Paris Phoenix Group

Case Study:
Start-Up Competency Model, Toolkit for HR, Employee Self-Assessment, and Hiring Practices

This is an example of a process we have used successfully with a large local company who supports several internal 'start-up' groups and could be implemented in a similar fashion for companies experiencing transitions from smaller start-ups to medium-sized businesses or who are also supporting internal start-up groups.

Business Context

A large organization which has an active Research and Development function as well as several internal start-up groups ('incubation' or special projects) whose focus is delivering new products or advancements quickly. Initially, the request was from an HR Director who was supporting a Vice President who wanted to know about internal employees who had a profile that would indicate that they would be good in a start-up organization. Because start-up roles tend to differ from roles working on more established products, it is a competitive advantage to have the employees in those roles who are likely to be most successful. This project then started as developing a self-assessment for employees to be able to understand if they were a match to a start-up profile of success, and for the organization to be able to acquire more

talent management information. The project started with developing competencies unique to working in a start-up role, then creating the self-assessment. This project was extended to include related materials for HR professionals supporting the start-up organizations, including an HR toolkit and hiring toolkit.

Develop Competency Model and Self-Assessment

The competency model was created based on internal interviews of successful start-up leaders and focus groups with employees. The model also included competencies from the client's competency models for leaders and employees, so the new competencies would be seen as complementary. Commercially available measures were researched to determine if there would be an off-the-shelf option which could meet the client needs and align to the competency model, but in the end we determined together that a customized assessment would be best. The assessment was based on a biodata format and written to align to the start-up competency model for this organization, and includes a self-development guide for participants to be able to consider focused growth and development activities if they desire start-up roles but may not be a good profile match yet.

Develop HR Toolkit

Once start-up organizations are determined to be more and more successful, they gradually grow and receive funding and more employees and support. As this happens, HR challenges change and different support is needed. To help support the organization and the internal groups going through these transitions, we developed a toolkit based on stages of growth from start-up to established business, including identifying changes that occur in each stage. Additionally, as a group grows and may be merged into another organization internally, there may be culture or climate issues that surface. The toolkit includes ways to easily assess gaps and potential issues and ideas for smoothing out the transition by focusing on culture and climate. The toolkit keeps in mind unique aspects of this organization and draws upon existing internal assessments and programs to be leveraged in a new context.

Develop Hiring Toolkit

While some start-ups face issues with identifying internal talent and developing those with start-up potential, other organizations are looking to hire start-up talent. Working with the start-up competency model, we developed targeted interview questions and validated these with managers and employees currently viewed as successful in start-up roles. These questions were packaged in a hiring toolkit for staffing, including tips and ideas for recruiting start-up talent into a large organization.

Outcomes

The HR organization launched the suite of start-up programs (competency model, self-assessment, HR toolkit and hiring toolkit) together, ensuring alignment between each piece, and building awareness for this sub-group of employees within HR. In the future the self-assessment will be analyzed for on-going validation and feedback will be sought from the client for improvements to all materials as needed. Feedback has been positive from the client directly, and from others using the materials.

Through customized business solutions, Paris Phoenix Group helps answer complex organizational questions around employee issues. Our consultants focus on understanding how the employee perspective fits into the organizational people system. Each of our customized solutions is founded on a rigorous research approach. This allows us to provide our clients with well-founded and effective solutions to meet their business needs.

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