Change Proposal & Needs Assessment

Introduction

The purpose of this proposal is to outline an implementation plan for use of a new team communication technology within the organization I currently work with. We Are the Next (WATN) is a small non-profit organization dedicated to promoting civic engagement and sustainability initiatives across multiple environments and platforms. Education of youth in these matters is critical to the organization's mission. As an Education Coordinator for WATN, I support the only full-time employee, the Executive Director, in developing programs, designing workshops, and facilitating learning experiences. In addition to this work, I also participate in website and social media management, and will serve as the main contact for volunteer interns during the 2015-16 school year.

Problem

We Are the Next recently received a two-year grant intended for organizational development and capacity building, and with several projects on the horizon it is likely that multiple positions will be created in the near future. While the organization currently communicates primarily through face-to-face meetings, email, and text message, this process will not be sustainable if rapid growth occurs. The increase in projects will also result in less overlap between the Executive Director and the employees in the office environment.

The organization also has a new internship position offered each semester, and with multiple projects occurring at once it can be challenging to keep new interns updated and informed. Productive internships are crucial to the organization's continued development, and without accurate and informative information it can be a challenge to be productive. By adopting a new team communication platform, projects can be organized in a way that information, notes from meetings, and follow-up is clear and accessible to all.

Intervention

The short-term goal of this implementation is to improve team communication on projects, resulting in more productive meetings and a successful internship program that will benefit the organization and the individuals. In the long term, it is hoped that new communication tools might make the process of rapid growth less tumultuous. Testing platforms and processes now could help to ensure that rapid growth doesn't result in poor communication, and will hopefully avoid unnecessary organizational struggles.

Reflecting on Les Robinson's five qualities that determine the success of an innovation, adopting this new technology gives a relative advantage, is compatible with existing values and practices, has a great degree of trialability, and has observable results. The quality that is the most

uncertain is simplicity and ease of use, and hopefully the research and trial process will reveal an option that is intuitive and easy to use.

In addition to the shared communication needs of the organizational staff, there are some individual and technical needs to be addressed as well. The Executive Director is frequently at job-sites, and will require a platform that is accessible on a mobile device in iOS and Windows based platforms. It is also expected that the platform be accessible and work while offline, and have an option to sync automatically when connection to wifi is resumed. The platform will also need to be accessible through Google Chrome internet browser for use in the office and from home desktop computers.

The ability to organize communications based on project, communicate privately, and share links and multimedia are also important needs. Potential platforms will be researched and tested to assess the availability of the required features, and a final decision will be made after presenting the findings to the Executive Director. A new platform has the potential to increase productivity and streamline rapid growth and development of the organization. An investment in implementing this tool now could have significant short and long term benefits. Existing training and tutorials for the platform will also be considered, as little training will be available on the job. While low-cost or free platforms would be ideal, it is of utmost importance that the right features are available.

Evaluation

Frequent and ongoing feedback from the Executive Director and staff will be necessary to monitor the success of the implementation. Immediate and direct feedback will be received through informal conversations at team meetings, and long term reflections will be collected through a more formal reflection survey at the end of each internship.