BUSINESS CONTINUITY: HOW TO USE CULTURE & CHANGE MANAGEMENT TO BUILD BETTER TRAINING

Oftentimes, a large organization with significant depth and breadth has the internal knowledge, skills and ability to develop business continuity training on its own. A training which is intended to create consistency in how business lines and functional departments think about risk, view the potential impacts to business operations and define what their role is as part of the larger organization working to sustain operations during a disruptive event.

Such was the case with one of our clients, an American multi-national computer technology firm. While they're a large corporation with an abundance of skilled practitioners, what they lacked was earmarked staff who had the time to complete a company-wide priority business continuity training expeditiously. They turned to our expert development and design team to help them accomplish this goal.

A main consideration factor was accounting for corporate culture while designing the business continuity training. Below are several key steps that helped structure our team's efforts throughout the project's lifecycle.

Imagine

As a subject matter expert, it's often easy to forget that not everyone knows as much as you do. Training designers translate the knowledge of the subject specialists into clear learning outcomes that build progressively and are tailored to the audience.

- Thoroughly review and understand the vision and strategic plan for the training. Ensure your team clearly understands the urgency and drivers for the training and analyze any implications on the organization's culture, people, processes and technology
- Clearly identify anticipated training or learning requirements
- Proactively outline the role of internal communications and how it supports the training vision and mission

Define

Deciding what to omit from company-wide training is often as important as what's included – always reminding yourself that attention spans are quite short. Identifying the audience and their knowledge base helps to focus the content on what's most important.

- Consider organizational-wide readiness for new training, define potential risks and obstacles
- Determine high-level training goals, objectives, approach and delivery mechanisms
- Develop a communications strategy and define key messages to support importance of training

Design

In order to resonate with employees, training should reflect the company's style, culture and brand identity. Effective training design connects related topics, highlights important distinctions and provides high-level structure.

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- Map 'obstacles to change' to 'opportunities from change'
- Design thoughtful training materials using the company's overall tone of voice
- Construct customized, targeted messages that align to company culture to convey benefits of training before launch
- Incorporate project sponsor and key stakeholder feedback into training materials and finalize rollout logistics

Launch

A key factor when developing training is considering how it will be promoted internally.

- Include new business continuity training and materials into the organization's existing training offerings – make it easily accessible to those that must participate in the training
- Deliver and revise communications as necessary to increase participation and completion

Evaluate

Detailed usage statistics and feedback provide another level of evaluation and are used to refine the training based upon how users are engaging with it.

- Conduct post-launch interviews with key stakeholders to validate the success of learning
- Celebrate successes and quick wins

"The learning tool that the experts at Witt O'Brien's was customized to our company's needs and reflects the culture of our firm and its employees. For the first time in two decades I've gained a clear understanding of our Business Continuity function and how to best prepare my team for future crises which serve to interrupt our daily operations." – Senior Executive, Client

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