Executive Summary

Consumers Energy strives to be productive, innovative and creative like other industries of their kind. Every company has some turnover, but when Consumers Energy looks at the type of employee that does leave, they found out that a majority of the employees that leave are minority females. When asked, the minority females said they left because of the leadership and culture. There are three recommendations of training that the Training and Development department gave the business.

A strategic plan has to be in place for the next steps to go smoothly. All the steps will include the executive officers and it will start with creating the mission and vision statements. This will set the tone for Consumers Energy’s leadership. It will answer the questions of “what do you want your leadership to become?” and “what is it that our leaders do?”. The next step is to assess the situation by performing a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis and looking at what external and internal obstacles may be in the way and address them.

After the SWOT analysis, objectives will be laid out to make sure the trainings will address the concerns of why minority females are leaving. The objectives also will be communicated to the employees because it explains the reason of the training. Communication will be an important aspect of the strategic plan and during implementation.

Implementation will include training by the Training and Development department and will start at the highest level of management and will work down to all levels of employees. Another part of implementation will be keeping track of the process by using the scorecard method. This will also include weekly operating reviews to discuss where Consumers Energy is in the plan to retain minority females and strengthen leadership.
A Strategic Plan to Retain Employees

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A Strategic Plan to Retain Employees

Introduction

Companies are more productive, innovative, and creative when they retain employees. To do this, Consumers Energy was given three recommendations to help with their turnover rate concern. These three recommendations include three new trainings and programs for a new onboarding process, leadership training, and diversity, inclusion, and culture training. Consumers Energy knows based on research that a majority of their 2% turnover is minority women. Now that we have pinpointed who is leaving and the reason why employees are leaving, the question that this company will ask is, what will the plan be to develop the leaders in their role?

Mission and Vision

Training and Development create the structure for Consumers Energy to start moving forward with plan to try to retain minority females and other employees that are leaving due to their leaders. Mission and vision statements will help with the new training programs to determine how this company’s leadership will move forward. To retain employees, a foundation has to be formed which can start with the mission, vision, values, and policies (Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, & Pemberton-Jones, 2015). The mission, vision, values, and policies should be clearly stated to allow for employee commitment. Cloutier et al. (2015, p.120) explains that “acceptance of the organization’s vision, mission, values, and policies come by way of effective leadership communication”. Executive officers are the first to initiate the creation of the mission and vision statement, and should communicate with others in the company, etc.

Training and Development will first ask the executive officers of Consumers Energy, “what do you want your leadership to become?” The vision will be built around Consumers Energy’s core values and help push the goal of leadership at Consumers Energy (Cloutier et al.,
This will help them develop their internal vision for the leadership role. The leadership role within the company is one that works hand in hand with each level of employee. The establishment of a strong, structure leadership group will not only help with supervision and employee relationships, it will show the stakeholders that Consumers Energy wants to be productive, yet manageable company.

The mission will also add to this new strong and structure leadership role within the company. It is important to ask “what is it that our leaders do?” Having a mission will describe what values and priorities should a leader withhold at Consumers Energy. It will show the direction to the leadership. Having these statements in place will increase the levels of learning as well (Gurley, Peters, Collins, & Fifolt, 2015). After establishing these statements, the company will look at what obstacles are in the way of moving forward and what opportunities and strengths are going to help the plan succeed.

**Assessment**

An assessment will be done to look at both external and internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The value of doing a SWOT assessment is to assess and highlight Consumers Energy’s internal and external environments to see if any of them affect the turnover issue they are having. It also will help for development and implementation of the long-term strategies to achieve the objectives that will be laid out by Consumers Energy (Bull, Jobstvogt, Böhnke-Henrichs, Mascarenhas, Sitas, Baulcomb, Lambini, Rawlins, Baral, Zähringer, Carter-Silk, Balzan, Kenter, Häyhä, Petz & Koss, 2016). This will be done by bringing together a group of trend experts within the energy industry and also the leadership of the Training and Development to look at what forces, both positive and negative, will impact these new trainings within in Consumers Energy.
Weaknesses and Threats

The company will look at forces external to the training department to identify any possible obstacles that negatively impact the training. These external forces may be out of Consumers Energy’s control, but they will have to face them so the plan can move forward. External forces reveal key opportunities and threats”, which confronts “an organization so that managers can formulate strategies to take advantage of the opportunities and avoid or reduce the impact of threats” (David, 2013, p.62). These external forces can be economic, social, cultural, natural environmental, political, governmental, legal, technological, or even competitive forces. Pinpointing what could be a weakness or threat will help avoid those forces in the process of assessment (David, 2013). To start pinpointing the weaknesses or threats that are external, Consumers Energy’s Training and Development department will explore the trends that go along with the forces listed above. Again, looking at the focus question of what is the plan to develop these leaders in their roles, what could be a possible external threat or weakness to the Training and Development department?

