

Administration Seminar

Thursday, 14 June 2007

Inside This Issue

- 1 Introduction
- 1 What we do well
- 2 The Barriers
- 3 Suggested Actions
- 4 Feedback

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Introduction

First, a big “Thank You” to everyone who attended and participated. The promise was made that a summary of the Workshops would be circulated by Friday 15 June, so here it is.

The responses from the five Workshop Groups had a large number of items in common, so this summary does not give an individual report of the feedback from each Group, but attempts to summarise them all into a coherent whole.

Likewise, not every group separated “What we should do” from the “Priority Actions”, and some Groups identified as actions to take place within 6 months, actions that other Groups thought should occur within 12 or 24 months, so no timing has been included either.

What we do well

There would seem to be a general agreement that communications within the VEC among its Administrative Staff has improved. Links have developed between individuals in different areas, different locations are communicating better and there is a growing knowledge among staff of what goes on in other areas/locations.

Much of this has stemmed from the various Groups, such as the Consultancy Group, Section Meetings and the Supervisor Group and the circulation of the Management Group Meeting Minutes. IT has also played a major role, in particular the use of e-mail to distribute information and the VEC website.

Published policies and procedures are helpful and staff training is seen as very positive, particularly days like this administration day. Questionnaires, such as the Disability and Customer service ones are also helpful in focussing staff.

Staff would see themselves as flexible, open to change and there top support one another in their work. There is an increased willingness to take responsibility for their advancement and to avail of opportunities as they arise. They would also see themselves as providing a good customer service, being helpful and responding quickly to queries.

Staff can feel taken for granted, isolated and afraid to speak out.

The Barriers

Time was identified as a major problem by nearly everyone. There were a few aspects to this:

- One was a lack of structure in College Offices, in particular. Uncontrolled access by teaching staff to College Offices was a particular timewaster. No matter how busy the Admin Staff were, teachers expected to simply go into the office and have their needs attended to there and then.
- Allied to this was a lack of organisation on the teaching side. Teachers could appear with an exam to be typed that they needed for a class that morning, irrespective of the fact that the office staff were trying to meet the payroll deadline.
- If staff do volunteer for some initiative, such as say the production of a staff newsletter, then they need the time and freedom to do so. There should be some type of official permission.

Staff can feel taken for granted, isolated and afraid to speak out. While communications have improved, they can still fail on occasion. E-mail is an excellent form of communication, but sometimes messages are not passed on. There is still a lack of information on what goes on elsewhere in the Committee and of the role of the Committee. Language is becoming a problem when dealing with non-nationals.

There is both a lack of recognition of the need for integration across the Committee's institutions and of the differences between the institutions. Resistance to change, exclusion from policy decision making and the lack of a training budget were all items that were highlighted.



The new Jury's Hotel provided an excellent venue for the day

Suggested Actions

All Groups agreed on two main sets of actions:

Improve Communications.

The Committee should produce a Newsletter and make better use of the Website for communicating between staff.

More consideration should be given to how e-mail is used, with the provision of an e-mail address book covering all administrative staff as an example.

An updated list of what staff are performing which duties should be available, together with upcoming events (maternity leaves, career breaks, etc)

Allied to this, Reception staff should be kept informed of who is in and out, to prevent staff being constantly forwarded to an unmanned telephone.

There should be regular, scheduled meetings between Head Office Staff and Centre Staff. There should be consultative and information meetings.

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More Training.

There is a need for more Training, Seminars, Information and Development Sessions. Agendas and documentation should be sent out well in advance. More training in Customer Relations and the training and use of mentors were among the examples given

Other matters.

There should be more recognition of the role played by & work done by the administrative staff and a bigger role given to them in promoting their Colleges/Centres. There should be more focus and training on Customer Service, in particular how to deal with troublesome customers, and the possibility of opening College Offices over lunchtime.

Feedback

To help us in providing a relevant and quality service to our staff, we would be grateful if you would take the time to complete the Feedback Questionnaire below and return it to the HR Office, City of Cork VEC, 21 Lavitt's Quay, Cork.

Thank you.

Please tick as appropriate

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Presentations				
Introduction – T. Owens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Services – J. Fitzgibbons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services – T. Daly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scéim Teanga/Ed Plan – J. O'Regan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HR Department – S. Mullins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Support – U. Carroll	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finance – U. Fitzgerald	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Info Technology – A. Deasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilities:				
Room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Comments/Suggestions:
