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Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield: Evolution of Advancing its Workplace Culture

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Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield: Evolution of Advancing its Workplace Culture

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Introduction

Culture is an essential element of a workplace that helps employees define their job and their culture fit experience. In 2013, Excellus BCBS faced a dilemma: How to transition from a formal corporate culture of top - down authoritarian leadership to more open, collaborative, people – centric work environment where employees feel more valued, respected, and engaged. This study explored different methods and initiatives the culture team conducted since its existence and their employee's satisfaction. The goal of this case study is to seek employees input about their culture experience and their thoughts toward the culture team different initiatives since its existence. The August Pulse Survey is used to gather specific feedback on Excellus BCBS desired culture and measures the behaviors to lead to be a great workplace. The 2018 August Pulse Survey was administrated online to all employees. According to responses as a company, employees are not holding themselves accountable and employees are empowered to learn. Therefore, the culture team use the information from these surveys or focus group meetings to make improvements.

Research Question

In the past 5 years "How effective have the culture team methods and initiatives been in advancing the culture"?

Purpose: Conduct a case study on Excellus BCBS culture and the role played by the culture team in the evolution of culture.

Corporate Overview

Who:

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, headquartered in Rochester, NY, is part of a $6 billion family of companies that finances and delivers health care services across upstate New York and long term care insurance nationwide. Collectively, the enterprise provides health insurance to nearly 1.5 million members and employs about 5,000 New Yorkers. Excellus is known for its exceptional customer service and open, collaborative work environment.

Why Culture: What is Culture?

In my own opinion, culture refers to people at work. Culture used by itself refers to the collective institutions, art, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, values, and products of human beings. Organizational culture refers to names the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and values that develop specific to a company, as a subset of the culture of the national or ethnic culture in which it exists. The term corporate culture became widely known in the business world in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The Lifetime Way

Where Did the Lifetime Way come from?

Excellus began its initial partnership with Brand Integrity in 2010 by implementing employee recognition software. In 2010, CelebrateU was launched by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion team. CelebrateU brought more focus for Excellus BCBS need for a defined culture. For example, CelebrateU has morphed into their LTW recognition system. The senior leadership team worked together to create the seven Lifetime Way Values. Feedback on desired behaviors was gathered from leaders and employee groups. Brand Integrity led the senior leaders through prioritizing this feedback. After that, the focus was connecting the Lifetime Way to our mission and Strategy. Mission: to improve the health of the members we serve and communities we serve. Making sure the behaviors were not perceived as common sense, but common question are they common practice.

Values & Behaviors

The **Lifetime Way** | Values & Behaviors

We Passionately Serve Our Customers	• Take time to listen to and understand the customer's needs. • Take action after considering the customer's perspective. • Follow-up on customer inquiries promptly and accurately. • Treat customers with a polite and friendly tone.
We Care About Each Other	• Help others without being asked. • Demonstrate interest in each other's well-being. • Greet coworkers throughout the day. • Understand and appreciate diversity of background and viewpoints.
We Are Proud of What We Do	• Appreciate and recognize contributions and accomplishments. • Speak positively about the company, coworkers, and customers/providers/patients.
We Challenge & Empower Each Other to Drive Excellence	• Act with a sense of urgency (importance, priority, and drive). • Take ownership of issues and follow through to resolve them. • Listen attentively to the ideas and opinions of others. • Share ideas to improve processes, procedures, and systems. • Communicate and collaborate across the organization. • Show up on time, prepared, and ready to work.
We Embrace & Drive Change	• Willingly adapt to help change happen efficiently and smoothly. • Share knowledge and expertise to help others learn and grow. • Be knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the company and our products and/or services • Be curious, innovative, and explore alternative ways to get work done.
We Have Open & Honest Conversations	• Treat others with respect and fairness. • Speak up, respectfully sharing ideas and opinions. • Ask for and accept feedback.
We Can Do it... & Have Fun!	• Approach problems with a positive, can-do attitude.

Solution

Culture Team

The culture team exists to promote an employee experience that consistently reflects our LTW values and behaviors. In a way that: ensures all of our corporate policies, practices, procedures, and decisions align with our LTW Values and Behaviors; retains the best and brightest talent; fosters an atmosphere of continuous improvement; employees feel a sense of pride in what they've created. So that: our employees, customers and various community partners experience us as the organization described in our LTW values and behaviors, enabling us to achieve our Long-Term Enterprise Strategy. The Director of Culture & Organizational Effectiveness focuses on LTW strategy, culture roadmap development, Culture curriculum development, and serves as a Corporate coach. The team focuses on LTW system administration, Survey administration, analytics, and reporting, Corporate coach and public notary, Culture Show, HR Reflectors, and LTW Ambassador program facilitation, Communications, and Instructional Designs.

Methodology

Qualitative Research: The Focus Group Research Method asking employees for open-ended responses conveying thoughts or feelings.

References:

1. Steve Falco
2. Excellus BCBS