Driving Force Carrying Company; Process Improvement

Student’s Name

Institutional Affiliation

**Background**

Driving Force Carrying Company has been acclaimed in its industry as a reliable carrier ever since it started out like a freight company. Its delivery of services has been top notch, and customers have had very little or nothing at all to complain about on the manner of services offered by the company. However of late some of the company’s truck drivers like Mason Williams have not been taking the time to customers seriously; making deliveries late and picking up products way after the time they are required to; in addition to that, they have not been honoring traditions to help companies like Dried Goods Limited to load and unpack goods, and this has been a subject of concern. Upon learning that Driving Force Carrying Company has loading and unpacking arrangements with some companies, most of the establishment's customers are looking to get the same treatment from Driving Force i.e. that the drivers of the company help in packing and unpacking with each respective pickup and delivery. The fact that sales force is experiencing a lot of requests from a lot of new companies for the “extra service” (of helping in packing and unpacking) which Driving Force only offers to a few of its longstanding customers, and for the very reason that there are complains that stem from every late pickup and delivery, there is a need for the company to realize process improvement. Process improvement or continuous improvement will help the company to realize more of a Unique Selling Position maintain all the entirety of the existing customer base and attract a whole lot of prospective customers. Driving Force Carrying Company will need to dig into its capital reserves so as to effect process improvement; notwithstanding the short run overheads and costs at large, the company is bound to benefit in the long run (Stokes et. Al., 2017).

**Process Issue**

The main issue of concern in this very scenario is the fact that business has been on a downward spiral, loyal customers have been complaining about the quality of service, and if something is not done to address said complaints, they are bound to move away from the company. Among the most sensitive issues that ought to be addressed with immediate effect is time; delivering on time shows customers that their time is respected and nota took for granted. Second to time is the condition with which the goods are delivered to the clients the moment they are picked up from their respective warehouses. What’s more, Driving Force Carrying Company should be aware that customers are in needs of being offered and are willing to pay for after sales services so long as the whole process is convenient; be it at the standard price customers are used to or even at a premium (Larrucea, O'Connor, Colomo-Palacios & Laporte, 2016).

**Analysis; Current Process**

The current way of doing things is flawed in more ways than one. In fact, it is for this reason that customers have been complaining about the company's mode of operations. Problem analysis regarding the main issues that have been facing the company revolves around timely deliveries, the efficiency with which fragile goods are handled, freight security, and after sales service which involves packing and unpacking. Apart from the processes mentioned above, there are other facets within which the company can realize improvements such as the issue of pricing per mileage (McIvor, 2016). The chart below shows the main processes of Driving Force Carrying Company and the manner in which they can be improved to suit the needs of all the end users.

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| **Facet** | **Current Situation**  | **Description of Process Improvement** |
| Timely delivery  | There are instances when deliveries are late  | In the corporate world time has an equal weighting with money and as such deliveries should never in any way be delayed; the time of customers should be respected.  |
| Pricing  | The current prices are not customer friendly and are uniform with that of competitors | Second mover pricing, as opposed to price leadership, will help the company to appear cheaper, attract more customers and maintain existing ones. |
| After Sales Service  | After sales service offered selectively |  |
| Loading | Dried Goods Limited and two other companies | Loading services should apply to all the customers of Driving Force Carrying Company, being selective is not appropriate and makes some customers feel sidelined. |
| Unpacking | Dried Goods Limited and two other companies | Unpacking services should apply to all the customers of Driving Force Carrying Company. |
| Interstate Availability  | The company has not been very active in some states because of their being far from the company headquarter; locations at the periphery have been at a disadvantage.  | Increase the number of trucks and stations such that customers in any state within America and Mexico where operations are most pronounced are not left behind.  |
| Natural feedback capture points | An absence of a customer feedback framework. | Customers should be accorded an opportunity to say how they want goods and services to be delivered to them. |
| Customer process mapping  | There is a general assumption that all customers require the same methods of service delivery within the industry.  | The needs and wants of customers are not the same and they ought to be given different attention.  |
| Innovation Endeavors | It is rare for the company to come up with new ways of doing things; the systems are very basic.  | There is a need to keep up with the times, especially when it comes to technology.  |
| Tracking | No definite provision for tracking | The introduction of tracking devices on all carriers to avoid losses. |

**Needs of the Project Determination**

Process improvement and continuous improvement is a process that is very goal oriented and should be defined by meaningful action; more of planning and limited action does not make it alright. In other words, the management of Driving Force Carrying Company ought to be well aware of the fact that process improvement is something that comes with a lot of pragmatism. For all companies that are involved in the transport industry, particularly in the freight and haulage domain, there is a need for technology and a sufficiency of funds.

