

Case Study: Happy Teams Deliver Great Services

Problem –

The development team also supported the same systems in production (DevOps). The client had outsourced this work to us. The systems provided were critical to the client's core business, processing millions of dollars of transactions daily. The client was concerned about the support they were getting, and the time taken to address any issues.

The team itself had low morale. They were putting in long hours maintaining legacy systems, with little or no appreciation from their management or the client.

Action –

I was engaged to lead the team, manage the people and improve services. First action was to determine the culture and attitudes in the team. I conducted one-on-one sessions with each team member. Most were keen to deliver a top job, but were frustrated by having a poor reputation. I quickly made some role changes in the team, and made it clear that I trusted them to do the best they could.

I worked with the client management to list their main issues, and collect historical data to put this into perspective. I acknowledged the client's frustration and requested they work with to construct a plan to correct the situation. They loved being engaged in this way.

The team's morale began to improve and they became more customer focused. The client was now recognising the positive performance they were making, and with every issue, they received a report of what happened and why. The client realised that some of their issues were self-inflicted. Relationships between the support team and the customer improved.

Result –

Over a period of one year, the number and severity of incidents dropped off significantly (by about 30%).

Instead of being the butt of jokes regarding poor quality, the client began using this team as an example of excellent service. It wanted other service suppliers to use our model to improve their services.

The client accepted the troubles with the outdated legacy systems, and funded the rewrite of the systems, further improving maintainability and reliability of the services.

Morale in the team stepped up. We knew we were not perfect, but we wanted always to get better at adding value. The team was happier and so was the client.

The turn-around was achieved by open communication and mutual trust.