97TH FLOOR
DIGITAL. MARKETING. ELEVATED.

Recommendation Report

Prepared for: 97th Floor Digital Marketing Agency
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Executive Summary

Introduction

The 97th Floor is a digital content marketing agency experiencing difficulty with communication between its individual teams. As each of the teams have their own client and responsibilities with little overlap, there is not a direct emphasis on team to team communication. Using qualitative research from primary sources and secondary research focused on the organizational principles of *leadership*, *structure*, and *culture,* this report will provide recommendations to help facilitate better team to team communication within 97th Floor.

Why Team to Team Communication Matters

Effective interdepartmental communication is a cornerstone for successful organizations. For the 97th Floor, success is determined by "fantastic results" with their clients. These results depend upon the ability to effectively communicate, problem solve, and deal with change. Team to team communication has a direct influence on each of these abilities.

Qualitative Research Methodology for 97th Floor

To determine how 97th Floor's Leadership, Structure, and Culture is affecting its team to team communication, the following qualitative research methods were employed: Interviews and Observational Sessions

Analysis of 97th Floor's Team to Team Communication

This report features an in depth analysis of the 97th Floor's overall organizational communication. Three aspects of the organization's leadership, culture, and structure are covered. These include the overall ROWE effect, managerial communication styles, and isolation tendencies within the teams.

Recommendations

To improve the 97th Floor's team communication the following strategies are recommended:
1. Managerial Communication Strategy: Emphasize Team Communication and Collaboration as a Necessity for Results
2. Consistent Team Collaboration Sessions: Problem Solving and Reflection Agenda
3. Cross Train Employees
4. Continued Promotion of Organizational Wide Social Events

Conclusion

Research shows that collaboration between departments and teams increases the organization's overall performance. By implementing cross training, managerial communication styles, consistent team collaboration, and organizational wide social events, the 97th Floor can build upon its already powerful teams' performances.

Introduction

The 97th Floor is a digital content marketing agency specializing in graphic design, video content, Search Engine Optimization, copywriting, Pay Per Click campaigns, and overall content development. Its overall mission is to provide clients with custom multi-faceted campaigns based on proprietary research. That mission hinges on an employee base that is well informed, proactive with communication both internally and externally, and constantly striving to give their clients the best results possible.

The 97th Floor is experiencing difficulty with communication between its individual teams. As each of the teams have their own client and responsibilities with little overlap, there is not a direct emphasis on team to team communication. This problem is amplified by the ROWE system, as employees are given complete autonomy to communicate and finish projects without a set schedule.

Using qualitative research from primary sources and secondary research focused on the organizational principles of *leadership*, *structure*, and *culture,* this report will provide recommendations to help facilitate better team to team communication within 97th Floor.

Why Team to Team Communication Matters

Effective interdepartmental communication is a cornerstone for successful organizations. For the 97th Floor, success is determined by "fantastic results" with their clients. These results depend upon the ability to effectively communicate, problem solve, and deal with change. Team to team communication has a direct influence on each of these abilities.

Studies on organizational performance indicate that team collaboration establishes better problem solving abilities and adaptation to change for the organization as a whole (Marlow and O'Connor,1997). For the 97th Floor, clients are constantly changing their expectations and needs. In many cases, teams at the 97th Floor run into unexpected problems and shifting expectations with clients. Effective team to team communication can minimize transition hassles and anticipate future client needs.

Qualitative Research Methodology for 97th Floor

To provide 97th Floor with an in depth analysis of its difficulties with team to team communication, this project focused on three themes of organizational communication: *leadership*, *structure*, and *culture*. How a company is run by management, how it operates structurally, and what makes it unique culturally are all extremely important aspects of understanding organizational communication.

With *leadership, structure*, and *culture* as the featured targets of analysis, the following qualitative research methods were employed:

Qualitative Research Methodology for 97th Floor Cont.

