

(IJ-01) Organizational Development Consulting Report

Dr. Junqiao Xiao, EdD, JD, DBA, Esq.
Adjunct Professor, California School of Management and Leadership, Alliant International
University
Adjunct Professor, California School of Professional Psychology, Alliant International
University
Adjunct Professor, Department of Leadership and Human Resources Management, College of
Professional Studies, National University

Interviewee Summary

For this interview paper, this author interviewed the current DevOps Engineer of Component Control Inc., Mr. Chuan He (Chuan). This researcher interviewed Chuan questions about the business model change recently implemented in the Component Control and its sibling subsidiaries under the parent company, CAMP Systems.

Name of Person Interviewed: Chuan He

Organization/Company: Component Control

Address: 1731 Kettner Blvd, San Diego, CA 92101

Telephone Number: 619-696-5426

E-mail Address: chuan.he@componentcontrol.com

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Introduction

Chuan He came to San Diego, California at age of 16 from China, and stayed in San Diego ever since, went to the University of California, Irvine, and the University of California, San Diego for his Bachelor of Science in computer science. After graduating with his bachelor's degree, he worked for some technology companies, and later he went to Thomas Jefferson School of Law for a Juris Doctor degree. Worked three technology jobs in San Diego, the latest one being the software configuration manager at Component Control since 2019 as part of the company's effort to migrate products from the current self-hosting model to the cloud-hosting model, so his job is to provide customers with a uniform user experience without suffering unforeseeable interference and interruption. Chuan became a California licensed lawyer in 2021.

Job Responsibility

Chuan is in charge of the development and maintenance of the continuous delivery of various projects. To explain what he does, Chuan used an analogy of the relationship between Amazon.com and UPS. In his analogy, the developers are Amazon.com and Chuan is UPS. Imagine that Amazon.com can sell the best products to its customers, but if UPS takes too long to deliver, the customer experience would still be terrible. Therefore, Chuan's job is to develop and maintain a system that delivers the latest features and fixes to customers within 15 minutes of developers committing their changes.

Introduction: Organization of Interest

Component Control Inc. is a 32-year-old software company, located in San Diego, that designs, develops, and implements software solutions for aviation aftermarket industries. Component Control provides applications for inventory control, logistics planning, maintenance repair and overhaul, aircraft service center management, and other aviation-specific applications in the aviation aftermarket space.

According to the CAMP Systems International, Inc. official website and LinkedIn information, in October 2005, Component Control was acquired by New York-based CAMP Systems International Inc, which has 9 other subsidiaries in aviation management software solutions. CAMP has grown to become the world's leading Aircraft Maintenance Tracking Solutions provider, serving more than 20,000 aircraft, 32,000 engines, and 1,500 maintenance facilities globally. CAMP Systems itself was acquired by Hearst in October 2016.

According to the CAMP Systems International, Inc. official website, CAMP's mission is to commit to providing the highest quality products and services to the business aviation community across the globe. The company has a long-standing history of excellence and is the factory-recommended maintenance tracking provider for Airbus ACJ, Beechcraft, Bell, Boeing BBJ, Bombardier, Cessna, Daher, Dassault, Embraer, Gulfstream, HondaJet, Leonardo, Piaggio, Pilatus, Viking, and numerous other aircraft. CAMP is the exclusive Engine Health Monitoring provider for all Pratt & Whitney Canada engines and for Honeywell TFE, HTF, and TPE engines.

According to the Component Control official website, Todd Lewis is the President of Component Control, San Diego. Mr. Lewis has worked with a wide variety of leading-edge technologies and has been committed to improving the value proposition for the customer. Mr. Lewis's experience is indeed global as it has included significant project experience in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the Middle East. With his background, Mr. Lewis brings a balanced perspective as it pertains to the practical and effective application of technology solutions for the Component Control customer base.

As to why this practitioner chose Component Control, first and obviously, Chuan is willing to participate in this process. Second and more importantly, Component Control and its sibling subsidiaries are currently working on an integration project. This integration project has caused many clashes of old and new in many aspects, thus Component Control may face many difficulties in introducing the new and phasing out the old. This is an opportunity for this practitioner to observe this organization growing and breaking out of the cocoon.

