



ABC Hotel Consulting Report

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| Alan Wei Kang Liu; Bryan Lau; Mark Thomas;
Maxence Arignon; Sue He

Dr. Tony Williams

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Executive Summary

ABC Company has several areas of improvement as identified using contemporary organizational behaviour theories. Using qualitative and quantitative data provided by 11 members of the food and beverage team, we can see central issues and themes emerge. The Banquet Event Order form (BEO) is a specific guideline that is required for setting up events. We find that the current leadership team uses this tool to inflict power influence triggers on staff, creating A and B team dynamics, trust issues, and perceptions of unfair workload distribution.

We recommend that the management team be educated on select Organizational Behaviour strategies and tools so they can implement change that will result in sustainable improvements in their business. These tools are: systems mapping, MBTI Graphing, and the Team Score Card. These are visual strategies which can have a slight overlap. These tools are consistent with overall strategies to improve the effectiveness of ABC Hotel. With a strategic focus on transparency, communication, and equality, this team will improve. The benefit of having several strategies for organizational change is that this will generate as much pressure as possible on the intervention point. That point of intervention is the BEO work order.

The leadership team should carefully design and publish each BEO work order, and provide copies to employees who are working on complex tasks so they have a detailed guide to follow. This will have an immediate impact on improving transparency, communication, and equality where directing work can now be delegated and there is no question of fairness. It will also remove elements of the A and B team dynamic.

With organizational change, there will be a period of time where employees will be mapping new processes and with this will come adversity. The leadership team must anticipate “blowback” from staff even when this little change is implemented. By not having a strategy to channel these feelings, the employees may only validate their current feelings by drifting further into an unproductive state and become even more hostile than ever.

Creating an environment of encouragement and increased productivity will take time. The adoption of these changes will be faster and more quickly accepted if the leadership team provides positive reinforcement. Words like: “good, good job, great work, fantastic”, are necessary to trigger the release of dopamine associating their new actions and attitudes with: something positive.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Current Situation: Organizational Culture	4
Analysis.....	4
Systems Diagram	4
MBTI.....	7
Team Fitness	8
Current Leadership Style	8
Leadership Freedom of Scale.....	8
Transformational Leadership.....	9
Vision Leadership.....	9
Situational Leadership	10
Emotional Intelligence	10
Team Roles.....	10
Organizational Transform.....	10
Recommendation	11
Implementation.....	12
Bibliography.....	14
Appendix A – Organizational Chart	15
Appendix B – Survey Results	16

Current Situation: Organizational Culture

ABC is a well established hospitality hotel chain with several different work groups and complex team dynamics. The workgroup that this report focuses on is the food and beverage Department. This particular workgroup is responsible for setting up and taking down special events. The task focus oriented nature of work can have critical consequences when instructions are not followed exactly as the clients specify. These specifications are prepared by the marketing department, customer, and food and beverage staff in what is called a Banquet Event Order form (BEO). The BEO is effectively the work order and contains specifications for each event.

At the start of each shift, the team comes together and has a 5 minute team meeting led by the captain. Unfortunately, not all team members speak English, and some do not speak Chinese. The dictation is given in English by a person whose ability to speak English is limited. Without fail, members of the team leave the meeting without a clear vision of what the group is trying to accomplish or what they are specifically responsible for. From survey results, only 1 member of the team felt heard by management.

Based on some of the feedback collected, there is a considerable amount of distrust between team members. According to the survey conducted, only 1 member of the team confided that they trust other team members at work. The captain, who oversees each individual event, often assigns difficult tasks to the same people each event and assigns less difficult tasks to others. This creates the foundation of an A team, B team divide, and this is the source for a lot of conflict. Even more importantly, the BEO is not shown to other members of the team and is almost always kept secret by the captain.

This workgroup is also unionized, and hasn't had representation for several years. Employees feel powerless to stand up to their leaders, fearing retribution without protection. Survey results reveal that 7 of 11 employees feel that their managers handle problems poorly. These organizational culture issues will be addressed in this report, which will identify benefits associated with effective BEO's and consider how it can change this workgroup. Survey results also indicate that 8 of the 11 survey respondents are willing to accept change and 3 are neutral on the idea of change.

Analysis

In any change project, the analysis is extremely important. To confirm that our focus should be placed within the BEO, a variety of tools will be employed to verify our findings and ultimately, guide our recommendations.