1. Interviews
2. Observational Sessions

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 4 campaign managers and 2 marketers within 97th Floor. Questions focused on the following elements:

1. How communication in the organization flows through the hierarchical structure
2. How ROWE affects the organization's and individual teams' communication styles
3. How individual teams communicate with internally and externally
4. How ROWE affects the overall culture of 97th Floor
5. How the overall culture at 97th Floor emphasizes communication
6. How leadership promotes overall communication
7. If risk-taking within the organization is encouraged

Observational Sessions

The elements for observational sessions focused on the following:

1. Verbal Notes (observations on what was said)
2. Nonverbal cues (observations on physical reactions)

Analysis of 97th Floor's Team to Team Communication

Overall ROWE Impact

1. From a structural standpoint, ROWE has a tremendous impact on how the 97th Floor communicates overall.

   a. Since employees can dictate their own schedules, communication times are always in flux, presenting difficulty when teams need answers to client issues.
   b. Meetings, collaboration sessions, and brainstorm discussions are all affected by the ROWE premise of employees governing their schedules.

2. The 97th Floor does an excellent job of using ROWE as an open communication platform for employees to express ideas, questions, or concerns whenever they want.

Isolation Tendencies with Leadership, Culture, and Structure

1. By prioritizing the "results only" model, leadership within the 97th Floor has done a fantastic job of molding their teams to focus on the ultimate goal; producing great results for their clients. However, the "results only" model does preclude managers to

exclusively focus on communication within their individual teams and not open communication between the teams.

2. Due to ROWE's emphasis on "results," the 97th Floor organizes its client base to be covered by individual teams with very little crossover. This strategy of "zeroing in" individual clients with individual teams creates a culture of isolation within the teams themselves.

3. Because of the "results only" approach, there is a cultural fear of "stepping on each other's toes" within 97th Floor. As a result, collaboration suffers.

Recommendations

Managerial Communication Strategy: Emphasize Team Communication and Collaboration as a Necessity for Results

Because the teams from the 97th Floor operate independently of one another, how a manager communicates to their team has a direct impact on the culture of communication habits in the organization as a whole. The leadership at 97th Floor has a chance to foster a culture of communication where reaching out to other teams is necessary for better results. Below is a list of strategies to utilize:

1. Encourage employees to reach out to other teams with questions about client issues
2. Schedule consistent collaboration sessions between teams
3. Offer as many mediums as possible for employees to communicate with when they are outside the office (Slack, Email, Zoom) .
4. Establish metrics for generating new ideas and creativity for each employee (Managing in a Results Only Work Environment).
5. Encourage their employees to share information on clients and how they operate with different teams.

Consistent Team Collaboration Sessions: Problem Solving and Reflection Agenda

A case study by StatusNet, an organization that offers free microblogging software, concluded that consistent team collaboration sessions could bolster an organization's overall efficiency and customer responsiveness (StatusNet). For the 97th Floor, implementing consistent team collaborations with an emphasis on client solutions and overall reflection can help its teams anticipate future client needs.

Cross Train Employees

According to a case study by SANs Technology Institute, one way for employees to understand how everyone's work is connected is to invite them to rotate or shadow other positions (sans.edu). For the 97th Floor, a potential cross training strategy could look like this:

1. Invite marketers, writers, and graphic designers to shadow each other's counterparts in other teams for a day.

2. Educate writers and graphic designers on what marketers do for clients and vice versa.

3. Encourage campaign managers to shadow other campaign managers to see different leadership styles.

The 97th Floor has started to employ some cross training elements by encouraging writers to jump in on marketer's projects. This strategy can help combat the 97th Floor's siloed structure by advocating cross training on a team scale.

Continued Promotion of Organizational Wide Social Events
As 97th Floor's culture continues to be affected by the ROWE system, the implementation of organizational wide social events is extremely important. Combating the isolation from the ROWE system means establishing a culture psychological safety. In an attempt to discover the reasoning behind the most effective teams, Google conducted a study called Project Aristotle. The project's overall findings concluded that a team with a culture of psychological safety was the most effective for producing results (What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team - NY Times).

One of the major elements for developing psychological safety within teams was getting to know employees on a personal level. One of the best ways of establishing personal relationships with employees is organizational wide social events.

Conclusion

As an award winning digital marketing agency, the 97th Floor consistently provides its clients with data-driven strategies and refined execution. This mission depends upon employees who are well informed, proactive with communication both internally and externally, and constantly striving to give their clients the best results possible. To continue to produce award winning results for their client base, the 97th Floor has a chance to bolster its team to team interactions by understanding how 97th Floor's leadership, structure, and culture affects its overall communication.

Research shows that collaboration between departments and teams increases the organization's overall performance. By implementing cross training, managerial communication styles, consistent team collaboration, and organizational wide social events, the 97th Floor can build upon its already powerful teams' performances.

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