



Delivering Results: Three Case Studies

A Great Team. Lagging Performance

Problem: Have you thought, “We had a great team. Now, they seem tired and unhappy.”

This client had delighted in a talented, motivated staff. Now team members in many areas were showing poor morale and burnout.

Solution: Talking with client leaders and staff showed that what had been occasional unplanned projects had turned into constant new projects. Therefore, what at one time were work “peaks” that employees were happy to tackle, now felt like chaotic, never-ending work demands.

We worked with leadership to confirm key priorities to evaluate new projects, and how they could be sure they were leaving capacity for “normal operations.” Leaders also agreed when, how, and on what basis they would adjust their priorities. These changes moderated the workload, provided employees with confidence the work expected was achievable, and improved morale.

Leaders are rarely fully in tune with employee concerns. Tic Tac Toe Consulting’s employee engagement survey and focus group services can help you head off potential problems.

A Company in Search of a “Your Job Title Here”

Problem: “We are struggling with attracting and retaining the right people.” Amen!

Hiring is a challenge for most firms right now. But it can be hard to fill specialty roles at any time.

Solution: First, we helped the client identify, “What makes us special?” by exploring why current employees joined them and like working there. We used these themes to develop recruiting marketing messages, telling candidates why they might like the company.

We also helped the client select and implement their first Applicant Tracking System (ATS). This software hosts a client recruiting website and is the backbone of the application and hiring process. The ATS increased hiring efficiency and information sharing among interviewers. And, the client can now search its candidate database for future needs.

We also evaluated the selection process. We looked at existing hiring outcomes (e.g., quality of hire and timeline for achieving it) and the candidate experience. We clarified hiring roles and timelines, added selection tools to help with skill evaluation, and created candidate communication templates to provide a “concierge” experience.

The client’s offer to hire ratio improved. Hiring timelines dropped. Candidates reported, “It was the best candidate experience I ever had.”

We can also help you with an employee referral program and other recruiting approaches.

“Name” Is Extremely Talented, But...

Problem: You’re awake at night, again. Are you thinking about that one person in your team who is extremely talented and valuable, but causes a lot of problems?

In this case, the client’s employee had valuable technical skills, and got a lot done, but could be very insensitive interacting with others...some labeled it harassment.

Solution: These issues are never easy to solve. (If they were, you would have already done it!)

One key is **not to ignore it!** If you do, it sends the message that you pardon bad behavior by one employee at the cost of other employees’ discomfort. Not a good look.

First, we examined the employee’s role, skills, motivations, interactions, and contributions. We also looked at trends in their behavior and their manager’s supervisory style.

Sometimes you can achieve behavior change – by some combination of the employee, manager, or other staff – to at least improve the situation. At other times, change isn’t likely to happen.

In that instance, you need to evaluate the Individual Employee’s Contribution vs. Employee Costs in declining morale (and possible legal action) among other employees.

Efforts at behavior change had failed. The next step was to explore other options, including:

- Could the employee’s role be adjusted to reduce contact with others?
- Might the employee “move outside” as a contractor?
- Could the valued skills/contributions be found elsewhere/provided by another employee?

We reviewed what would be needed to transition a new employee into this role. Each option -- “keep,” “contract,” or “separate” -- had pros and cons.

The client decided to “contract.” We helped the client prepare for an open, constructive, conversation with the employee. The client described the specific problems and need for change, and offered the individual a contract as an outside contributor. In this arrangement, the former employee would work more independently toward specific deliverables. The individual would still communicate with other staff, but on a more limited basis. The employee accepted.

The client kept this individual’s contribution and improved staff morale. Leaders gained credibility by addressing this employee concern.

If the client had decided to separate the employee, Tic Tac Toe Consulting would have been available to walk them through the potential implications (legal, operational), planning for the separation event (possibly offer a Non-Disclosure Agreement with “sweetener”, who would run the separation, when it would be done, key messages, etc.), and aftermath (communication to other team members, decision on redefining the role or recruiting a new person, etc.)

Reach out today so we can help you with creative, compliant, solutions!