Starting an Employee Team

Employee teams can be instrumental in creating positive changes within an organization by allowing employees who may otherwise never work together the opportunity to collaborate on projects that they are interested in. This guide will provide you with the tools you need to set up and implement a successful employee team within the City of Royal Oak.

Before you embark on creating a new employee team, we encourage you to check that there isn't an existing team already addressing your area of interest. This can be done by visiting www.romi.gov/teams to view a list of current employee teams.

Defining the Value of an Employee Team and Gaining Management Support

Gaining the support of management for your employee team is important to ensure the team has the resources it needs to be successful. As such, we require that employee teams have a department head sponsor. This does not mean that the department head must be on the team, but simply that they acknowledge the value of the team and are willing to provide assistance in getting team projects included in the budget.

Before meeting with a potential sponsor, prepare a strong statement of value that articulates how and why your team will be a benefit to the organization. Your value statement should define why your team is necessary, and should include how you expect the team to interact with management and other departments. Get a clear understanding of how management expects you to handle any budget needs in your first year as it is unlikely your team was accounted for when the city budget was adopted.

Building Your Employee Team

Team Members

Recruit team members from all levels and departments within the city. Look for team members who:

- Can regularly attend meetings.
- Are able to take on project work responsibilities.
- Are knowledgeable about the area of the organization they are representing.
- Can serve as an informational resource for others in the organization.
- Are enthusiastic about the team's mission.
- Represent a variety of positions and departments. For example, do you have members from both leadership and front-line employee roles? Are both full and part-time employees represented?

Set up a way for employees to communicate to you their interest in joining the team. This can be via email, phone, sign-up sheet, or application process. Be conscious of the fact that in some areas of the city not all employees have email, and not all employees have access to the G Drive.

Team Meetings

The Kick-off

A kick-off meeting is a great way to build excitement around your new employee team. Here are some suggestions for agenda items:

- Provide everyone the opportunity to introduce themselves, what department they represent, and explain what their interest is in joining the team or what they hope to get out of participating. It is good to know what skills people have and where their passions lie.
- Develop a mission statement, goals, and action items to help your team stay focused, articulate reasons for having the team, and help in recruiting additional members.
    - A great way to help the group shape these items is through storyboarding. Ask the team to storyboard the question: What actions or projects should this team take on? Let the group know that header cards will be used to help determine team goals, and idea cards will be used to determine specific action items. Dots will be used to determine the priority of projects. If you need a refresher in storyboarding, please feel free to contact Kayla Barber-Perrotta at KaylaB@romi.gov.
    - **Setting a Mission**: Compare the results of your storyboarding process with your original value statement to management to determine your mission statement. Ask the group if their results show any need to adjust that statement, and if so make those adjustments so you have a clear mission statement that can be communicated to other employees.
    - **Setting Goals**: Review your header cards using the dots to help narrow down your goals. Remember that goals are longer term and can have many action items that fall under them.
    - **Determining Action Items**: Review your idea cards using the dots to narrow down action items. Try to consider what can be implemented quickly (within the first two months) to help get your members and others excited about your team. Also consider how great an impact each item will have, and what types of resources would be needed for implementation. We recommend beginning with no more than three action items so as not to spread your team too thin. Additional items can be pulled from the board as others are completed.
    - **Select Champions**: Don't commit your team to projects that no one is willing to do the work for. Once you have narrowed down your top action items ask the

Scheduling Your Kick-off

Selecting a Time: Doodle Poll (www.doodle.com) is a great resource for choosing your initial meeting time. Once you have a list of participants you can plug in several potential meeting times and then have everyone vote on which ones will work for them. Doodle will then recommend a time based on responses.

Choosing a room: A list of meeting rooms and the contact for booking them may be found at www.romi.gov/teams. Be sure that you choose a room large enough for your group, that meets any technology needs for your meeting, and if needed, has a storyboarding station.

group who would like to work on each and who would like to be the contact point. If no one volunteers on an item it should be saved for another time.

- Determine future meeting times and meeting lengths. It is suggested that teams pick a regular meeting time that makes it easy for members to plan ahead. Please visit www.romi.gov/teams to see what schedules other employee teams are using. Once you have selected your time, remind members to work with their department heads to determine what if any conflicts may arise from their meeting attendance and how it will be handled within the department.

