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Management Development Certificate Course Summary Notes

MDC Participant: Patricia Participant
Course Title: Principles of Quality
Date(s) Taken: April 1, 2010

What are the key learning points from this course?

The purpose of the course is to provide an understanding of the concepts and techniques that are used to build and sustain continuous quality improvement. Continuous quality consists of multiple elements. These are: focus on the customer; product/service excellence; employee involvement; data-based decision making; continuous improvement; and leadership. The definition of continuous quality adds that it involves all managers and employees and uses quantitative methods to continuously improve an organization's processes. I feel one of the most important points is to communicate the principles and concepts of continuous quality improvement to everyone in the department and involve all employees in the decision-making process.

Integrating a quality culture does not happen overnight. It is a paradigm shift that many employees may resist. Eight values play an integral part in a quality culture. These are: we are all in this together; no subordinates or superiors allowed; open, honest communication; everyone has full access to what they need; processes, not people, should be one's focus; there are no successes or failures, just learning experiences; do your work with integrity; and strive for excellence in all that you can control.

What are the benefits of incorporating these points into your work?

Our Department has been through a lot of reorganization in the last year. We are striving to achieve customer and employee satisfaction. In fact, we hope to request funding from the First State Quality Improvement Fund next fiscal year to achieve these levels of satisfaction. The course has helped me define who my department's customers and stakeholders are and methods that our department can use in measuring customer and employee satisfaction.

The biggest benefit I've noticed since taking this class is learning to focus on the work processes and not the employee. Instead of blaming the employee, I can look at ways to improve the employee's work process by working together and soliciting input from that person. I've begun to set up meetings with other employees in my unit in order to define what current processes need to be improved and develop plans that will lead us toward quality work processes.

What impact did this course have on your developing the required competencies?

This course had a positive impact on the development of my overall understanding of customer focus competencies. In particular, this course gave me a better understanding of the value of our department's services and the needs of our customers. I learned the importance of developing a value system that is aligned with our mission and long-term goals to ensure quality service.

This course also helped the development of my critical thinking. In particular I am more aware of various ways of gathering data to assess my department's performance. Also, I learned problem-solving techniques to help define the problem and find the appropriate solution.

Discussion notes with your supervisor:

As a new manager, Patricia will benefit greatly from the course. She has communicated to me different ways that we can improve our daily work processes and how to measure the results. She will be a valuable player in leading the continuous quality improvement effort that our department will be participating in the near future. We have decided to place her on our department's new quality team. The team will convey and facilitate the principles of the course to the entire department to build a quality culture.

Patricia Participant
Participant's signature

Sally Supervisor
Supervisor's signature

May 5, 2010
Discussion date