

LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE PROJECT SUMMARY

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My project was to research, develop and implement expanding communication methods within Mary's Woods employee infrastructure that will carry us into the future of our mission and to evaluate through personal surveys the outcome and ongoing needs. After research directly with employees, three thematic modes of communication enhancement were requested; written, electronic, and person to person.

The completion of my project has benefited the organization by furthering the improvement of across campus communications by the new venues developed. There is now a Company Newsletter for Staff every other month which has had positive reception. The Marketing department was already updating and implementing the website for employees and this has progressed over the past year. Campus wide Block Parties were initiated where staff across campus gather every three months, eat and have two hosting Directors who talk about their departments and answer questions. These projects benefits are that when people are informed and invested in their employment community they are more invested in their work.

The team needed to complete this project was campus-wide. First, discussions with the executive team for permission to move forward was needed, then feedback from staff for development ideas. After research, a team of Human Resources, Marketing and I decided on possible and feasible ideas. The third component was that I needed the Directors input and support to keep things moving forward. Their input for the newsletter and participation in hosting Block Parties was essential. I also needed my manager's support to take time to work on this project while still completing my daily work.

Communication with stakeholders (staff, directors, executives, manager) was done both in person and by electronic updates. I used my project outline to stay on task and to give a visual update of progress throughout the project. Staff communication was through the project itself, and also in person.

The challenges faced with this project were/are that the Newsletter input takes time to gather and does not have a department that is able to take on this project on an on-going basis as initially planned. Additionally, there is a lot of time needed for development of the website as it is a large project. A possible concern is also that the Marketing department is managing this and not a direct Employee representative. Finally, and most difficult challenge is that the planning and execution of Block Parties take time and there is not a department or representative to take over this project as initially planned either.

Overcoming these challenges continues however; the newsletter is still being produced, the website is still progressing, and the Block Parties have still happened all due to people taking on these projects as worthy of their extra time. Additionally, a proposal was rough-drafted for the executive team to discuss how to best manage time and staffing to continue these projects if desired.

The surprise in this project for me was the amount of time needed to get input for and edit the newsletter. Giving department heads deadlines was needed and some dedicated uninterrupted time was also imperative. Instead of a consistently open door, there were times that I had to set aside my 'regular work' and singularly focus on the project.

My key leadership lesson in relation to this project was to "start and end with the vision". What I am taking away is that the vision - which Mary's Woods states as our Mission statement in fact has no end, but is an ongoing and global process. Initially, I underemphasized my ability and willingness to affect the vision due to my position within the organization and was thinking locally. What I am now doing is attempting to engage others throughout the organization in what we state is our Mission and vision of the future. To promote this, I will evaluate ongoing my role in fostering the promotion of education for improving communication and leadership skills throughout our community as we grow, and challenge myself to not just think locally, but globally.