Performance Management in the Administrative Office of Rajarambapu Institute of Technology, Sangli

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Abstract: **Engineering is a highly skilled oriented stream of education. Looking at the demand for engineering, lots of institutes are launching themselves in the market and it leads to cut throat competition amongst them. Main challenge is to stay ahead in the competition. This can be done by improving the image of the institute and we can improve this by outperforming on following fronts.**

- **Best Placements for the students**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Quality of education**
- **By offering professional and efficient services to students and staff.**

The focus of this study is services to students and staff. Improving on these points will contribute towards enhancing image of the institutes and ultimately towards attracting more and more students. The topic of discussion for this article is developing professionalism in the approach of administrative staff by increasing their efficiency and working on attitude. In nutshell working on managing their performance so that they will work efficiently and their approach will be student and staff centric.

Keywords: **Performance management, Image of engineering institutes and challenges for engineering institutes**

I. INTRODUCTION

Engineering education in the country has started gaining prosperity from 80s when permission for private engineering colleges was granted first time. Before that only Government engineering colleges were in existence and because of that admission to the engineering was a tough task for the students. In 1980 the permission was granted for private engineering colleges to open their setup and start the colleges. Due to this, admission opening has widen up and more and more students started taking admission to engineering colleges and this has given birth to a cut throat competition amongst them. Now scenario for engineering colleges have become more and more challenging because of the competition on one side and adverse economic aspects like less demand and more supply of seats on other side. This has lai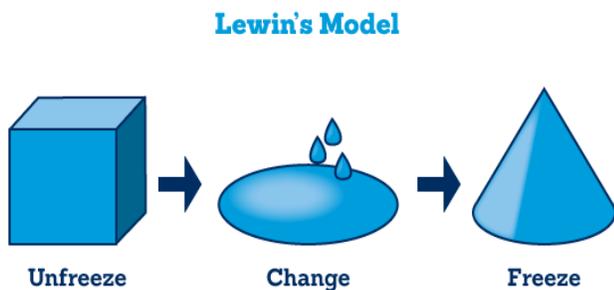d more and more emphasis on teaching learning process and administrative services to the students to attract admissions. I would like to focus here on the administrative services to the students and staff. If we see the today's nomenclature of the most of the engineering colleges then we will find that they are in transformational stage and which is a matter of concern. Expectations of students and parents are changing rapidly and coping up with the expectations is a biggest challenge for the engineering institutes. For giving very prompt service we need to have efficient and smart office employee team. So building up a strong efficient administrative team has become the priority. We have so many engineering institutes which are functioning for last 2 or 3 decades and subsequently we have administrative team which has seen the old days where the admissions were abundant but now scenario is changing and admissions are decreasing and now this is the time for engineering institutes to consolidate on best and efficient administrative services for both students and staff. On other hand time is changing rapidly and more and more ICT based system is becoming tool to contribute towards efficient service but as we have already seen, some of these employees are not computer savvy and they are finding it difficult to change. One more thing is very important that there is always "NO" to change from employee's side and this becomes one of the hurdles for bringing change. So motivated and well trained administrative staff has become need of the time. Managing their performance to get it done is a huge task. As we know there is always a great resistance for bringing a change. But if we analyze the causes of resistance then we will come to know that, it is for following two reasons.

1. **Fear of unknown**: Employees are often confused about why we require a change and where this lead to. This is to be dealt with the communication and counseling.
2. **Fear of inability**: Employees are often afraid of whether they will cope up with the new technology, which is a requirement of the time. This has to be dealt with training.

II. METHODOLOGY

The primary data is collected by way of observational study and secondary data of various sources is also instrumental for the study. Performance management (PM) includes activities which ensure that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner. Performance management can focus on the performance of an organization, a department, employee, or even the processes to build a product or service, as well as many other areas.

Looking at the scenario, bringing change has become important task. Here we can talk about applying Lewin's Model of change. It is as follows.

Lewin's Model

Unfreeze → Change → Freeze

Source: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_94.htm

Attitude of the employees is always a deciding factor for managing the performance. Unfreezing the old culture, working style, attitude and mind set is the first step which we have focused on. It always happens in engineering institutes that administrative team is considered to be a secondary in comparison to teaching staff. Building their confidence and building a team was necessary. We decided to work on spiritual as well as managerial principles. Converting regular practices to ethical one was one more objective. We started taking following initiatives.