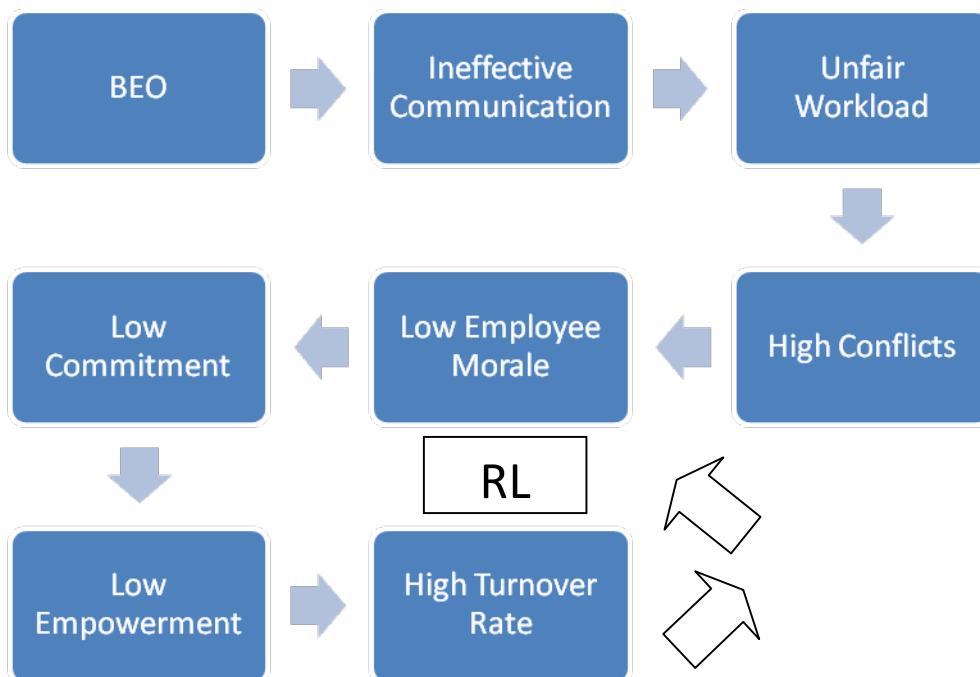
Systems Diagram

This report focus on a limited view of a systems diagram stemming from the BEO. The BEO is the work order of requirements for a specific event. Currently, the direct team leader does not publish this information. This secrecy of the BEO creates a dependency to the team leader.

Some individuals do not receive a fair workload as a result (perception of favouritism), though all members of the team are capable of completing tasks equally. The unfair workload creates high conflicts that lower employee moral resulting in lower commitment and a high employee turnover. The reinforcing loop (RL) that is identified is based on: high conflicts; low employee moral; low commitment; low empowerment; resulting in high employee turnover.

System Map:

Figure 1:

