

Background

A global café chain having an extensive retail network of over 800 outlets across India and other key cities across the globe was seeking aggressive growth. The growth however had its own share of challenges, one among them being the quality of managers.

Point of initiation

NIS Sparta's solutioning team met the HR and management team of the company and identified their initial concerns. The concerns revolved primarily around two roles – the Café Manager (who was responsible for the day to day operations of the Café and ensuring profitability of the Café to the organisation) and the Area Manager – who would manage 4 to 6 cafes in an area. The Area Managers report to the City Managers who report to Territory Managers. Territory Managers look after a designated region.

Identifying and Validating Concerns

The initial concern expressed by the Management was that the Café Managers had come up the ranks and while they had received regular training in terms of products and processes, they were inadequately trained to develop their managerial capabilities, especially in the behavioural areas. They were also concerned that the café was unable to retain customers consistently. Service standards in the café were a matter of concern.

After having understood the situation, the NIS solutioning team proposed the following actions:

1. Conduct a CVS that would validate the concerns expressed by the management.
2. Recommend training solutions to the company.
3. On receiving approval on the solution, create content and handouts for delivery.
4. Create an annual planner (that would give the Café Manager an idea of his daily responsibility and special days to consider) that should be handed over to the participants during the program.

NIS Sparta conducted a Concern Validation Study, which included discussions with the member top management of the company and closed group discussions with the audience themselves and their supervisors. The CVS also included field visits at to key outlets in cities such as Bangalore and Delhi to assess first-hand the competencies and performance parameters of the audience. Based on the CVS conducted, a presentation was made to the company's management on the trainable and non-trainable concern areas that were uncovered. The management and stakeholders agreed on the trainable areas and gave NIS Sparta the go-ahead to prepare content and requested for a presentation during which the content would be validated. After the content was validated by the HR Team, the first pilot was conducted.

The HR and training teams found niggling issues with the first implementation; for example, the pilot module did not use company terminology.

NIS Sparta's solutioning team presented the second version of the pilot module. In the new pilot, NIS Sparta incorporated changes keeping the feedback from the first intervention in mind. It was also decided to assign the trainer who had conducted the CVS to conduct the training. This way the program content and delivery were consistent with the findings of the CVS and addressed the concerns effectively. Overall, having learnt from the experience of the first pilot, the program was customised to suit specific requirements of the company besides the two-day intervention being interactive and engaging. The program covered the following key outcomes:

- Understanding the importance of your (the participant's) role in ensuring customer delight
- Developing better management and leadership skills
- Communicating assertively

- Developing a positive attitude
- Identifying steps to improve each guest's experience at the Cafe
- Identifying different types of customers and their needs
- Handling different types of customers
- Handling complaints

Delivering the Solution

The company team was satisfied enough by now to agree for a nationwide roll-out of the programs and provided inputs to the NIS team wherever required.

NIS Sparta, on the other hand, left no stone uncovered. A telephonic boot camp was arranged during the entire experience of the company was informed to the trainers for subsequent programs. Expectations of the client, CVS findings, recommendations, content and delivery mechanisms discussed. Trainers were also asked to visit café's and observe the operations for themselves. Subsequently, the programmes were rolled-out at various locations across the country.

Results: What has been achieved so far

NIS Sparta has conducted 25 batches (excluding the pilots) and trained over 400 participants. Every program has been successful and consistently repeated the impact promised by NIS Sparta.