Furthermore, looking at the organization as a whole, external threats and weaknesses could be social, cultural, demographic forces along with political force, and potentially a competitive force. The social force could be the other employees within the company that may be more negative and vocal about the change. Consumers Energy not only has a culture within the company, but it has cultures within department and/or teams. Cultures are created or established when a group of people get together and attitudes, values, and/or traditions are formed. If a group does not like what is happening, or changing, this could create a threat to the plan of development for employees.
A demographic force could potentially be an issue due to the fact of the way Consumers Energy is made up for employees. As of 12/31/2017, Consumers Energy has 8,006 employees, of which 71.5% are male and 62.4% are Caucasian. This statistic leads to demographics of 28.5% being females and only 5% of those females in a minority grouping (Consumers Energy Workforce Profile Sheet, 2017). These demographics are not diverse and there could be some backlash regarding the diversity, inclusion, and culture trainings. Cloutier et al. (2015, p.120) state “an employer who knows that workforce diversity, quality talent and relational growth determine the stability of the workplace”. Consumers Energy would like a stable workplace where all employees want to stay for their whole career. A diverse population would be beneficial for Consumers Energy. Those benefits include few barriers and more opportunities for growth for employees to advance in their position rather than it being handed to them.

A prior concern of employees has been the advancement of employees into leadership through politics within the company. It is important that the leaders are on board with the purpose of the trainings. If there is any reservation of the new direction that comes out of the training, this will be addressed with that individual. Another political force that Consumers Energy might have as an obstacle is the labor union. All objectives must line up with the contract with the Union already in place will be key to push the new trainings forward. Lastly, if the training is not done to the executive officer’s standards, there could be a competitive force would also be an obstacle. There are other companies that Consumers Energy could contract to come in and do the training for a price. The Training and Development department must be conscious about the mission and vision statements that the officers have treated and stay aligned to that.
Strengths and Opportunities

With any assessment, not only will there be weaknesses and threats found, but also the positive aspects called the strengths and opportunities. These assessments must be done so the objectives and strategies can be created and aligned with the mission and vision statements. Finding the internal strengths and opportunities will help proceed with the new trainings and also managers and employees will all work together to provide ideas and information. Within Consumers Energy one opportunity would be the organizational culture. There is importance to organizational culture by having the external factors and internal factors identified to make strategic decisions. Consumers Energy does not expect one employee to agree with others beliefs or values, but as for culture, this is one of the training aspects and Consumers Energy has room to grow. They want strong work ethic, so during changes, the executive board can implement changes easily. Another opportunity is for development and design, when Training and Development went through a reorganization in 2014, new technology and software was introduced. There is more room to grow in this range, and the training materials could be updated and stimulating to get employees that are going through the trainings excited.

Some strengths that come with this assessment include resources, assets, and people. Training and Development has many newer employees that are certified in multiple outside certifications including PowerTalk where the class is given tools to have powerful conversations and get attention. This department also has many assets including areas all of the state where there are opportunities to hold training for the leadership so they can be closer to their home office. Finally, they have the people. Highly qualified, trained facilitator that can help with the training so Consumers Energy can start retaining employees. Marketing would be another strength for this company to use, since their internal communication is top notch.
Communicating can be a struggle in some companies, but with Consumers Energy one of the main objectives that the company has as a whole, is to communicate well with all employees.

**Objectives**

It is important for Consumers Energy to set objectives that are “quantitative, measurable, realistic, understandable, challenging, hierarchical, obtainable, and congruent among organizational units” (David, 2013, p.133). Having these types of objectives within the training, can create many benefits for a company and are needed. Some of the benefits that the business will see are organized structure training because the expectations are laid out right away. Also, it will reduce uncertainty, minimize conflicts, stimulate exertion and help with the design of how leaders will move forward. Knowing that these trainings will be helping with lowering the percentage of turnover, leaders will want to make sure they understand the priorities.

