

Newsflash

FROM LINDA SWERLING

June 11, 2001 - An update for you. We have revised our web site at www.level2solutions.com to better reflect our current services offerings. Please take a look and let us know what you think.

THE ART OF STANDARDIZATION

PROBLEM:

A professional services firm had more than doubled its revenues over a two-year period. And while revenue was up, profitability did not increase at the same pace. Productivity was down, and the company was no longer running smoothly:

- ◆ **Employees became frustrated** because they spent too much of their time dealing with crises rather than doing their work.
- ◆ The time to **orient and train new employees** - who were being hired rapidly - was significant and used up the resources of many different departments.
- ◆ **Projects and tasks were taking longer** than usual and, often, more than one person did the same task.
- ◆ **Communications** that worked when the organization was smaller began to **break down with added staff**.

The firm had not adjusted their informal systems to manage their growth. Stuck in a rut, they had tried to get by without making the necessary upgrades in their systems.

SOLUTION:

Perhaps one of the most important points when planning to improve operations was establishing the ground rule that the team and consultants would take an unbiased look at what existed and try to create processes and procedures as though the company were a startup. Banned from discussions was the phrase, "but that's the way we've always done it."

The first step in improving the operations was creating a master list of all the problems. Using this big picture overview, front line employees, working with Level II Solutions:

- ◆ Refined and prioritized the issues.
- ◆ Identified possible solutions and established a plan of action.
- ◆ Designed and documented new procedures.
- ◆ Introduced and trained employees via e-mail, Intranet, and workshops.

Among some of the changes were a CD-ROM that was used to set up a new employee on the network in minutes; a corporate template folder on the network for purchase orders, check requests, requisitions, and other forms; a new and consistent orientation program

RESULTS:

The work environment became **calmer** and employees became less frustrated because they could spend more time doing their jobs. The consistency the processes provided resulted in **fewer mistakes** and errors and eliminated ambiguity. ROI on the improvements was excellent; **profitability** and **productivity improved**. But, most importantly, the company was now ready to **handle additional growth easily**.

As always, Level II Solutions provides business operations for emerging, established and family-owned companies and specialized consulting for M&As, turnarounds and global expansion. Until the next News Flash . . .

LEVEL II
SOLUTIONS

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