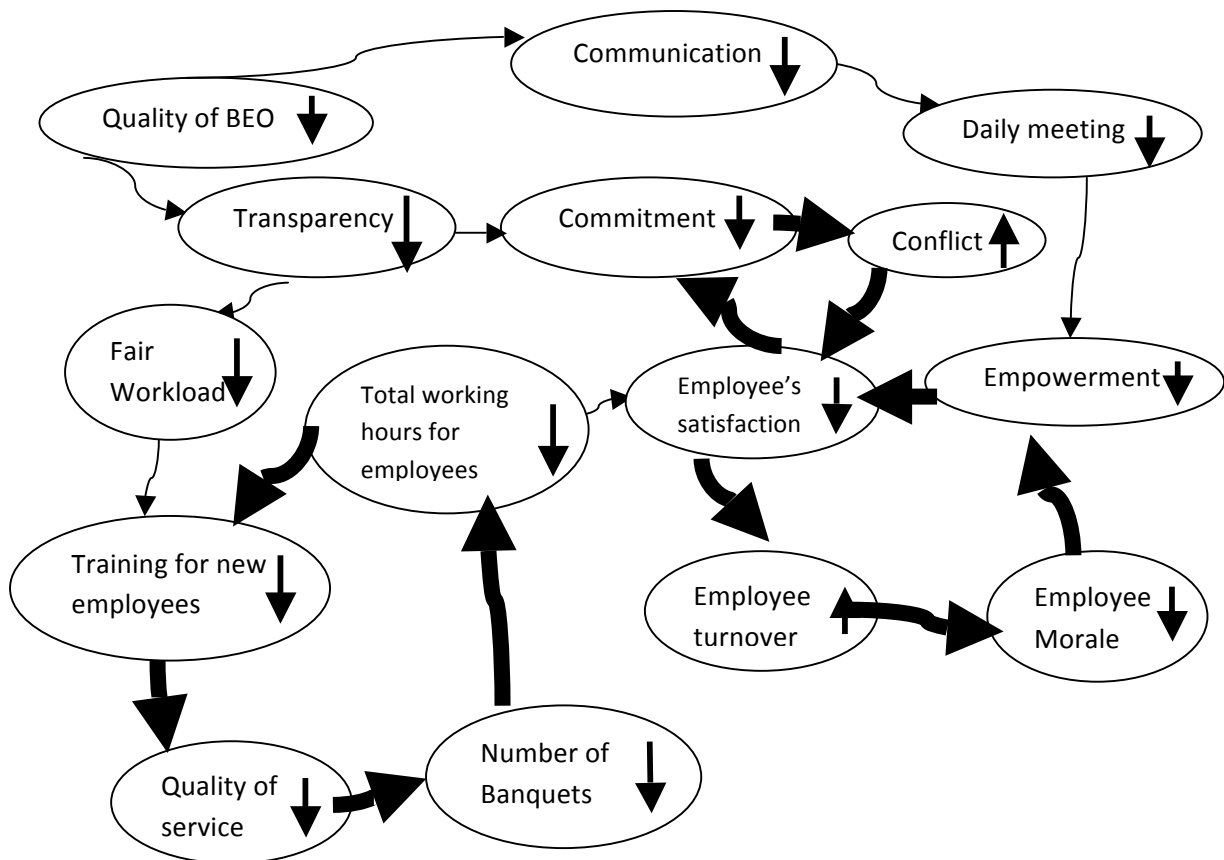


Using this condensed version of a systems diagram, it is apparent that the organization's central focus should be improvement of the BEO. Addressing this as the central point of intervention, ABC Company will remove or reduce factors reinforcing the current RL in a positive way. However, there are other variables that affect elements of the systems diagram. Other elements that impact the systems diagram include: language barriers between different staff, the union environment, and distrust.

According to McClaren and Morton, "an effective organization is a system that can accomplish more or in different ways than any of the individual members of the organization operating on their own." (McClaren, Morton, 2003) An organization should work as a group, a team, and more than that, a system that develops, evolves, readjusts, and regulates itself through any changes from the past to the future. Based on the survey administered, the F&B department in ABC hotel, like any other, is just a collection of people who work together. There may be some

extra-professional interactions here and there, but those interactions do not create any positive results or connections. After defining variables and influences that exist in the department into analysis, we have drawn this simplified “system” map of F&B department.

Figure 2:



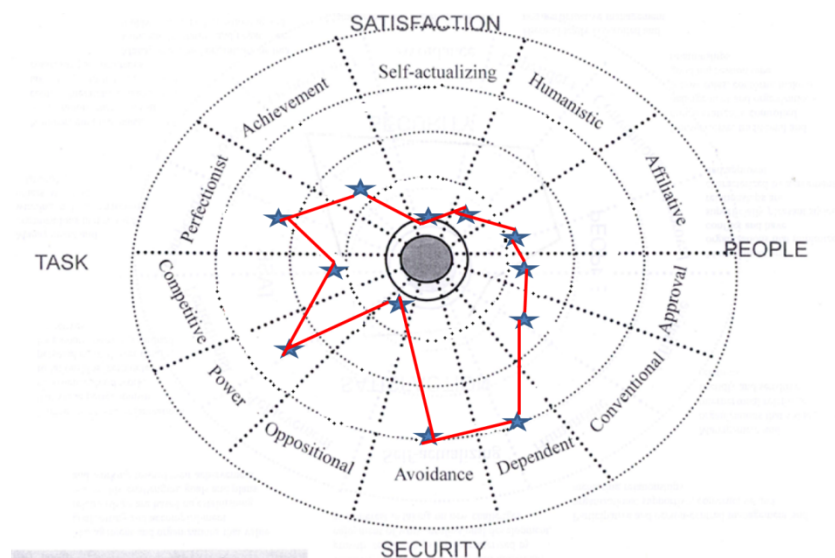
This map focuses on a systems approach to the work team . The BEO is intended to be the work order of requirements for a specific event. Currently, the direct team leader does not elaborate on or debrief about the BEO. This secrecy of the BEO creates a dependency to the banquet captain and senior staff. Some individuals do not know exactly what to do next besides taking orders from senior employees, which creates an unfair workload and a perception of favouritism. Though all members of the team are capable of completing tasks equally, the unfair workload inherently results in less training for new employees decreasing quality of service, banquet event numbers, working hours for employees and then again resulting in training. This reinforcing loop (RL) only worsens the situation of dissatisfaction among employees. The other two inter-connected RL loops are: 1) reducing commitment to both their jobs and their employer which raises conflicts among management and staff, which then