Secondly, apart from money and technology, information is also paramount. Information can best be realized from a market research and development approach. Market research will help Driving Force Carrying Company to get to know key trends in the industry and turn get involved in the development of product lines that awe customers. The needs of the project will revolve around a hefty initial capital outlay whose payback period will have to be determined before the project is started. The main business needs are shown in the chart below.

The table below is a depiction of the Key Performance Indicators of Driving Force Carrying Company; a show of what can be done to monitor the project progress.

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| **No.**  | **Key Performance Indicator**  |
| 1 | Mishap free freight transportation |
| 2 | Efficient warehousing and distribution |
| 3 | Customs, security, and insurance |
| 4 | The level of technology integration in processes |
| 5 | Provision of visibility to the company processes in need of attention |
| 6 | Level of engaging operational teams in the review of day-to-day process metrics |
| 7 | Temperature control logistics |
| 8  | Green logistics solutions such as the emission of less carbon during transportation |
| 9 | Lead logistics provision  |
| 10  | Constant knowledge on industry sector solutions |

The process improvement project of Driving Force Carrying Company needs to define quality and be aware of what it means so that it can be achieved. A Total Quality Management culture can come in very handy the moment it is adhered to religiously by the management and the employees. As such, the company ought, to begin with its service expectations, its business goals and objectives, and all the regulatory requirements; this will place performance measurement at the center of the process improvement plan (Keller, Stulberg, Lawrence, & Delaney, 2014).

What the listed out performance measurements do is offer the management of Driving Force Carrying Company all the necessary information and tools required to decipher each element of its performance as an organization. As part and parcel of the company management review process, there will be a need to look at dashboards and score cards. Besides, performance discussions ought to be provoked, and attention will now and then be drawn towards the defects. All this will be done on the need of identifying initiatives for performance improvement. It is worth mentioning that business goals of Driving Force Carrying Company revolve around profit making (Gijo & Scaria, 2014).

What the stakeholders of the new process improvement project and the company require is absolute transparency on the nature of the business operations and a fair return on investment now and then. With transparency and enough information, shareholders (investors) are bound to work in a much better way (Rosemann & vom Brocke, 2015).

**Project Team Selection**

The machinations of process improvement require a lot of calculation, measurement, forecast, and commitment. As such, the company should select the right people for the job. Since Driving Force Carrying Company has a lot of departments, a cross-functional team would best suit it. In the company's cross-functional process improvement team there will be groups of people from all the company departments, with differentiated functional expertise working in the direction of a common goal. It may include individuals from the company's marketing, operations, human resources, and finance departments. Typically such an arrangement will include workers from all levels of a firm. Other team selection methods such as the conduction of interviews, checking references, predictive index system, and occupational personality questionnaire will not be appropriate as it may lock out individuals with important ideas. The main reasons as to why a cross-functional team would be the best option for the establishment is because it will help broaden the range of skills within the company; will in more ways than one help in the building of team spirit; and will be one of the best examples in the company since it will build upon the relationships and skills employees and managers ought to be creating on a daily basis. In addition to that, it is quite noteworthy that cross functionality will empower the entirety of the workforce; it offers a great venue for the manner of understanding that makes departments and teams more efficient and effective (Evans & Lindsay, 2014). What’s more, it offers associates the opportunity to be part and parcel of a shining example that cooperation in cross departments can thrive and generate brand new ideas.

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| **Team Charter** |
| **Name of Team** | Driving Force Carrying Company Task Force |
| **Mission, Goals, and Objectives**  | Performance improvement, profit making, customer retaining |
| **Skills Pursued**  | Finance, operational, human resource, project management |
| **Roles**  | Leader: Quinton McCleod Chairperson: Bespoke Hughes Facilitator: Bart Cleaveland Scribe/Secretary: Mary ScottsCommunications Coordinator: Donald Ichigawa Resource person/Technical support: Maribel Editor: Erasmus |
| **Ground Rules**  | Time efficiency,  |
| **Conflict Resolution Mechanisms** | Round table discussions, arbitration  |
| **Preliminary Project Plan** | Minimization of Wastes, maximizing output |
| **Performance criteria** | Total Quality Management |
| **Signatures** |  |

**Summary**

There is a need for the company to use focused customer processes in its freight business so as to maintain its current following and also to attract brand new customers. End users are the primary arbiters that will either make a business like Driving Force Carrying Company to succeed or to fail. The absence of an approach to make sure that their wants and needs are considered will make their voice not to be heard; as a result, the perspective of customers fades away in the midst of the clamor of the activity in the corporation. In essence, whenever customers are ignored, there is always a chance that a competitor will come along and pay attention to each detail. For the company, to start on a new slate would mean that Total Quality Management and process improvement should be adhered to on a day in day out basis.

**References**

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