1. Every day of the office starts with prayer "**Pasaydan**" which spreads positivity at the workplace. This brings employees of all 3 sections (Establishment, Accounts & Students) together and ultimately it leads to building a positive TEAM.
2. **Thought of the Day** – This program is followed after Pasaydan. In this any one employee of Office is sharing the positive thought with all others. This helps giving recognition to each employee and to build confidence in them. Every Monday one HOD (Head of the Department) is invited to share a positive thought and every Friday one non teaching employee is invited for sharing a thought. This leads in bridging the gap in between staff and Office. Teaching staff has started empathetically understanding administrative staff and its contribution.

3. **Sound System** is installed in the Office premises and everyday prayers & instrumental music is played to create a stress free atmosphere which leads displaying best of the efficiency of employees in the work.
4. **Word of the Day** – This program is designed to add one English official word to the vocabulary of all Office members. Under this, one word is written on the white board along with its meaning in local language. This helps in improving drafting of the letters to be sent to various Govt. bodies and outside agencies.
5. **Monthly Meeting** - Once in a month every section (Establishment, Accounts, and Student) conducts the meeting to discuss on administrative work and try to understand the problem if any and finds out the solution on the problem. Problems & issues discussed in the section meeting are brought to the Administrative monthly meeting. This enables every employee of the Office to understand what is happening in every section for better co-ordination among them.
6. **Meeting with Departments** – Administrative department is conducting meeting with all other departments in the Institute to understand their administrative problems. This also helps in bridging the gap between Administration & other departments. ATR (Action Taken Report) of all meetings are prepared to bring discussion into practice.
7. Online fee collection facility is made available through various payment gateways of private & nationalized banks. This enables students to pay their fee from any part of the country.
8. **Birthday Celebration** – Everybody's birthday is celebrated in the office. This gives the proud feeling to every administrative staff.
9. **Send off ceremony for retiring staff** – Administrative Office is taking initiative in arranging send off ceremony for the employees who are getting retired. This creates bonding with other staff.
10. **Arranged following Training programs**:
    a. **Training to upgrade computer skills**. Specially Microsoft office, which is the day today need of the present administrative job profile.
    b. **Training to develop behavioral skills.**
    c. **Training for personality development**
11. **Upgrading ERP Practices –** All 3 sections of Administrative department are networked in a state of art ERP System. Following things are covered under ERP.
    a. Expenditure, Leaving, Bonafide certificates are issued within one day to the students with the help of strong ERP system.

b. Online leave & attendance management system is designed and it is directly connected with Salary Management.
c. SMS portal for students & parents is created to send results, attendance & notices to give updates. Vendors are also updated about their payments through SMS.
d. Online Cashbook is created for the updated account balance to the departments.
e. Online salary slips are generated and this option is open for all employees.
f. Every student's information and details are updated online at the time of fresh admissions on the 1st day of the college.
g. Online payments are done to various vendors and Govt. agencies. This helps to create a cashless culture.
h. Online Document Verification and Transcript – Entered into MOU with M/s True Copy. True copy is providing online document verification and transcript facility for the students. This helps students to apply for transcript from anywhere in the world.

12) **Sports day** for the administrative staff is celebrated, which included Cricket and Badminton. Everybody has participated (Irrespective of gender) full heartedly and cheered up each other in the games. This has taken the whole administrative team to the greater height of belongingness.

III. CONCLUSION

Above mentioned interventions are proved to be effective and following changes are visible now.

a. Employees are motivated and eager to share each other's work. Previously there were water tight compartments of each 3 sections but now they are mixing up with each other and trying to help each other.
b. Their confidence level has gone up.
c. Proper bridging is done in teaching and non teaching staff.
d. Mindset of the Administrative staff has become more student and staff centric.
e. Administrative staff has become more communicative in both ways: towards staff and students and internally with colleagues. This finally helps in convincing each other.
f. Prompt Services to students and staff.
g. Processes are set now and nothing is adhoc.
h. Administrative staff is suggesting more and more linkages for ERP up gradation, finally it helps in efficient services.