For example, Chuan has told me that Component Control uses a programming language called Delphi. Delphi is not very old, but it is a rather unpopular programming language. Delphi programmers are at least middle-aged, and no new programmers learn Delphi as their first choice. In the long run, if Component Control sticks with Delphi, it will have to spend more time and money training new programmers in a language that is almost useless on their resume or keep finding older programmers who know Delphi. The situation is like the New Jersey state government seeking

COBOL programmers to fix their unemployment system amidst early COVID-19 quarantine (Leswing, 2020). In this integration project, the majority of the projects being integrated are done in newer technologies such as dotnet, but what to do with the existing Delphi programmer, and what about customers who have been using the software for years, if not decades? There are many clashes under the surface of this integration, and each is an opportunity to watch and learn. This practitioner suspects that the entire integration will take much longer than her DBA program, but nonetheless, this makes Component Control a great target for this study.

Phase One: Start-up: Pre-entry, Entry, Contracting

Pre-Entry

Self- assessment

This practitioner conducted an internal scan of her interviewer Chuan He and asked him about what his need is. This practitioner also conducted an external scan of Chuan's perception of this practitioner's knowledge and skills. If this practitioner can make recommendations that help Chuan and his organization, it will be his gain for free. Chuan has no expectation of any profound outcome from this process.

Research

According to the CAMP Systems International, Inc. official website and LinkedIn information, in October 2005, Component Control was acquired by New York-based CAMP Systems International Inc, which has nine other subsidiaries in aviation management software solutions. CAMP has grown to become the world's leading Aircraft Maintenance Tracking Solutions provider, serving more than 20,000 aircraft, 32,000 engines, and 1,500 maintenance facilities globally.

Chuan is the software configuration manager of Component Control in San Diego, he is in charge of the continuous delivery of various projects. To explain what Chuan does, an analogy is a relationship between Amazon.com and UPS. Programmers are Amazon.com and Chuan is UPS in this analog. Imagine that Amazon.com can sell the best products to its customers but if UPS takes too long to deliver, the customer experience would still be terrible. It is Chuan's job to develop and oversee a system that delivers the latest features and fixes to customers within 15 minutes on average.

Entry

Orientation

This practitioner managed the initial meeting with Chuan He, the meeting date was March 19th at 5 pm via FaceTime. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is better to communicate online instead of face-to-face for safety purposes. The initial meeting took two hours long. The main outcome was that the meeting initiated this process with genuine interest and curiosity. Chuan not only shared his company Component Control public information and working feelings but also shared the aforementioned company CAMP System's public information. That information is public, with no trade secret or any confidential information involved. This practitioner observed the above information about culture, morale, and relationships during the conversation.

Identify client

This practitioner identified the contracting client as Chuan He because he agreed with this practitioner's consultation. However, Chuan He does not have the authority to control any big business decision process and implement outcomes because his position is very independent, but he has some close and well-managed relationships with many departments.

Build relationships

This practitioner made meaningful contact with Chuan, so This practitioner learned about his educational background and working experiences. This practitioner shared her personal resume and explored her values. Additional topics were the diversity dynamics of Chuan's workplace and explored the excitement and development of the workplace.

Establish the need for the work

This practitioner invited Chuan to tell the story of his job and inquired about what he wanted, what is his expectations, what is his hopes, what is his company wanted to change, what is the need behind the request for help, and what is his current and previous successes or failures. This practitioner deeply understands his concerns because he wants to keep his job stable and smooth.

Recently, CAMP Systems is on the path of integrating the products from its many subsidiaries together to form a platform with the help of cloud computing, so CAMP's customers of each subsidiary will become one community. This is a huge undertaking considering there are ten subsidiaries that need to work together to integrate five major products in many phases. The first phase is three teams integrating three products. However, here is where many problems occur.

