Process of Change

At the transportation company changes have been made in the work of the bus drivers. A bus driver does not only drive from A to B, but also performs other activities that are done by supporting departments at other transportation companies. For example the bus drivers sell tickets at the bus and are part of a group that works on the planning and maintenance of busses. The drivers of the company work in a team and have extra tasks that are divided according to the star role model.

This start role model is a model for allocation of coordinating tasks within a team to the employees that look after the interests of this task. The star role holders on one aspect (e.g. marketing, planning, maintenance) form the deliberation group. The extra roles are in the field of marketing, planning, administration, maintenance and personnel & organisation. The roles rotate over the different team members. Each start role has an own budget. This budget is carefully guarded. The leftover amount of money of the budget determines the bonus for the drivers at the end of the year.

The drivers think of actions for the customers themselves. They work on complaints themselves by communicating the complaint to the responsible employee and by answering the complaining customer themselves. The drivers also maintain contact with the government regarding the bus routes and takes care of the purchasing of new parts for the busses. In the monthly work meetings of the teams decisions are made regarding the routes, the actions for customers, the budgets etc.

Essential of the change are: the development of semi-autonomous work groups as well as balancing individual competence with organisational development, rethinking the role of middle and frontline managers. Strengthening partnerships across organisational boundaries.

4. Obstacles to Change

The start of the team work was quite difficult. The companies drivers had to become more independent, while they were used to the coach taking care of planning and controlling tasks. In the team concept they became responsible for these tasks. The coach had to show them first how to make the schedule and arranged several planning and scheduling courses for the drivers. This was a difficult process that took quite some time.

5. Risk Analysis

A risk of giving the bus drivers more authorities to make decisions regarding their own work was that each bus driver wants to optimise his/her own work and does not care about the work of colleagues. This risk was taken care of by letting all bus drivers work together frequently and by making them responsible for the work of the team that they are a part of. This led to a good work atmosphere.

6. Benefits of Change

Benefits for the organisation of the change process are:

- From 5 to 6 bus lines
- From 27 to 45 bus drivers
- 26% more passengers
- 20% more sales of bus tickets in the bus
- from 10 busses to 19 busses in rush hour
- 2 years in row the lowest costs in Dutch public transportation

Benefits for the quality of work of the change process are:

- Improved motivation and work satisfaction of employees because the employees feel more involved in their work.
- Decreased sickness absence to 2%

Conclusions

As it can be seen from the benefits that were generated, the change from a traditional functional bus driver company, in which bus drivers were only allowed to drive, to a modern form of work organisation, in which bus drivers perform not only the driving function but all sorts of supporting and work preparation functions was very successful for this company.

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