decreases employees' satisfaction; 2) an increase employee turnover leads to a decrease in overall employee morale and empowerment with a drop in the level of satisfaction, accordingly.

Since the relationships between system causes and effects are clear and obvious to all, the strategic approach used for simple systems will be most effective to improve the current situation. This strategy requires that leadership sense, categorize, and respond. Since it is apparent that the beginning of negative effects is the BEO, it should be addressed as the central point of intervention. The other two intervention points are union representation and the language issues. The recommendations at the end of the report are designed specifically to provide the most effective improvement in responding to those three intervention points.

MBTI

The MBTI analysis is a graphical representation of a team's dynamics and core competencies. This graph takes into account many aspects of "modus operandi" or the way that this team does things.

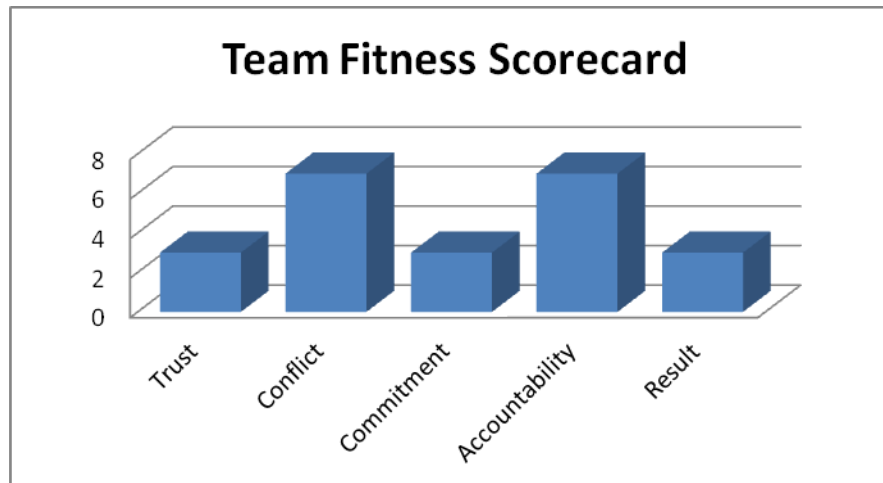


This tool should be seen as a visual representation of what this team's strengths are, and where it needs improvement. The aim of this approach is to create a "whole brain team". ABC Company is currently weighted heavily towards a security and task focus. It is however, lacking in people focus and satisfaction. These are major areas of concern if organizational objectives are to be attained. One reason why the MBTI chart looks so weighted towards "Security", is the overuse of power triggers.

According to Leonard and Straus, the lower left quadrant is represented by descriptive words such as: planner, organized, and administrative. Using the idea of the whole brain theory, ABC Company is lacking in the upper right quadrant. Such skillsets and attributes that are lacking are: artistic, imaginative, and holistic.

Team Fitness

Based on survey results, both qualitative and quantitative, we can see a Team fitness Scorecard that has much room for improvement. For example, 9 of 11 team members believe that team work is very important. However, all 11 surveyed say they do not feel that they are a team. By quantifying these intangibles/measurables, we can more effectively plan and control the organizational behaviour of ABC Company.



From the scorecard, it is evident that the relationship between Trust and Conflict create somewhat of a trade-off. This particular workgroup has such a low level of trust that it would be reasonable to think that even genuine attempts to improve employee commitment and reduce unhealthy conflict will be challenging. Management must be diligent in anticipating this. ABC Company has even made attempts to have a stronger voice in union relations; however, the union representative position has been vacant for several years.

