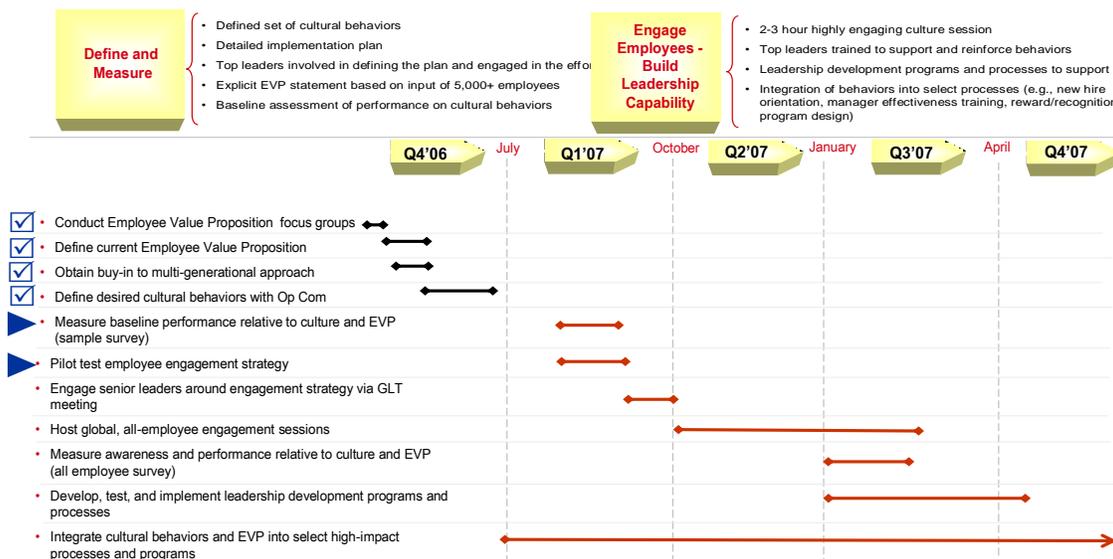# HEALTHCARE CULTURE CHANGE AND ENGAGEMENT

BACKGROUND

Cultural change and integration was a strategic objective for a large Healthcare medical products and services client. Historically they had been reporting high rates of revenue growth and profitability driven by the acquisition of successful medical product and service enterprises. The Operating Committee was concerned about the risks associated with a myriad of incompatible systems, people issues and processes, reflecting the large number of acquisitions and declining levels of productivity. Over 60 acquisitions had been made from 1980 – 2006.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Leadership felt the business could not be run as a "Holding Company," reflecting a company made up of independent entities, redundant systems and conflicting business practices. Development of new systems and organization processes required to efficiently operate on a global scale could not be implemented without a common unifying vision. Medical Products Company wanted to establish a multi-phased transformational plan to build a unifying vision and culture. The first phase, focused on understanding their current culture and a definition of their "aspirational" culture. Led by a new CEO, the Operating Committee had defined the organization's shared purpose, vision, strategic themes, and values.

The Medical Products Company was entering a second phase of its cultural transformation, designing an employee engagement process to support the culture change and sustain the adoption of the desired behaviors. At this point the business challenges inherent in the second phase were:

- Involving leaders in the development and implementation of an organization wide engagement strategy for approximately 27,000 U.S.-based employees around the culture and expected behaviors.

- Engaging employees and leaders in defining the application of these behaviors in their local work environment and preparing managers to coach and reinforce behaviors in their day-to-day jobs.

SOLUTION

Develop a Blueprint for change based on an organization analysis and piloting of an engagement strategy. We worked with our medical products client to conduct an organization analysis, develop a blueprint for change and conduct a pilot within five facilities across the US. The purpose of the pilot was to test communication and engagement strategies in order to build a robust design for institutionalizing the new culture across the 27,000 U.S. employee bases.   Based upon on-site interviews across all sites engaging key leaders and employees a common set of Engagement Strategy and objectives and design principles. The objectives are were to:

- Align all healthcare sites with Business Unit and Regional Goals.
- Span boundaries and learn across sites and regional organizations
- Adopt a common set of organization values engaging employees in "Values Workouts."
- Use "Workout Sessions" to provide employees direct input into regional goals and action plans

In addition to the behavior change strategy objectives, design principles were developed with the support of pilot team leadership and used to develop and implement a detailed "Blueprint for Employee Engagement. The graphic reflects a high level outline of the Blueprint that was reviewed by the Pilot Team Leadership as well as a Corporate Steering Team.
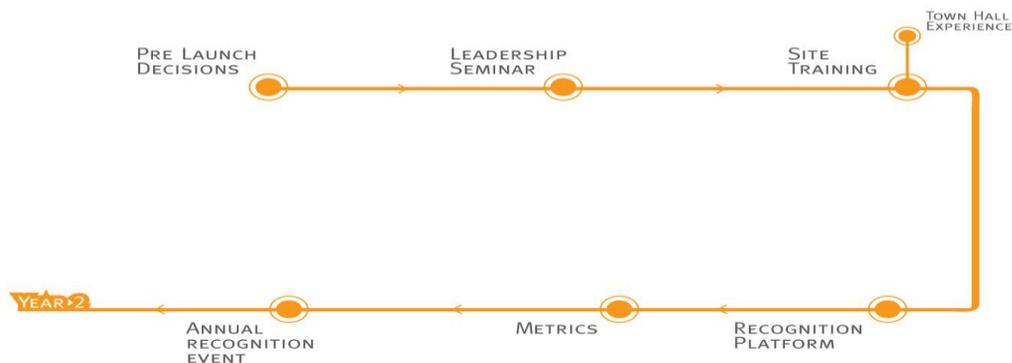
RECOGNITION AND RESULTS

Tracking employee performance and rewarding results throughout the culture change process was viewed as crucial to ensure desired behaviors and business results were being focused on and achieved. A measurement strategy was based on completion of regional and site goals and a recognition strategy was also established aligned with the same set of metrics.

Results reflected a significant increase in employee engagement; not steady-line increases, but in a general trend upward with wide variance along the way. The Engagement Survey that was used at the outset to assess the climate and initiate and organization wide dialogue on values were used as the primary measure of culture change.   Some of positive organization wide results reflected by the engagement survey and feedback sessions after two years:

- Increases in the frequency of formal and informal **performance feedback** sessions of managers and supervisors.
- Improvements on individual **employees productivity** scores
- Improvements in the **satisfaction levels of employee**s
- Reduction of our **turnover** rate and increased retention of high performing employees.
- Marked improvements in **customer satisfaction** levels as measured by focus groups results and customer surveys.

The engagement survey was used on a quarterly, basis to track change over time done primarily for the purpose of organizational learning and change. The initial measurement efforts focused on the pilot, application of findings was not an organization-wide effort. The objective was to engage earlier adopters before attempting to build organization wide support. The survey data was used by the pilot locations for feedback and reflection and as an opportunity to examine progress and improve performance.