

LeadingAge Leadership Academy

Project Report for Mark Diller

1. In one paragraph, summarize the project you completed for the Leadership Academy program.

I wish I could say that the project I set out to complete was completed. My intent at the beginning of the program was to develop a system of staffing along with programs for cognitive and physical therapy to enhance the lives of residents at Quail Run. I do feel that I have been working in the right direction over the past year; however, the past year has been spent mostly trying to address underlying barriers to improvement that are beyond my authority.

2. What benefits, both tangible and intangible, has the completion of your project brought to the organization you serve?

Since my work on this project has yet to yield the results needed, the benefits have not yet been realized. It is my hope that greater communication will occur in the weeks to come based on some events in motion including outside consultation.

3. Who were the people you needed on your team to complete this project? Consider all stakeholders: colleagues, coworkers, direct reports, supervisors, residents, vendors, government officials, etc.

The people who I have needed on my team include those who report to me as well as those who I report to. My team understands the areas where improvement is needed and we have together. However, there has not been full support from those who I report to.

4. How did you communicate with your stakeholders during the duration of this project?

Over the past several months, I have worked closely with my team on areas where we can improve performance. Although some improvements have been made, those requiring cost simply haven't happened. I feel that I've communicated a vision and direction for my area of responsibility and have challenged the process.

5. What were the very real challenges you faced in the completion of this project over the course of the year? List 3-5.

The very real challenges I've faced and continue to face are:

1. Addressing outdated perceptions of the industry by those who have the final say.
2. Changing needs of our residents.
3. Financial concerns of the overall organization.
4. Unwillingness to change despite clear need.

6. How did you overcome these challenges?

I have yet to overcome these challenges although I am working on communicating with some key individuals with the hope that challenging questions will be asked of those who have authority to make needed changes.

7. What surprises did you encounter while completing your project? How did you address them?

To this point, I've encountered few challenges since I have become accustomed to the barriers that I face.

8. Identify 2-3 of the 30 leadership behaviors listed in the LPI (Please refer to your LPI 360 assessment or the document that came with this worksheet) that were critical for you to learn for the successful completion of this project.

1. Challenge the process – Challenging the process is very important in order to improve. This one has been ironic for me. My direct reports would like to see me challenge the process more because we have not received the support needed to grow. However, those above me have indicated that I challenge too much.
2. Creatively reward people for their contributions – I've been more assertive in expressing appreciation directly to people in a specific, timely manner.
3. Searches outside the organization for innovative ways to improve – Involving a consultant has helped to both provide new ideas and to confirm what we're doing well.

9. How have you learned to implement these 2-3 leadership behaviors more effectively over the past year?

While challenging the process may not yield immediate results, it's important to be persistent. I have hope that improvement will happen in the areas of my project, although there are some challenges beyond my immediate control that need to be addressed first.

It's important yet challenging to reward people and keep them engaged when I as a manager have frustrations about what I have limited control over. What I've found helpful is to spend time with people, have coffee, etc. and be very transparent about what concerns me while also sharing appreciation for their hard work and patience.

10. What are your plans for continued leadership development in the years ahead?

I look forward to being involved in Leadership Academy in the upcoming year in a mentor role. I'm working in personal areas to grow leadership. In September, I am starting as our church's board chair.