

Case Study

Using a Service Brand to Regain Market Share and Retain Employees

The vaccine division of a major pharmaceutical company lost its top market position because it was unable to compete with pricing set by discount warehouses. As a large, well-known business, it was decided to beat the competition by offering a value proposition and revitalizing its brand. The company also sought to improve retention after losing 50% of its sales force in one year, partly due to low employee morale primarily due to the poor sales performance. A new brand and range of service offerings were developed for the sales force leading to the new approach of value based selling.

Gaining Employee Support

Engaging participating employees was critical to the success of the new brand launch. Gaining employee understanding was also key to beating the competition and boosting employee retention. The initial step of the employee brand launch centered on a workshop for managers. Our project team trained them to adapt to a service-oriented model for conducting internal business. Aniko and the team helped managers move from a directive to a coaching approach when working with their staff. During the sales force training, Aniko and the team motivated them to change to a service-oriented approach by demonstrating brand significance. By putting the reps in the role of customers, the communications team created a brand experience, prompting them to consider behaviors attached to brand values. In the training, reps compared their own company's products with those of competitors, including pricing, quality and overall value. To ensure that the sales team received the internal support needed to be successful, Aniko and the team worked with departments that provided services either externally or directly to the reps, such as medical affairs and accounts receivables.

Employee Research Leads to Optimal Environment

The company conducted a benchmark survey to assess if the internal culture mirrored the brand message "striving always to anticipate and answer your needs." The survey reflected 10 attributes needed to create an optimal internal environment to support a service-oriented approach. Follow up included a quarterly survey for reps. Questions/statements included: Can I ask my manager questions? Is my manager responsive? I know how to escalate customer complaints. The result maintained the momentum beyond the initial changes. A new system for evaluating staff included appraisals and rewards based on the new attributes for delivering the service proposition. Managers were trained to recognize desired conduct and skills needed for service-based offerings.

Results

Staff turnover dropped from 50% to 5% the following year. Sales, customer retention and customer satisfaction levels all improved and the company gained back its top spot in the vaccine market.