Here are some symptoms of trust issues that this team has vocalized:

- Favouritism – Staff believe that management favours some staff members
- Scheduling – Staff believe that management does not always follow seniority
- Secrecy – Captains are deliberately concealing the BEO to keep staff dependant
- Workload - Perception that unfair workload is distributed unfairly

Using the Team Fitness rankings, we can once again observe that the central issue is the BEO and the secrecy around it, which is consistent with the Systems Diagram.

Current Leadership Style

Leadership Freedom of Scale

According to William Onken's Freedom Scale, only employees that are new hires or extremely inexperienced should be placed in freedom levels one and two, where employees are instructed to "wait until told" and "ask what to do". However, in the case of the ABC Company,

employees are kept at these levels by the actions of the banquet captains. Level 1 and 2, referred to as the “dungeon”, reinforces an A and B team dynamic. It also prevents employees from self-actualizing and discourages professional growth.

Another major contributing factor in employees being kept at level one and two is language. Many of the employees have a language barrier between the English and Chinese staff, which systemically results in employees being on a one or two level, since instructions cannot be communicated properly.

Transformational Leadership

According to transformational leadership concepts, the management at the ABC should strive to care for its employees and inspire them by challenging them in a “do what’s right” environment. Currently, the management is more focused on task oriented leadership, to an extent that is damaging morale and preventing better results. Tipping the balance more towards a “people first” attitude will ultimately increase employee commitment and produce the desired result in this environment. Especially since the food and beverage department is unionized, it is essential that people be motivated properly and job description be very precise, to prevent grievances such as stress leave. Such issues can cripple the work team by developing a “bare minimum” culture among staff with devastating consequences for results and rebooking by clients.

Currently, the team is governed by fear and kept on a “need to know” basis, with favouritism towards senior and Chinese staff by management. Employees fear negative repercussions for whistle blowing and criticism, destroying the communication chain and widening the divide between employees and management. The language barrier once again further divides the levels of hierarchy by preventing managers from expressing what charisma they might have, which could inspire employees to strive for their personal bests. Overall, the only employees being properly cared for are senior staffs, who enjoy a leisurely and secure employment. Specifically, the banquet captains and managers need to apply these concepts and increase transparency to reduce resentment and transform and restore employee trust in the company.

Vision Leadership

For the ABC and the vast majority of businesses, it is essential that management have a vision of the department and each event, clearly developed and communicated to staff to create a group social identity. For the manager, a vision of how the department should be run and a strong brand image as an attractive and pleasant venue would guide staff towards desired results. For the captains, a clear vision of how each event and setup should be would result in greater coherence between employees and facilitate the development and attainment of common objectives. Currently, neither level of management has given the staff any details of where the department should be heading and how each event should turn out. This leads to the strong task focus, and strong pressures to complete tasks more quickly, since there is no “big picture”. This reductionist thinking is largely responsible for most of the inequality in the work team and the “dungeon” style leadership.

Situational Leadership

Once more, since most employees at the ABC are senior and very experienced, the directive leadership style is frustrating staff members and inappropriate to their experience level. Delegating should be used instead, in accordance with appropriate freedom scale levels, to inspire employees to be autonomous and give their personal bests. Some coaching may be necessary for junior staff, but directive leadership is wasting valuable management time in an attempt to keep employees under “control” and maintain the favouritism culture.

Emotional Intelligence

Although EI is an important dimension to analyze in team dysfunctions, most employees seem to be very aware of the department’s issues, as evidenced by their survey responses. There is also a strong “office politic” in place, which allows employees and managers to manipulate their professional images and career paths. This shows some self- and relationship management and a relatively high level of EI. This has led the consultants to believe that the team possesses the necessary emotional intelligence to work effectively and that other issues such as inequality and lack of communication are more central to improving this business unit.

Team Roles

According to Belbin’s team roles, most of the ABC food and beverage staffs are “Implementers”, who turn objectives into practical results. This distribution in team roles is consistent with the directive and “need to know” attitude that governs the organization. However, there is a large lack of people and thought oriented role members, which creates a stagnant and inflexible environment. This is a toxic culture which paralyzes the food and beverage team and is responsible for most of its problems. The team needs more coordinators, team-workers and plants to generate more ideas and increase team cohesiveness while guiding the department towards its objectives.

Organizational Transform

Based on the above analysis, ABC Hotel clearly needs changes. But before any implementations are being taken into place, leaders have to understand that organizational transformation involves not only getting the changes done, but also getting people through the transition and anchoring those new elements into the organization’s culture. According to Kotter, the manager of a department is the key if the change is needed in a division (Kotter, n.d.). At this stage, manager of the food and beverage department is the first “step” in transition.

