

CASE STUDY

Vidya Sanskar - International School of Holistic Learning

I worked with Vidya Sanskar, located in Faridabad, Haryana from 2006 to 2008 and helped it become a global project by: (1) having world class work learning environment (2) By Becoming IT aggressive; and (3) Have mission focussed and driven by vision - work culture!

This document outlines how creative thinking and innovation can help in school management in areas such as Governance, Value Education, Marketing and Holistic Learning by putting organizational vision in practice.

INTRODUCTION

Spread over 40 acres of land and with over quarter of a million state of the art learning facilities, Vidya Sanskar is India's first International School offering Cambridge Curriculum from Nursery to Class 12th; with Student Teacher community of people from UK, South Korea, USA, Canada, Thailand, Tanzania and India

Organizational Mission: To nurture knowledgeable and ethical, sincere and compassionate, responsible and confident leaders of the global community who contribute positively to the common good.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

1. Parents complained school is only teaching curriculum and not values of "Vidya" and "Sanskar". Students must be Righteous, Self assured and Self Motivated towards nobility. After all its the education alone that can transform the world.
2. Focussing entire school community in direction of mission. Positive Behaviour Support in Work/Learning Culture based on Ethics and Values that are global as well as Indian in Nature. Emphasis on Quality Education and Holistic Learning.
3. Basic Student Issues: Lack of Motivation, Lack of responsibility, leadership and belongingness, non commitment. Also, Student Assessment/Evaluation. Managing highly energetic, internet and telecom champion young minds is like managing a complex chaos.
4. Parents were apprehensive that by following international curriculum our students will become Americanized resident non-Indians? Western education philosophy and practices is unable to save necessary social institutes like family and marriages. This was more important to us, particularly as school was named Vidya Sanskar.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 1. Centre of Focus: Aligning Everyone in Direction of School's Mission.**
- 2. We need to spiritualize the work culture. School is an organization where work/learning culture should be self propelling towards nobility.**
- 3. Further, staples of fear, punishment, manipulation and/or politics cannot keep educated people together for long. Teaching itself is a strong passion work, so these people want to associate themselves with a bigger purpose.**
- 4. Purpose of a School: Just like oil refinery brings out crude from the bottom of earth and refines it into useful and beautiful petroleum products; similarly all these attempts were of human engineering - preparing better students with character refined in universal values of dedication and service.**
- 5. We have to discourage rule by fear or stick!**

MISSION AND VISION DRIVEN APPROACH

Vision without action is daydreaming then action without Vision is just Random Activity. Mission and Vision helps set organizational priorities. Mission defines what organization will do while vision provides focus to assess that individual, department and organizational progress in that area.

Benefits of mission centric working are: improved productivity, unity in community, better academic and overall performance, increased job satisfaction, better organizational reputation, distinct character and brand building of school.

With school's priorities right, logic, values, perception and decision making becomes easier. Teachers also don't just want to work for the school they want to belong to a bigger purpose of teaching.

SOLUTIONS

Five Innovations that were implemented:

1. Knowledge Currency
2. Value Trees
3. Rejuvenating Spirit of Education - Learning and Teaching
4. Introduction of E-Culture
5. Strengthening Goodness and Nobility

Innovation 1: Knowledge Currency

Introduced "Vidya" or Knowledge Currency. Idea is to move from Dhan-vaan to Vidya-vaan. This currency could be earned by students based on their performance in academics, co-curricular, discipline, punctuality, attendance, class-room behaviour, social responsibility, neatness, helpfulness and other life skills. This is an intelligent matrix to evaluate students rather than just exam marks and is a fluid, non structural way of management.

It is difficult to improve things which cannot be measured. "Vidya" Currency makes entire education system measurable and sets a holistic development focus for organization. Distribution and Implementation Mechanism of Currency was in accordance to school's mission and psychology. These could be redeemed as day-offs, chocolates, collectibles, cups, pens, mugs etc.

This is an example of Social and Ethical Incentive for Better Performance, Leadership Grooming which is cultivating goodness. This innovation ensures overall betterment of organization and its community in new way with lesser conflicts, higher productivity and smooth working.

Innovation 2: Value Trees

There were six trees in the front lawn of the school. I assigned a big Sign Board in front of each tree as: "Knowledge", "Ethics", "Sincerity", "Compassion", "Responsibility", and "Confidence".

For young kids it was a fun and play activity. Unable to complete homework, water the knowledge tree for 3 days. Two kids had fight, teacher asked both students sit under Sincerity Tree and eat lunch together. If a student lies? "Run five times around the "Ethics" Tree!"

This inclusion of trees was supported by presence of goose and peacocks in the front lawn. This is inclusion of Nature is very distinct cultural characteristic of our India. Snakes, Elephants, Monkeys have always been part of our society, culture and religion.

In evenings, when students visited the lawn, all school bags were voluntarily kept circularly surrounding the knowledge tree. Teachers and students would sit under trees and devise their own unique games, discussions and chats on the value assigned to the tree.

This also served as a social glue for the entire school and helped us change the thinking process, with use of e-mails and internet capabilities.

Innovation 3: Rejuvenated the Spirit of Education

I designed Post Cards on theme of education, passion for teaching, leadership and circulated them via emails to students and teachers. I wrote open letters for dialogue and discussion. Purpose was to focus school's mission and vision more and "Management" less.

What is impressive about design visualization and literature is that it transforms the mind of reader into the state of the mind of the person who created it. These enterprise development postcards and articles gave a common vision, helped in internal brand building and rejuvenating the spirit of togetherness in a multi-nation, multi-cultural, multi-religious student -teacher community.

Innovation 4 - Introduction of E-Culture using Internet:

Internet has been nominated for noble peace prize for becoming medium expression of public voice for common good. I used school's email and intranet for sharing of knowledge and ideas. Help build an e-bridge between the young students, teenaged students, teachers, principal and directors and staff beyond the hierarchical structure.

Management development by power of positive suggestions through postcards and letters democratised organization and promoted dialogue, debate and consensus.

Initiative 5 - Strengthening Goodness and Nobility

I identified good and disciplined students and teachers - who were reserved but kind, sympathetic and did small things right; people for whom service to others was leadership. People who were noble and did not hesitate to take inconvenience to help others or work for the common good...

I gave them designed Table Top Frames with a quote or picture of a famous person that best suited their aspirations, personal goals or resembled their personality, like Mother Teresa, Netaji Bose and Sadhu etc. Purpose was to their strengthen nobility; their faith in goodness and to encourage their ethical and sincere behaviour.

CONCLUSION

1. Management is an Art - In this "Desi" way of management, I used power of Art, Psychology, Literature, Science, Internet together to make a truly "Desi Style" of management, a fine art in which heart and head are motivated together.
2. Only better thinking will make better India, better world!

In the name of making this world noble...

Respectfully, Nitin Mendiratta

Cell: 98102-18031 | nitinmendiratta@yahoo.com | www.mnيتين.com