Contracting*Frame desired outcomes*

There are three things Chuan wants to get out of this consulting process: (1) the impact of the integration project (2) recommendations for improvement, and (3) suggestions on sustaining the changes in the future.

Create shared expectations

Chuan's objective is to understand the impact of the integration project and how to navigate the sudden changes because the integration is a large-scale project that will last for years, and organizational incidents can potentially reduce the efficiency of the CAMP Systems as a whole. Chuan will be corporate with this practitioner for this paper, and this practitioner will observe, gain insight, and try to make useful recommendations to aid Chuan.

Clarify scope and roles

This practitioner's initial consultation strategy is to understand Chuan's needs and background. Chuan will take and act on the recommendations at his own discretion, and he will update this practitioner on the development.

Negotiate a structure

There is no fee involved because Chuan provides assistance on this project, and the consultation for him is free. Even though this is a free service for him, this practitioner will still do her best to research, learn about his problem, and pay attention to his need.

Measurement, feedback, evaluation

The success of this project is difficult to define because this practitioner cannot go to his company due to the pandemic, but this practitioner and Chuan agreed to measure the project by the development as Chuan updates weekly.

Assess fit, clarity, and commitment

This practitioner and Chuan both believed that this is a project of mutual benefit because there are adequate clarity and commitment to proceed.

Summarize and document

This practitioner's expectation is to finish this paper with excellent quality, so this practitioner's service for Chuan is free. Chuan's expectation is to keep his stable job safer and enhance his communication skills with his co-workers. Meetings are on every Friday night from 5 pm to 7 pm online via FaceTime or Zoom to solve his barriers in his workplace from March to April.

Phase Two: Data Collection and Analysis

Organizational Culture, Employee Motivation

According to Ivancevich and Konopaske (2014), organizational culture is what the employees perceive and how this perception creates a pattern of beliefs, values, and expectations. In chapter two, Edgar Schein defined organizational culture as a model of fundamental assumptions, which created, discovered, or established by a given group as it learns to cope with the problems of external adjustment and internal incorporation. Furthermore, if the organizational culture functioned well enough, it should be considered effective and be taught to new associates as the right way to perceive and think concerning figure out problems. Thus, the interview questions below were designed by dissecting this definition.

1. You are a part of the software development department, so can you describe the development model and daily practice of your company?

Component Control adopts the most popular software development model called Scrum; the detail will take too long to explain. The short version is that every team is self-governing and self-sufficient; each team has developers, quality assurance engineers, and product managers. Each team can function autonomically. Every morning, each team has a Scrum meeting, where everyone reports the progress on yesterday's tasks, and picks up new tasks for the day. Blocks and delays are discovered and dealt with early, and we keep the wheel turning every day.

2. How long have you been in this company, has there be any change of business culture and business model during your career here in Component Control?

I joined Component Control in the July of 2019. After I got his feet under me, I was concerned that the company's business model was very ancient. Every step of maintenance of aircraft has its accompanying paperwork for safety and regulation reasons, Component Control's software helps to digitize that paperwork, increase the transition speed from one step to the next, and reduce the chance of human error. I thought it was a good business model, but there was not much more to it. The software simply transferred the same work from paper to computer, so there was no technology barrier to this product. By my estimation, anyone can replicate the software in a year or so. I suspected Component Control has been doing so well because the company got into this niche market early and met with relatively little competition.

I believed that Component Control's products lacked innovation and were becoming stale. If any other company can introduce any innovation to improve the business logic, the new product would leave Component Control in the dust. Later, I learned that the management team had similar concerns, and they suggested various changes to improve business logic. The reason for inaction was that the paperwork being digitized was heavily regulated. The reward of a successful innovation would be that Component Control's software would be adopted as the new standard, but the risk of failure would be dire as well. Instead of betting all-in, the parent company, CAMP Systems, has another idea.

