

People and Productivity : Goal Planning Activity

Virtual Capacity Building Cohort

11th-14th August 2020

Conceptualised and Executed by:

PEOPLE AND PRODUCTIVITY

Introduction :

Social Lens conducted the second edition of the Virtual Capacity Building Cohort from 11th-14th August 2020. This capacity building cohort helped NPOs navigate through their challenges around business continuity planning, risk management, zero cost budgeting, and the people's function. The participation of NPOs from a varied list of sectors led to knowledge sharing, exchanges of best practices, and experiential learning towards improved recognition of their strengths, weaknesses, and identifying a way forward.

People and Productivity - Goal Planning Activity :

In trying times and otherwise, the multifaceted **Human Resources** function is of utmost significance for each organization. HR managers ensure the wellbeing of employees and address people related challenges that the organization or the staff may face. As the role of the people's function becomes exceptionally critical in the post-Covid era, it is imperative that the HR teams remain agile, possess in-depth and extensive knowledge of the function and set objectives that are aligned with the organization's legacy as well as the greener/newer targets.

On Day 3 of the Virtual Capacity Building Cohort, Ria Shroff, the founder of MESA Consulting, shared insights on the importance of communicating effectively with employees and keeping them engaged. The session aimed at enabling the participants to improve the people's functioning in the 'new normal', keep employees motivated, and evaluate performance of employees while working remotely.

In order to discern the current requirements of Not-for-profits vis-à-vis the People's function and help the organisations improve human resource management, Social Lens administered an activity during the session, centered around setting of Goal Plans for junior and senior staff members of organisations. The impetus for the activity was to understand how employees can be repurposed as well as to recognise any ongoing policies/activities that can be done away with to make the work environment more comfortable. This exercise was conducted over a period of 45 minutes.

For the activity, participant not-for-profits were asked to follow the necessary steps as mentioned below -

1. Create a learning goal plan for one junior and one senior employee
2. Identify 3 ways to keep the field staff engaged
3. Identify any policy that can be completely removed, modified or improved currently

Activity 2	
Learning goal plan	
	Junior team member
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
Goals	Senior team member
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
Ways to keep staff engaged	
1	
2	
3	
Policy that can be changed	
1	
2	

Key Insights :

Participants found the **People and Productivity : Goal Planning** activity to be extremely valuable. Participants understood the importance of defining the roles and responsibilities of the senior and junior management respectively and setting goals accordingly. The exercise also helped them in ideating with regards to the different ways to keep the employees engaged. Conducting such an exercise with different NPOs allowed for the presentation of varying perspectives addressing common objectives.

The participants raised various concerns, the most common of which were about lack of financial resources for hiring more people, staff retention policy, monitoring regular employee activities, having to work remotely and keeping in pace with the others. The participants solicited guidance on motivating the staff who have not yet fully come to terms with the sudden adoption of virtual methods of running the programs.

During the course of the exercise, few of the participants presented their work and the following insights emerged –

1. Communication is key - organizations should develop an effective communication plan and reporting structure. Communication brings information, which relieves anxiety.
2. Work-from-home guidelines should be laid down carefully and structured to ensure work-life balance.
3. Senior management should pave the path for ease of transition to automation and collaboration tools as well as cloud computing.
4. HR managers should revamp policies and processes in accordance with the new guidelines.
5. Approach employees with empathy, understand their fears and limitations from a place of trust.
6. Set upskilling and learning goals to keep employees engaged.

The responses received during the exercise presented the following solutions to address the challenges facing the nonprofit organisations on how to manage the teams and work effectively in the 'new normal' -



THE WAY FORWARD

The onset of the global pandemic and the ensuing lockdown has led to several realizations for many organisations. First, employee wellbeing, health and safety is of utmost priority. Next, organisations understand the significance of knowledge sharing and upskilling of employees. Finally, it is through consistent employee engagement and involvement that an organization can realize its term goals.

Recently, employees have showcased increased productivity and notable resilience to adapt to the new ways of functioning. The capacity to sustain this momentum poses an immediate challenge to organizations. The new way forward demands upskilling of existing resources, creation of new roles while rendering some of them as redundant. For many organisations, working hours, locations and arrangements need to become more fluid. Remote working opportunities need to be incorporated

as an integral part of every organization. It is also necessary for organisations to work on capacity building and strengthening in order to remain competitive in the market.