

Case Study

Engaging Employees in a new quality program

Internal Communication Builds Employee Support

The manufacturing division of a global pharmaceutical organization produced generics at sites worldwide. Many sites were acquisitions that operated in disparate ways. The company aimed to standardize procedures for quality control through a new quality excellence program. Garnering support for the fifth quality improvement initiative in six years would be a challenge. The manufacturer wanted to seek employees' attention by transcending the facts and figures of its previous quality programs.

Promoting Employees' Investment in their Work

Our strategy focused on engaging employees emotionally to the users of the products by appealing to the workforce on a personal level versus a site-level or team-level with the message: your families, your friends, your neighbors and colleagues use the products that you make. By strengthening their sense of personal responsibility, the company gained employee commitment to implement the new quality standards and a commitment from operatives to watch for problems. The slogan "quality is in my hands" emphasized that each employee was accountable for the end results of his or her work.

Global Program; Local Customization

Workwise helped identify brand communication champions for each country who would adapt the program based on local culture and language. The program was implemented in three stages. Pre-launch involved getting the support of local management and preparing for the program rollout. Launch included employee engagement initiatives. The post-launch focused on helping employees to internalize the new processes for quality excellence. We launched the program at a global brand champion workshop. Following the workshop, the brand champions set up a launch day to introduce the program to employees in a memorable way. They were provided with an event kit, including ideas for managing the event and materials such as balloons, posters and banners.

Recognizing Success

In the post-launch stage, human resources managers and operational/line managers facilitated workshops to help employees incorporate the new initiative into their work. Individual training sessions, e-learning initiatives and feedback forums for employees to offer suggestions to improve quality instilled a sense of personal responsibility. The employees whose suggestions were used were awarded prizes and their ideas were published in the quality newsletter. Senior management incorporated leadership visibility initiatives to demonstrate top-level commitment such as site visits, reinforcing the program messages and recognizing local initiatives. The success of the quality excellence program was reflected in a reduction in recalls, complaints and deviations.