The objectives of the training will include how to work with minority females, how to build a solid, open communication between an employee and boss and also an objective that will help employees explore diversity, inclusion, and culture within Consumers Energy. Objective will include:

- Given the opportunity to examine how diversity and inclusion impact employee engagement, the employee will be able to demonstrate a positive increased attitude towards nondiscrimination of race
- Given tools to increase the employee’s confidence and comfort level, the employee will be able to engage in conversations that help create a more inclusive place to work
- The employee will explore how assumptions and bias can get in the way of people doing their best work and address these with their team
• Given tools to increase communication between a leader and their employee, the employee will be able to engage in a 3-way communication technique

**Strategy**

To have the flexibility of planning and to have a formal strategic planning process, research shows there is an overall positive association (Dibrell, Craig, & Neubaum, 2014, p.2001). Siren and Kohtamaki (2016) explains how strategic planning and learning goes hand in hand. These authors go onto say that having personnel discussions increase the knowledge for the company. The overall strategy to get everyone on board with the trainings will first include getting all of the leadership on board. Meetings will have to be held with detail explanation of why Consumers Energy is going to new lengths to fix the low turnover rate and the fact that the low turnover rate is a mainly minority females. In a diverse society, this needs to be change or at least addressed. There will be an owner of each new training at the executive level. This officer will have a team at the functional level that will take care of the human resource, research and the design of the training within the Training and Development department, finance of putting the trainings on, and also information systems (as needed). Then there will be someone on each team on the operational level. This person will be like a first line supervisor that will work with the employee levels. All team members will be marketing the training and showing a positive attitude towards each one. They will also provide support to all of those who need it.

One area that will need the most support is explaining the objectives and going into details of why each are extremely important to Consumers Energy. What is considered market penetration, development and then the produce (training) development will be a very intensive strategy based on the efforts that will be taken. The objectives that are within the training will drive the company and keep them on track of the overall objective and goal of addressing the
low turnover rate of minority females. “Without long-term objectives, an organization would drift aimlessly toward some unknown end” (David, 2013, p.133). To stay on track with the strategic plan, there will have to be a measurement tool and accountability will be established.

Part of the strategy process will be tracking the process of hitting the objectives and the training implementation. To do this, a balance scorecard will be created and housed in the Training and Development office area. There will be weekly operating reviews with the executive officers and managers to discuss the ongoing process and a owner for each section of the scorecard. These sections will include percentage how many employees have been trained, the evaluation of the training, and the time frame of accomplishing the key objectives of the training.

**Implementation**

Training and Development personnel will be handling the implementation of the three trainings. Implementation will start at the top, with executive officers and high-level management going through all three trainings. After that phase is completed, the managers and all supervisors will go through the three trainings and last all employees under the supervisors will go through the Diversity, Inclusion, and Culture training only. If an employee is promoted to a supervisory role, they will be put through the two other trainings as part of their promotion. Taking these necessary steps in this order is important to create a strategy-supportive culture. With the culture being one of the reasons for minority females leaving, it is crucial that management takes on the responsibility of creating a new and improved culture. To do this, Consumers Energy can continue to communicate with all levels of employees, use positive statements, mentoring, reward systems, and even the training.
As these three levels are going through the new trainings, a balance scorecard will be kept in the Training and Development department to continue communication and to show the success rate on training 100% of the employees. In Cloutier et al. (2015), these authors explain that when employers invest in the employees' training and development, the employee is more likely to stay because they are tools for motivation and it increases the employee's commitment. Investing in employees will pay off for the employer in the long run. Marketing of the training that includes the communication of the process, why employees should participate, and embracing in what is comfortable with the employees will make the implementation smoother.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, Consumers Energy’s primary focus will be, first, creating the mission and vision statements for the three recommendation trainings. To get the executive officers on board to help create these statements, along with other employees, is key to the communication aspect of the upcoming changes. With changes, Consumers Energy may see resistance during the implementation process. Going through an assessment to forecast any internal or external obstacles and addressing them, will help create the strategic plan and then implement. Following the above process, Consumers Energy will be able to go forward to help provide the training needed to employees to help with the minority females leaving the company.
References