Moving Forward

- **Developing and Implementing Action Items:** Keep in mind that it is very hard for large groups to develop a full plan. There can often be a lot of discussion with very few results. Have your smaller action item teams meet between meetings to develop programs or plans, and use full team meetings to finalize them. Alternatively, if it is a large project that needs full team input to know where to start, storyboard the action item with the full group and then have the smaller action item team flesh out the full project.
- **Action Items with a Cost:** Some action items may have an associated cost to implementation. If this is the case, you will need the permission of management to spend city funds. As previously mentioned, in your first year this may be difficult as it is unlikely your team was accounted for when the city budget was adopted. Try to let your department head sponsor know as early as possible what projects may require money to be spent, and how much. This way they can let you know whether resources may be available or whether something needs to wait for the next fiscal year. See the above call-out box for more information on getting your budget needs included in the recommended budget for the next fiscal year.
- **Keeping Minutes:** Employee teams are encouraged to keep minutes for each of their meetings. This will help to keep members informed if they miss a meeting and will help new members to get caught up on current activities. Examples of items minutes may include are:
    - Attendance-Track who was present at each meeting.
    - Call to Order-Track when meetings started.

Budgeting

Since the city has limited funds, each year the city must prepare a budget for approval by the city commission. The fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th, and the budget determines the projects that will receive funding during that period. Departments must turn in their requested budgets in April to be considered in the recommended budget provided to the city commission in June. If you set your goals and objectives for the next fiscal year in January and then use the time before your February meeting to determine a requested budget, you should have time to talk with your department head sponsor about having it included. Be aware that just because something makes it into the recommended budget does not mean that it will be accepted in the final version. Always check that projects were approved before spending funds.

- Budget Report-Provide an update on the team's budget including recent revenue and recent expenditures.
- Action Items- Have team members provide group updates of various projects and solicit feedback where necessary.
- New Business/General Comments- Provide members the opportunity to bring up new topics and ideas, or to share related happenings in the city.
- Adjournment-Track when meetings ended.

Sharing Your Projects

It is important to share your projects with other employees; doing so will help to build their enthusiasm for your initiatives and may even get some people interested in joining the team. Several resources have been created to help teams promote their projects.

Employee Intranet: The Employee Intranet provides several opportunities for reaching employees including:

> **Employee Team Pages**: These are all linked from the intranet page www.romi.gov/teams and offer the opportunity to advertise both your team and its projects. At a minimum, we request that employee team pages include a brief description of the team, the contact information, and the meeting time. To keep a consistent format for these items we ask that you view other team pages before creating your own. To get a page for your team, contact Kayla Barber-Perrotta at KaylaB@romi.gov or Dennis Van de Laar at DennisVdl@romi.gov with the address you would like. Be sure to include two team members who will be responsible for maintaining the page.
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> **Employee Calendar**: An employee events calendar is available on the Employee Intranet and is a great place to post team meetings and upcoming events. To add an event, please contact Kayla Barber-Perrotta at KaylaB@romi.gov or Dennis Van de Laar at DennisVdl@romi.gov.
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> **Employee Banner**: The employee banner is a rotating banner slideshow included on the main intranet page. This is a great area to advertise specific events or projects visually. We ask that teams please email Kayla Barber-Perrotta at KaylaB@romi.gov or Dennis Van de Laar at DennisVdl@romi.gov with a complete banner image and posting dates to be included in the rotation.
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> **Employee News Flash**: The employee news flash is included on the main intranet and can be used to advertise specific events or projects. This module allows a team to write a short informative blurb about the project or event they are undertaking. We ask that teams please email Kayla Barber-Perrotta at KaylaB@romi.gov or Dennis Van de Laar at DennisVdl@romi.gov with a complete blurb and posting dates to be added to the employee news flash.
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> **Employee Blog**: The employee blog is included on the main intranet and can be used to write more in depth about a specific project, event, or initiative. These posts will generally be longer than those included in the news flash, and offer the opportunity for

employees to comment. Additionally, blog posts will remain in the archive indefinitely allowing employees to go back and read them at a later date. We ask that teams please email Kayla Barber-Perrotta at KaylaB@romi.gov or Dennis Van de Laar at DennisVdl@romi.gov with a complete post to be added to the employee blog.

Email: Many, but not all, city employees have access to city emails. Several building oriented email groups have been established by IT to help make it easier to send targeted emails. These can be found by going to the city address book and typing in BLDG.

Posters: Posters can be placed in breakrooms, on message boards, near where people clock in and out, and near commonly used entrances. Just be sure to remove posters for events that have expired. Nothing is worse than stale advertising. You can design them from scratch using Word, Publisher, or Photoshop, or try free design websites like www.fotojet.com which offer templates for you to plug your pictures and text into. If you are looking to use the Royal Oak logo or other branding in your work, be sure to check out the Branding Guidelines located on the shared G Drive.

Got more tips? The Customer Centric Culture Team will periodically host inter-employee team meetings to discuss and exchange ideas. To find out when the next one is scheduled, contact Kayla Barber-Perrotta at KaylaB@romi.gov to see when the next one is scheduled.

This guidebook is courtesy of the Customer Centric Culture Team. Please feel free to contact Kayla Barber-Perrotta at KaylaB@romi.gov with any additional questions.