Urgency

In order to make actual changes happen, people have to let go of the past. However, fears of facing unknown possibilities or familiar patterns in behaviors can often make a leader hesitate, especially employees’ disinterests in their own performances. A sense of urgency can motivate them because transformation requires proactive thinking and behaviours, but people tend to

get defensive toward any changes. In order to avoid potential employees' antagonistic attitudes, some established behaviors need to disappear quickly without relapse.

Tools considered but not utilized:

In this particular situation, a number of OB tools were not explored in depth as they seemed trivial, however, they should be identified. Identity Adaptation modes were explored but were seen as being too individualistic rather than collective for this organization. The 5 Dysfunctions of a team were also considered, but quantitative methods like scorecards and visual representations of team dynamics were decided more appropriate.

Recommendation

After analyzing the current business situation at ABC, our consulting team has come up with several recommendations in making ABC a better work place in which employees are more empowered, motivated, and cared for by management.

First, our team believes that it is necessary to publish a more detailed BEO with additional copies distributed to all staffs. As a result, all staff would have equal access to information and therefore, workload would be distributed transparently and fairly. Knowing that the BEO is the source of all conflicts and negative results, our team suggests that management improve the BEO as an effective communication tool between all employees. Clearly, when the BEO is not published to all staffs, confusions arise within the team, which leads to problems such as low commitment, high conflict, high turnover rate, low employee morale, and low empowerment. By publishing the BEO, employee confusion will decrease as well as conflicts. Our team also recognized the language barriers at ABC hotel. Staffs who speak different languages are having trouble understanding topics covered in team meetings. Our team suggests the leader in hosting daily meetings in both English and Chinese. As a result, staffs are more informed by what has to be done for the day. Also, workshops should be designed to improve customer service and professional English for staff to improve the level of customer service and reduce confusion.

For ABC company, the urge for an organizational change is crucial. Management should strive to care for its employees, and inspire them by delegating meaningful tasks and motivating employees to take charge of their responsibilities at work. Our team therefore sees the importance of leadership training for ABC hotel's management team. In particular, favoritism has been a factor in creating low commitment that leads to low employee morale. Leaders of the team should acknowledge the importance of equality in terms of delegating work load. Captains of the team should also acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of each staff and in turn, should delegate job tasks to in accordance to their strengths and weaknesses.

Based on the team fitness scorecard, team trust has an extremely low score at 2, and clearly trust has been an issue in this team. Our consulting team had come to the conclusion that the captain of this team has caused this issue by overusing his/her authority. We would encourage the direct leader of this team to use other types of influence triggers in motivating staff. The types of trigger to be used should be appropriate to the personality type of each different staff.

As a result, employees will not be overwhelmed by the overuse of power by their leader. In turn, the captain can then enrich his/her emotional intelligence level during these self-monitoring practices.

Primary Recommendation: Publish detailed unbiased transparent BEO:

- Each BEO should clearly define customer standards and expectations
- Each BEO should established a clear vision of the event result
- Each BEO should include a complete lists of tasks to be completed with deadlines
- Each BEO should clearly indicate the specific employee requirements for the staff, including scheduling
- Each BEO should have a fair distribution of tasks according to experience and strengths/weaknesses
- Each BEO should be published and communicated in the two common languages of the workgroup

Secondary Recommendation: Reduce Language Barrier

- Setup workshops to improve conversational English mastery in appropriate professional situations
- Require mastery of both languages in managerial staff
- Translate all major objectives and strategies into both languages to assure comprehension and transparency

Implementation

In order to implement the key recommendations the following will need to be implemented:

- 1) Immediately: BEO needs to define their core competencies and create a communication method necessary for each of the department team leader in the organization to effectively communicate with each other. This is through a centralized corporate structure that requires quarterly meetings and an organizational structure that is similar across departments. Each team leader would be empowered to make business-level decisions and to ensure all communications are address to all staff members. Decisions to be made at this time will involve:
 - 1) Team leader need to ensure all staff members voices are heard and have a better communication between. To avoid language barrier, staff should not communicate in any other language beside English, only if it's necessary to communicate with customers or if it's not during their shift.
 - 2) Success and fail points – If banquet are not executed to customers and employees' satisfaction, team leaders can use this as a learning experience.