CAMP Systems has ten subsidiaries and many products. So far, those products are isolated and independent. There are a limited number of customers who have purchased multiple products from CAMP, but customers of each product are just small communities within the products. Now, CAMP has a grand project to integrate some of its major products so they can communicate with each other, thus bringing the customers together to form a bigger community. The new project will make the information chain flow longer and faster, thus creating more customer value. For example, Component Control deals with maintenance tracking and paperwork, but customers must use another CAMP product, Inventory Locator Service (ILS), to search, purchase, and track the shipping of parts. The information of parts from ILS must be manually copied and pasted into the Component Control software.

After integration, all information is managed on one software platform, and the purchase order of parts will flow from ILS to Component Control software natively, with no more manual data entries, no more human mistakes, and better paper trails. Existing customers will get more value from what they already purchased and may purchase more products according to their needs. Customers will be more dependent on this software ecosystem, thus more loyal to the brand. I believe when the integration project is completed, the new software platform may have rallied enough market share that making more profound business logic changes may not represent much risk. Thus, here is the big change in the company, we are in a process of integration and becoming something new.

3. How does this change reflect in your work?

This new project has brought many changes: teams are reorganized, new people are introduced, we have to work with people we never worked with before, and not all of the changes are good experiences. For example, the software configuration team in Austin (people who hold the same position in Austin as Chuan does in San Diego) had been refusing to comply with my request of opening a port so I could connect a server to the cloud. The reason for such refusal was a concern for security, and I had proved to the Austin team that such concern was invalid. The Austin team kept on refusing and even “played dead” on this issue. I had reported this issue to a higher level in both San Diego and Austin many times since January, but for unknown reasons the higher-level managers could not “put the foot down”, so to speak. To avoid holding up the work progress of three teams, for the past months I had been using limited San Diego resources to handle the workload from this integration project. In my opinion, the limitation and problem caused thereof were completely man-made and could have been avoided by five minutes of work in Austin.

Performance, Rewards, Employee Behavior, and Stress

1. Is your work stressful at Component Control?

No, it is not. I have had a truly stressful job before this. My last job was at a software company that makes 911 dispatching software. If something goes wrong with that software, people can literally die. In comparison, Component Control is not bad at all. Of course, it has the typical stress that comes with the job, such as tasks popping out of thin air and people demanding the tasks to be done as soon as possible or even yesterday, customers on the line raving, and so on. However, the frequency of those is low, and people will not die from it. I think another aspect is that I have better expectation management here in Component Control. I have more negotiating power with people who come to me with tasks, I can rank their demands and let them know they do not have the highest priority. In my previous job, I did not have that power, everyone assumes he is the No.1 priority and complains when the task is not done within one hour. Now that people have realistic expectations, when I can get low ranking demands fulfilled earlier, they are grateful.

2. You and your team have jobs in front of a computer all day long, do you or your team slack off? There is a word for it now, call “cyberslacking.”

It is inevitable. All technology workers have developed their own “rhythm” of doing things, we all listen to something while we work, may it be Spotify, YouTube, audiobooks, etc. If we want to prevent that, we can easily track the Internet traffic and be able to tell who has been doing what, but we do not. As long as he/she does not watch TV series, movies, or something inappropriate, we do not care. Some companies tried to block access to certain websites in the past, but those policies were short-lived. Here at Component Control, we trust each other to get the work done, which is the most important.

3. Do you have a reward or punishment system?

Not really, our budget is limited as it is. Because of the location of our office (Little Italy, San Diego), the parking space is very limited, most employees park on the street or find long-term parking deals with public parking. Employees of the quarter get to park at the designated spot in the small parking lot below the office, that reward was

rather coveted before the quarantine, but not so much now. As for the punishment, we do have guidelines for punishing misbehavior, but the bar is set high, you must want to be fired to misbehave on that level. I have not seen or heard that in action since I worked here.

4. Do you have a performance evaluation? How do you like it?

We have an annual goal set for each employee, which can be changed throughout the year. That means at the end of the year, we will just summarize what we have accomplished and write that as the goal. I can see this is defeating the purpose of setting a goal, but I do not think we can foresee our goal for a year. Maybe reducing the interval to semi-annually or quarterly would be more suitable for us.

