

Armstrong Bank Partnership Report



Challenges/Needs

- We recognized need for formal teller training relating to:
 - Consistency
 - Uniformity
 - Meet customer service objectives
- Content was so “big” – we couldn’t get our arms around it
- Time restraints (we thought we could do this ourselves if able to devote adequate time to the project – but we had been saying that for four years)

At The Bob Pike Group’s Annual Conference last year, we were introduced to Instructional Design approach.

Decision-making Process

Our Training Team recognized that we had a significant need to develop training for tellers, as they represent 40% of our workforce and collectively handle over 100,000 customer transactions per month. We had talked about this for four or five years and finally decided that it was time teller training became a priority.

As I presented our 2004 sales, service, HR and training goals to executive management – my mantra became, “2004 is the year of the teller and teller supervisor.” Based on what I had learned at The Bob Pike Groups (BPG) Annual Conference, my strategy was to partner with BPG to help us with the design of the teller training program. Executive management agreed to bring BPG in for a 2-day design session.

Design

We picked a design team that consisted of a current teller, new teller, branch manager, teller supervisor, and our training committee. We also involved executive management in the early design phase of determining purpose. After executive management sat in on the design process and could see the benefits that BPG could bring us, the rest was an easy sell.

We partnered with BPG, deciding whether BPG or the Bank would perform the necessary functions.

- The Bank provided content
- BPG put content together in book format, created job aids, etc.
- BPG and the Bank worked together to refine content
- The Bank selected one-on-one trainers.
- BPG trained the trainers
- The Bank conducted all informational meetings with senior management, branch managers, teller supervisors and tellers

We began the design phase in Feb. 2004 and had finished product by mid-May. Our trainers were anxious to use the new material because they could see the benefits of the teller excellence program. Since implementing the program, we have trained approximately 20 people in a 3-month time period.

Return on Investment

One of the big “discoveries” during the design phase was that we were having approximately 200 proof errors a week (there was no formal tracking of numbers at this point). We did a loose estimate that if each error cost us \$50 (time to fix, time to report back, time to coach, etc), that proof errors alone were costing us close to \$500,000 a year. We determined that if we could improve the bank’s proof accuracy alone by 16%, we could recoup our investment in the project. In the first 3 months following implementation, based on the reduction in proof errors, we have already recouped 2/3 of our investment.

Measurement

We are in the process of setting our benchmarks for accuracy and balancing percentages. We’d like to have 6 months of data before setting the goal. For the first 3 months of tracking, our average bank-wide proof accuracy rate is 99.54%.

We believe that what gets measured gets repeated. Tellers keep their own “report card” of activity each month:

- Number of transactions (production)
- Number of correct transactions (accuracy)
- Balancing percentages & time to balance (accuracy & efficiency)

One of our teller supervisors had this to say, “One thing that stands out at our branch is the tracking form used daily by the tellers. At month end they are questioning each other wanting to find out who had the highest accuracy rate. Just that is making them be more careful with their work.”

Benefits

This process has helped management to change philosophy towards the importance of the role of the teller in the organization.

Because of the excellence of the program, we are training new Client Service Representatives as tellers first, so they can back up the teller function in our small branches.

Also, anyone entering our Officer Training Program goes through teller training and functions as a teller before proceeding with their training plan.

Intangible Results

We see greater confidence in our tellers and a greater pride in their role within the bank.

Supervisor Comments

“...they aren’t coming to me all the time with every question about a transaction. They are more confident.” – JoAnn Vest

“Our branch has a new teller. She was trained by one of the teller trainers. I LOVED it. When she came here she was ready to go. The trainer did an excellent job. That saved me a bunch of time.” – JoAnn Vest

“What I am seeing is better balancing percentages sooner than in the past, more confidence and also a greater understanding of their role as a teller and how it relates to other areas of the bank and they know what is expected of them with no surprises.” – Shelley Branam

“They have a better understanding of the process of transactions running thru the system correctly and incorrectly and who all it affects. They seem to have more confidence in using codes on loan transactions, they understand them better now.” – Donna Mannon

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