Leveraging Community
to Lead from the Middle

Women Advance I.T.
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Beginnings: Why create a managers community?

From Lunch to a Community of Practice

- Place to share resources, experiences, tools, ideas, ways of addressing recurring problems
- Place to voice concerns, receive and give support
- Grassroots
- Setting expectations/identity
Creating the space

- Turn feedback into an action or ask
- Vegas rules apply
- Lead from where you are - bring ideas and enthusiasm
- Share freely - we can learn best from one another!
Evolution: Culture

Organizational Transformation

- Modernize technologies and update technical skills
- Align services with business needs
- Elevate management practices
- Improve service quality and customer satisfaction
- Enhance the organizational culture
Evolution: Culture

Culture Change Journey

What is culture?
- “Culture can be viewed as an organization’s personality.” -Edgar Schein
- Cultural Models vs. Cultural Settings

Culture change process:
- Assess current state
- Envision future state
- Co-create the desired culture
Evolution: Culture

*How the Community Enhances Culture*

- Builds relationships based on mutual trust and respect
- Breaks down vertical silos
- Increases lateral communication across the organization
- Develops a common set of best practices for managing IT staff and projects
- Establishes a model for how we want to work together
- Builds trust between executives and middle management
Evolution: the case for sponsorship

*Make a strategic pivot*

- Leverage existing story around leadership development
- Recast focus from training to standards and strategy
- Demonstrate potential to gain insights for organizational decision making; especially valuable for digital transformation
- Legitimize investment and endorse efforts of the community
- Create a platform: legitimize leadership’s openness to management feedback for buy-in
- Help advance executive leadership by creating asks for valued outcomes
The impact of sponsorship

*Create insights and recommendations*

- Create a feedback loop to leadership (share high level themes)
- Share this feedback loop with community
- Develop tangible recommendations
  - Professional development
  - Management standards
  - Organizational change
- Advisory
  - Create opportunities to leverage community insights for decisions about messaging, strategy and culture
  - Share feedback on everything, not just management operations
- Reinforce buy-in: draw a line from community work to leadership decisions and actions
Outcomes
Outcomes

- People showed up!
- We began to enforce our identity and norms
- We shared ideas and resources
- We became the outcome that transformation is trying to achieve
- Executives listened to the feedback and made adjustments - Revamping the more formal managers meeting to focus on key topics and face time with executives
- Community has become a strategic advisor to executives
Topics

- The rumor mill
- 1:1 workshop
- Leadership philosophy
- Reactions to transformation
- Values
- Performance management
- Goal setting
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Minimum (50%)</th>
<th>Target (100%)</th>
<th>Maximum (150%)</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>ITS Cultural Value</th>
<th>Target Cascading Goals</th>
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<td>Management Effectiveness</td>
<td>Achieve 100% participation in the individual development plan creation for staff. Achieve 100% participation of monthly 1:1 performance conversations with staff; establish 1:1s with direct reports within 14 days of new hire; require and measure 1:1s held by direct reports who are people managers (where applicable). Implement a formal manager to direct report feedback process with 100% of direct reports within 60 days of new hire.</td>
<td>Seek 360° feedback and identify improvements for management skills Implement a formal coaching process with 100% of direct reports within 180 days. Conduct skip-level meetings (where applicable) at least once a year with 100% of direct reports’ direct reports. Communicate and reinforce USC/ITS policies, protocols and processes Identify and attend at least one management professional development opportunity within 180 days.</td>
<td>Participate in one or more opportunities that move ITS forward, (culture champions, committee, advisory/governance). Designate and support innovation time for staff Create an onboarding checklist Identify and conduct at least one team bonding opportunity Develop a skill or capability across your team (e.g. customer service or analysis training) 0% of unexpected or regrettable attrition Champion, support, and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Employee Fulfillment: Nurture and empower the whole person (Coach &amp; Mentor / Professional Growth / Balance) Management Effectiveness (Deputy CIO)</td>
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Leadership Philosophy

- **Service leadership**
  Be stewards of customer service. As individuals, we support the USC mission of service to the community and world

- **Personal leadership**
  Understanding, valuing and cultivating employee growth

- **Authentic leadership**
  Open, sincere and humble leadership
What Members are Saying
“For me, the community is a place where we can be inspired by each other to become better leaders and people.”

“We all share in the same successes and challenges. It is easy to forget your support system when you are buried in your work.”
“...there is a feeling of inclusion, support, openness, and collaboration to allow for beneficial exchanges of ideas, impressions and information."

“It is a space where...minds can come together. It forces me to make that time to share ideas, thoughts, concerns with my peers. It provides me insight to other ideas, thoughts and concerns, which often help me.”
Key Takeaways
Key takeaways

- Find your people - step out of your comfort zone and reach out
- Start with a problem to solve as a rallying point (we started with performance reviews)
- Identify your point of entry
- Have fun - food after work, book clubs
- Ask for feedback - what’s working, what’s not
- Create house rules
- Success is contagious, support other advisory groups (for example, staff)
- Apply/frame what you are doing to executive needs, what do they care about? (Better managers, moving culture work forward, communication channels, lines of feedback)
Key takeaways

- Create a common language with leadership to set expectations (define “transparent,” clarify where you recommend action versus informational)
- Keep moving forward, don’t worry about setbacks
Let’s Try It!
Books and Podcasts

Give me your best leadership podcast?
- Women at Work - Harvard Business Review
- Radical Candor
- Safe for Work
- The McKinsey Podcast

What’s the last great leadership or culture book you’ve read?
- Sticking Points: How to Get 4 Generations Working Together in the 12 Places They Come Apart, Haydn Shaw
- Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change, William Bridges
- Radical Candor: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity, Kim Scott
Women in IT

How do you support and develop women technical staff and leaders in your organization?

- Michigan State University - Club25
- Ohio State - Mentoring Program
- Big Ten Academic Alliance - Women in IT Peer Group
- University of Wisconsin-Madison - Women In IT
Questions?
Let’s Connect

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