5. Do you have multicultural issues within your organization? Do those issues work toward the benefit of the company or otherwise?

I think my answer will not be what you expect. Your definition is probably based on nationality and ethnicity, sure we have that here, people from the same ethnicity tend to be closer than the others, but I do not observe that to be any factor that may impact business. However, within Component Control, there is a clear cut of cultural differences between what kind of technologies people are “raised” from. People with older technologies and those with new technologies, each group has its own computer languages, jargon, procedures, work environments, etc. The cultural difference is as pronounced as any difference generated by nationality or ethnicity. The old products are fragile and prone to errors due to the limitation of the technologies, so it is often new-technology people introduce something that breaks the old product. It cannot be helped, new-technology people just do not know the ins-and-outs, cuts-and-corners of old technologies. When that happens, it is almost a miniature BLM movement from old-technology people, “they did it again!”, “no more breaks!”. It would be at least a few hours gone in email fights. For months, we did not have a person who could play the mediator between the two groups. Now, we do have such a person who enforces communication and review of changes between two groups, and the frequency and scale of such conflicts have gone down quite a bit compared to when I started two years ago.

From the interview, Component Control is a rather laid-back company with infrequent episodes of rushing deadlines. There is no effective system for reward or punishment. There are not enough works or urgent issues for any employee to stand out, and the reward is not high enough to motivate any employees. The work environment is very relaxed, if one gets the job done, minor misbehaviors are overlooked.

The punishment system is never engaged. Relating back to the problems Chuan had with coworkers at the Austin team. The Austin team completely ignored Chuan’s request to open a web port for his programs to reach out to cloud resources, halting work progress for many teams, and even reporting to higher-level management could not move the Austin team. Maybe the Austin team’s blatant misbehavior was due to a similarly inactive punishment system, the Austin team knows they will not suffer from such misbehaviors. It is recommended to Chuan that he should do some research on the punishment system of the Austin team, to see “whose tail you have to step on to make them jump.”

Groups, Teams, Conflict, and Negotiation

1. Could you please allow me to show you my textbook definition of group and team? Do you think your organization has more teams than groups or vice versa?

We certainly call ourselves teams, but does it fit your definition? According to this definition, to call any of the teams a group would be accusing them of not being committed to the company goal, I do not think that is fair. I think I see in your book one important factor is whether members within a team have synergy. I think if anything that stops most of our teams from being teams, lack of synergy would be the culprit.

I think we are short on people right now. We have too few quality assurance engineers compared to the number of developers. I believe we need to hire at least one more quality assurance engineer (QA) for each of the teams to make this work. Right now, I think existing QAs are too busy handling everyday work to improve our existing procedures and systems. Ideally, we should use automated testing to make sure we do not have to manually test anything twice. However, QAs often have so many tickets waiting for them to check off just barely enough to make the deadline, they have no time or energy left to learn and make automated tests. Thus, if developers inadvertently created a bug, it is very likely it will slip through the crack. The bug will make into the release, disrupt customers' workflow, report back to us, and we spend time reproducing, fixing, and testing it, making more work for QAs yet again. QAs work themselves to death, and we are not better for it. I do not think that fits your definition of a team.

2. How do your teams handle conflicts? Do you have any way to improve?

To be frank, our ways of handling conflicts are not pretty. If you remember last time, I told you that there is a cultural difference between our old-technology team and the new technology team, those two groups have evolved their own way of handling conflict when there is a bug. It is called "let's dig out who is responsible, yell at him really loud over email, and cc everybody." It is embarrassing, bitter, but effective to an acceptable degree. To avoid being the targets of such emails, developers tread carefully when they are in each other's territories, even asking each other for help sometimes to avoid being on the spot. Grudge is still there but at least they have channeled it toward a somewhat positive outcome. There is a QA who has played a role in stopping two sides from pointing fingers and working out the problem, I made a recommendation to promote her to team lead so she can keep being the mediator, and she was promoted.

