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At the beginning of every year, workforce planning starts at the top of the list. Within weeks, our high hopes for a new and effective plan fall apart. The demands of daily emergencies compete for our attention. We can prevent most of those emergencies if we have a good plan in place.

[From the SwipeClock blog.]

Following is a brief overview of four primary areas on which to focus to kickstart

the planning process. I'll end with a helpful suggestion from industry experts to help you get your plan from startup mode to finished.

Let's begin…

Workforce Planning Defined

The definition of workforce planning describes a continual business planning process. It's a long-term, ongoing effort that expands as the organization grows. This isn't a quick fix, so settle in and prepare for the long haul.

Workforce planning defines the needs and priorities of the organization and matches them with employee and outsourcing resources. The goal of workforce planning is to ensure the organization can meet its service and production requirements with scheduled and properly skilled human resources. These factors change as the business grows, so you'll need to remain flexible and ready to pivot if necessary.

Workforce planning includes short-term preparedness for shift fulfillment, attrition recovery, and skill optimization. Workforce planning also includes forward-looking plans for organization growth, new talent acquisition, and management of outsourced third-party services.

The systems you have available to you should be designed to help you manage, collect, organize and analyze data. A good workforce management plan includes automated software and modern hardware to alleviate day-to-day busy work so you can concentrate on strategy.

Deeper dives into a workforce plan will include forecasting knowledge drain when employees leave with valuable skills and experience. Prepared managers seek qualified outsourcing resources to keep on hand for when new talent or skills are needed quickly.

Finally; no one can go it alone. Your systems need to be open and available to other

Let's take a look at a few of the more traditional barriers to planning and implementing your workforce strategy:

Too much focus on now

With deadlines looming and goals to achieve, managers rarely look past the end of the week. Workforce planning is a long-term game that requires patience and finesse. Without the freedom to focus six to twelve months ahead, managers have little ability to lead your company. They'll always be putting out today's fires instead of thinking about tomorrow.

Spaghetti bowl data

Small companies in industries such as retail, hospitality, and food and beverage rarely have the data-mining tools needed for productive data analysis. Without a good view of the data, it's hard to forecast growth and impossible to accurately predict the need for resources. When data is inconsistently stored in disparate systems, your workforce planning will suffer. Like trying to organize a bowl of spaghetti, managers will twirl and twist, but make little progress.

Houston, we have a control problem

Letting go is an age-old problem for many managers. One of the reasons managers have a hard time letting go is the intimacy they have with the tools they are using. It's hard to trust outsiders with complex systems that rely on complicated integrations. "I can do that myself faster than I can teach you" is a dangerous idea that really means that control is keeping you from liftoff. Make corrections now before you miss a shot at the moon.

The devil is in the details

Details are good unless they are holding you back. Many companies find

It's hard to blame today's manager for tomorrow's shrinking workforce when they have so little to go on. Often a manager will plan on a hunch without considering less intuitive threats such as turnover and retirement. Like the weather, a good look at the impact of intertwined systems can help refine a forecast. It helps to have integrated systems that offer warnings and alerts to that storm on the horizon.

Complicated workforce planning models

On a final note, beware of complicated workforce planning models. There are plenty out there, and some are very confusing. If a five-step workforce planning model looks more like a 12-step research project, back up a bit and focus on the high points; the rest will come.

Two Trends Shaping the Landscape of Workforce Planning

There are two emerging trends shaping the world of workforce planning. These new trends are helping managers understand the important role of data. They are also providing tools to work with data in new and meaningful ways. Let's take a look at these new trends...

Trend 1: Data

The first is a broader understanding and acceptance of data-driven decision making. Measuring data has become a mainstream business practice and well worth your attention. Google and Facebook have taught us that there is data everywhere and that it can be mined for information. They've also shown us that data can help remove the risk from previously risky decisions.

Managers today understand that data is out there, it is collectible, and that it harbors

The second important trend is the emergence and maturing of technology that fills the need for integrated data analysis. After all; what good is data if you don't have the tools to make sense of it?

Integrated workforce management solutions such as SwipeClock's Workforce Management Suite are empowering managers. Workforce management systems allow managers to collect and compare a wide range of employee data. Employee data can give valuable insights into scheduling cycles, unplanned overtime burdens, and resource trends.

Managers who use automated systems can reduce workload requirements while increasing control over time and attendance, scheduling, and payroll. Pre-configured alerts and overtime alarms can provide early warnings to potential problems. Accumulated data can provide a foundation for future planning, resource allocation, and avoidance of pitfalls.

Step-by-Step

As it turns out, there are five basic steps to building an effective workforce management plan. The trick is not to get bogged down in the details. For your first run through, stay on the high road and work to get an outline established. Once you're ready with the high-level milestones, you can dive in and tackle the details.

Step One: Establish a Strategic Direction

Continue reading at SwipeClock's blog:
https://www3.swipeclock.com/blog/defining-your-2018-workforce-management-strategy/

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