- 2) Within 6 months: Corporate meeting: Includes the team leader from each department and the BEO. Communication will be the centralized structure implemented and provide the team leaders to discuss and share their successes with each other.
- 3) Quarterly meetings: A follow-up opportunity with all team leaders and staff that will allow for feedback and career advancement.

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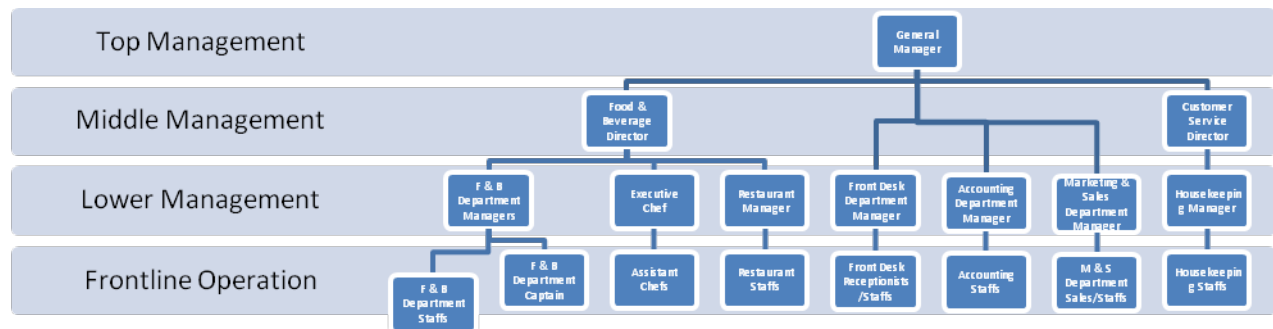
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Appendix A – Organizational Chart



Appendix B – Survey Results

1. Do you care about the organization's overall well-being?
Not at all (3) Moderately (4) Extremely (4)
2. At what degree, are you committed to this organization?
Very low Below average (4) Average (3) Above average (3) Very high (1)
3. Do you think the amount of work load is reasonable?
Unfair (2) Average (6) Fair (3)
4. Do you think we have good customer service at ABC Hotel?
Yes (5) No (6)
5. How is the shift scheduling within the Food & Beverage Department?
Very poor (3) Below average (5) Average (2) Above average Excellent (1)
6. Do you think there is a scheduling problem within the department?
Disagree (1) Undecided (2) Agree (8)
7. Do you think there is a communication problem within and/or between department(s)?
Yes (10) No (1)
8. In your opinion, do you think team work is important?
Not at all important Fairly important (1) Quite important (1) Very important (9)
9. Do you think there are sufficient guidelines at work in terms of what to do?
Too little (3) About right (6) Too much (1)
10. Do you think there is team work within this particular department?
Yes 2) No (11)
11. Do you think the amount of advancement opportunities is fair?
Disagree (6) Undecided (3) Agree (2)
12. Do you feel empowered by management? Yes (3) No (7)
13. Are you willing to accept changes within the organization? Yes (8) Neutral (3) No
14. Please rate the effectiveness of leadership style at ABC Hotel.
Very poor (4) Below average (3) Average (3) Above average (3) Excellent
15. What level of job security do you have at your current position? (Lowest:1 Highest: 5)
1 (1) 2 (1) 3 (6) 4 5 (2)
16. Do you feel your opinion(s) were heard by management? Yes (1) No (10)
17. What level of trust do you have among your colleagues? (Lowest:1 Highest: 5)
1 (1) 2 (4) 3 (5) 4 5 (1)
18. Is there any conflict(s) within your department? At what level? (Lowest:1 Highest: 5)
1 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (3) 5 (2)
19. What level of commitment do you have for ABC? (Lowest:1 Highest: 5)
1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (5) 4 5 (1)
20. What level of accountability do you think your team (department) has? (Lowest:1 Highest: 5)
1 (2) 2 (4) 3 (4) 4 5 (1)
21. What is the quality of results produced by your team (department)? (Lowest:1 Highest: 5)
1 2 (5) 3 (5) 4 5 (1)
22. When there is a problem within the department, how well did your leader handle the situation?
1 (2) 2 (5) 3 (2) 4 5 (1)
23. Do you think the job tasks being assigned match your skills and talents? Yes (6) No (5)
24. Do you think you have a voice in your department? Yes (4) No (7)
25. Do you think the current level of supervision from managers is reasonable? Yes (4) No (7)