According to Chuan's answers to the interview questions, Component Control has a human talent imbalance in team structure, which leads to the teams being unable to be at their best performance. Chuan said they were diligently hiring to fix the problem, but the pandemic has not made it easy. The more profound problem is how their teams handle conflicts, the long-standing conflicts are in a subtle balance and fortunately, teams still have the company's goal in their crosshair, thanks to a few key people playing the mediator.

The recommendations are (1) to keep a high standard in hiring qualified QA engineers, because if the newly hired cannot get up to speed soon, existing QA will spend more time training new ones, which will make their problem even worse; (2) to model a new way to resolve conflict that is less personal and more task-oriented, the current way is only avoiding the problem, the grudge may pile up and explode one day in the future.

Power, Politics, Ethics, and Communication

1. Do you have a co-worker that influences your career? How about in Component Control?

I had a co-worker, James, who was an architect at my previous job. He was such a great professional, and I look up to him so much. He was almost omnisciently knowledgeable about the product, and he was patient and nice. As long as his door was open, you could walk in and ask questions, and he would give you a clear and complete answer. I try to answer questions the way he does whenever a co-worker comes my way.

I have not met anyone like James at Component Control, a man of that caliber comes few and far between. I still have met co-workers who I respect, and they have a positive influence on me, such as Erica, now a team lead. Erica has been unafraid to step in between unproductive disputes to urge people to find a solution instead of finger-pointing. I can tell my team not to get involved in such disputes, I do not feel comfortable getting involved when others are doing it.

2. Have you experience a political move at Component Control? What is the result of that?

Only once, and it was not a political move within Component Control, but rather a political move between Component Control and its sibling subsidiaries under CAMP Systems. In July 2020, there was a task group assembled to tackle the early vision of the integration project. I was in this task group as a representative of DevOps to handle the deployment. Everything was going well, and I assigned some of my team members to work on the deployment. However, when I mentioned that to my superior the next day, my superior was surprised and upset that other teams “poached” me and my team to do their work without his consent. In his opinion, the Austin team had their DevOps and should not use my team. In a way, he was not wrong. I did not know what my superior did, but my team was pulled off that task group. I did not hear about the integration project again until February 2021.

This February, out of nowhere, an Austin developer asked me where we were on the deployment. By that time, I had completely forgotten about that project. Imagine my headache when I found out no one worked on deployment during those seven months, and by February the teams needed it soon, otherwise, development progress would be delayed. Then I gathered my team and had the most urgent part working in three days and the rest working in five weeks. My team did all those things despite the Austin team refusing us access to the Austin servers.

I did not know if my superior pulled that political move to spite someone or to protect his asset. In hindsight, the same project landed in my basket after seven months, with some urgency on top. I did not know if the Austin team refusing me access to the server was a political move against me or if I was just caught in the crossfire of another political

battle somewhere else. I think that office politics does more harm than good, it usually gets in the way of doing work and achieving goals.

3. Do you think communication is easier with all the communication tools available at your disposal?

Yes, but not all of it. When communication is easy or routine, all the tools we have made communication easy, fast, and trackable. However, when we need to have a conversation about a hard topic, tools give people room to hide. For example, in those situations, an online meeting with real-time conversation would be much more productive, however, people tend to use email and instant messaging, I guess it gives them time to contemplate what they want to say. Sometimes to be more precise, sometimes to avoid responsibilities. If the topic is complicated, the threads of conversation often get tangled up and discussion loses its momentum if it had any in the first place.

From this interview and some of the previous ones, Component Control/CAMP Systems now have a decentralized power structure, the teams consist of members from different physical offices, and teams are self-governing. Mixing and matching team members made sure that resources are being shared, the information flowed with people in every team, and decision-making now must take other teams' opinions into account. There are no secrets to hide, and no one is too powerful in this structure.

The company does not have an obvious reward system, thus there is no reward power. From what Chuan said, he believes in expert power and referent power, which frequently results in commitment. The unproductive politics is present in the company, and Chuan believes it was caused by the integration project. Some people in the company do not want to let go of the power they used to have, and they are resisting change. Now, the integration project has been in progress for months, some players have yielded to the company goals, and some persist. Chuan believed that people may use non-real-time communication to avoid discussing hard and complicated topics, which could be a result of a decentralized power structure. No one is more in power than others, thus no one wants to take more responsibility than others.

