

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



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Short Description

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT case study

Description

ENRICHING JOBS AT STANDARD DECOY

Standard Decoy in Witchell, has been making traditional wooden hunting decoys since 1927. Cyrus Witchell began the business by carving a couple of ducks a day by hand. Demand and competition have long since driven the company to use modern machinery and assembly-line techniques, and they now turn out two hundred ducks daily even on the slowest days.

When Steward Alcorn, Cyrus Witchell's grandson, took over the business, he knew things needed to change. Output had not fallen, and the company was surviving financially despite competition from what he called "plastic ducks" from the Far East. But Alcorn noticed that the productivity per worker had stayed the same for ten years, even during the period since the company had bought the latest equipment. While touring the plant, he noticed many employees yawning, and he

found himself doing the same. No one quit. No one complained, They all gave him a smile when he walked by. But no one seemed excited with the work.

Alcorn decided to undertake a survey. He appointed a respected worker at each step in the production process to ask each of his or her co-workers questions and to fill in response sheets. One conclusion emerged from the survey : The “fine-tuners”, as Alcorn thought of them, were the most content ones. That is, those who used fine tools and brushes to get the ducks’ heads, expressions, and feathers just right seemed to enjoy their work most. In contrast, the people who planed and cut the wood into blocks, rough – cut the body shapes, spray – painted the body colour, and applied the varnish were all pretty bored.

Alcorn had heard about a technique called “job rotation” and decided to try it out. He gave all workers a taste of the “fun” jobs. He asked for volunteers to exchange jobs for one morning a week. The fine-tuners were skeptical, and the other workers were only slightly more enthusiastic. The whole programme turned out to be a disaster. Even with guidance, the planers and the spray – painters could not master the higher – precision techniques, and the fine-tuners seemed to give them only limited assistance. After one trial week, Alcorn gave up.

During a lunch break that Friday, Alcorn was wandering outside around the plant bemoaning his failure. Then he noticed one of the rough-cutters, Al Price, whittling at something with an ordinary pocket knife. It turned out to be a block of wood that he had cut incorrectly and normally would have thrown in the scrap heap. But as Price said, “It kind of looked like a duck, in an odd way,” and he had started whittling on it in spare moments.

Alcorn liked what he saw and asked Price if he would be willing to sell him the duck when he got through with it. Price looked surprised, but he agreed. The following week, Alcorn noticed that Price had finished the whittling and was getting one of the fine-tuners to help him paint the duck in a way that made it look even odder. When it was finished, Alcorn offered it to one of his regular customers, who took a look at it and said, “You’ve got this hand made ?” and asked if he could order a gross.

By the middle of the next month, Alcorn’s “Odd Ducks” programme was in full swing. Workers were still responsible for producing the usual number of conventional ducks, but they were allowed to use company tools and materials any time they wanted to work on their own projects. There were no quotas or expectations for the Odd Ducks. Some employees worked on for weeks. Others collaborated and produced one or two a day.

Some wouldn’t sell their ducks but crafted them to practice their skills and brought them home to display on their mantels. Those who would sell them kept

half the selling price. That price usually did not amount to more than their regular hourly wage, but no one seemed to care about the precise amount of income.

The response to the Odd Duck programme was so great that Alcorn put up a bulletin board he called “Odd Letters, as a place to post appreciative notes from customers. Most of the customers, it seemed, had no interest in hunting but just liked to have the ducks around. And when Alcorn learned that some of his customers were in turn selling the ducks as “Cyrus Witchell’s Olde Time Odd Ducks,” he did not complain.

Questions :

1. How did the “Odd Ducks” programme enrich the jobs at Standard Decoy ?

1. What motivated workers to participate in marking the Odd Ducks?

Details

1. Case study solved answers

2. pdf/word

3. Fully Solved with answers