It is recommended that Component Control/CAMP gives team leaders training on leadership and has a reward system in place. The mindset needs to change, right now the mindset is "I do not have more power than others, why should I take more responsibilities"; however, it should be "because I take more responsibilities, I will have more power in reward."

Decision-Making and Leadership

1. If you have to use one word to describe your leadership, what would that be?

I may go with a "guardian". The job nature of my team is supportive, everyone else takes us for granted, no one thinks of us until it is too late, and they are late to thank us and quick to blame us. You can imagine how that does to a man's job satisfaction. What I do is to make sure I wedge myself, sometimes literally, into relevant meetings to make sure other teams include my team in the conversation, so they include us when setting goals and deadlines. Otherwise, they

will come to us at the last minute to demand something. When that happens, then it is my job to defend my team and tell developers, “You did not tell me what you wanted ahead of time, you do not get priority from my team now.” If they insist on the demand, I will ask them to get director’s approval, admit to the director it was their fault to leave my team out of planning. They either bite the bullet or get in line. I have done these enough times now the developers invite us to the meetings.

2. Did you do any team building?

My company has not had any team-building events so far. Honestly, I do not like those games and getting to know each other. I am not against becoming friends with my team, but I do not believe those are useful in a working context. When I was hired, every team member had been there for at least two years already. They were sizing me up and vice versa. I thought the best way to get accepted was to show them I cared about their problems and would do something for them. Also, I heard that complaining about a common topic is very effective in bringing people closer.

After my newly hired staff had settled, I took my team out on a Friday afternoon for coffee. I sat them at a table far away from me, while I stationed myself near the barista to pick up everyone’s bill. I gave them the rules: they would complain about the job freely in any aspect, they would anonymously come up with a list of problems without any pressure from me, and I told them I would fire any snitch. After they gave me the list, I told them to rank the problems, elaborate on certain ones to give me more details, and give me suggestions on how to resolve if they had any. Within one hour, I got my team’s problems and concerns, in detail and with priority. I had a rough idea of what to do to alleviate their pain. The problem I just mentioned in your last question was at the very top of the list.

3. Can you describe the decision-making process in your team?

Most of what we do is routine, there is a set of steps of procedures we follow on new projects. Thus, few of our decisions are about what or how to do something, most decisions are about who, when, and resources needed. According to Konopaske (2018), an employee-centered leader “focuses on having people complete the work and believes in delegating decision making and aiding employees in satisfying their needs by creating a supportive work environment.” Chuan is an employee-centered leader, he gathers information from his team members in an open, free, and honest setting, and focuses on aiding team members in their needs. Chuan says he is not more capable than his team members in terms of technology, his value to his team is to protect his team’s working environment from unreasonable demands and requests, so his team can focus on doing their work.

The recommendation for Chuan is to push his team to improve and learn new things outside of their comfort zone. From what he says, he focuses on his team’s job satisfaction too much and his team likes him for it. However, his team is likely in the comfort zone too much, Chuan should have them learn new technologies and improve, so they will be ready for future projects.

Phase Three: Intervention

There are three recommendations that this practitioner considers to be the most important for Component Control/CAMP Systems. The first recommendation is for Chuan's team. His team has been staying in their comfort zone. Chuan should push his team to improve and learn new technologies. Chuan said only few of his team members have been cloud certified to be on the next phase of the integration project, and he thought that was enough. My recommendation is to get every team member cloud prepared, cloud technology is the core for the integration project and future projects. If any of his team members do not learn cloud technology, he will get left behind.

The second recommendation is for Component Control. Component Control should establish a new procedure to resolve conflicts between teams that is less personal and more task-oriented. Now, teams broadcasting others' mistakes in the email, developers are afraid to be made the target, so they are extra careful. In a long term, developers will be so afraid of the consequence of mistakes, that they will not take any risk to introduce anything new, and the product will become stale. There has to be a way to resolve conflict without humiliating people.

The third recommendation is for CAMP Systems. Component Control/CAMP should give their managers and team leaders training on leadership and have a reward system in place. Currently, the company organization is very decentralized, teams are basically self-managing, and managers and team leaders cannot hoard information or manpower for themselves, which is a good thing for the company. However, managers' and team leaders' mindsets are "I do not have more power than others, why should I take more responsibilities", and there are no reward systems to incite incentives. CAMP Systems must have leadership training to turn the mindset around and have a reward system to give them the incentive to lead better.

Resistance to change

This practitioner does not think she will meet resistance to the first recommendation, because it is a very small-scale change. Chuan is well within his power to ask his team member to learn something, it is easy to convince the member that the company's future is cloud technology. Not learning cloud technology means not having job security either in Component Control or outside. This should not be a hard sell.

The second recommendation is likely to meet resistance. When the teams were in conflict, no one was holding back in the email war. Only several were willing to get involved to get people back on track. It is hard to imagine anyone who wants to jump at the opportunity to implement this change. Resistance may come in forms like "attack" and "moralizing". However, this practitioner must emphasize the current conflict resolving mechanism is very unproductive and is potentially destructive. Managers must not hide behind this temporary façade of peace and wait for the keg to blow.

The third recommendation is likely the hardest one to implement. CAMP Systems wants a decentralized organization so managers cannot withhold power and information, and it was successful. It is hard to convince the company that

its success has a flow in it. The executives can resist by saying, “it does not matter if managers are not incentivized, I can just tell them what to do.” This practitioner should point out that unincentivized and uninspired employees give a mediocre performance, such as the problem addressed by the second recommendation. If managers are incentivized, they would not spend half a day fighting in the email.

Phase Four: Transition

During the interview with Chuan, this practitioner learned that Component Control has been a laid-back workplace, but the recent integration project directed by the parent company has “stirred the pot.” The new project brought new goals, a new organizational structure, new job requirements, and much more. Major issues of so many suddenly introduced variables are (1) employees are reorganized into a new environment, (2) employees need to improve and learn new technologies in order to survive the new environment, and (3) there have been conflicts and political moves where there had been few or none.

Chuan has agreed to the first recommendation and found a learning course for his team members, so they can learn the same materials and help each other. Members will periodically report their learning progress, and skills learned can only help team members’ careers at or outside Component Control. In addition, Chuan can write this up as an annual goal of the team.

However, Chuan is not optimistic about other the two recommendations. He worries that the process of finding a conflict resolving mechanism can easily turn into a finger-pointing contest, even though everyone knows the current conflict resolving mechanism, or lack thereof, is a problem. He will suggest the change to executives and observe any changes. The third recommendation is the least likely one to get any action at all. The new decentralized team structure is working as intended, teams have been running without major problems, and a lack of enthusiasm is hard to detect. Executives may not acknowledge there is a problem at all.

Though CAMP Systems has customers in many foreign countries, it has no grand plan for global expansion yet. CAMP Systems’ international customers are in English-speaking countries like Canada, Great Britain, and Australia because their aero standards and regulations are similar to the U.S. one. Therefore, there are no multicultural and international issues to be discussed.

Conclusion

This series of interviews has caught Chuan and his company at the early stage of a major and potentially impactful change. They foresee the change will convert CAMP Systems from ten standalone subsidiaries to a unified and stronger company and will be capable of providing more value to the customers. The integration project is overcoming the boundary of physical locations and is making employees hopeful and excited for the future. This practitioner and Chuan were able to discover some issues caused directly or indirectly by the integration projects, and this practitioner was able to identify some of the major issues and give recommendations. Chuan is interested in one recommendation

that concerns his own team but cannot make any promises on the other two. Chuan believes this process has been helpful because he had a chance to take a look at the company from another angle. This practitioner gives thanks to Chuan for participating in this long process and for his help in this project.

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