

Summary of The Case

The case addresses a change initiative proposed by a contract food service provider for a higher education institution. The food-service company has multiple stakeholders they have to service: the higher education institution, which is interested in controlling costs and providing food options for students; the students are interested in food options that offer variety, are innovative, and provide healthy choices. Finally, the foodservice organization has to pay attention to their associates since they have direct contact with the guests and have the ultimate responsibility to provide excellent service.

Foodservice companies face many challenges such as controlling costs, increased competition, changing needs, and food trends. However, this case addresses specific issues related to customer feedback regarding food menu choices. Any issues that have been uncovered must or should be addressed to keep the guests satisfied. There is a sense of urgency for the company to address any issues as management is interested in addressing issues to keep their contract with the university.

The company completed a yearly survey in which the institution's students, staff, faculty, and the food service provider associates were asked to provide feedback on the food, service, and menu options. Several themes emerged from the results, but most were focused on the food. The results revealed that participants were not happy with the food options and the quality of the food. Specifically, participants stated they wanted healthier menu options, more interesting food, and trendier food. In addition, current items were described as 'old' and 'plain'.

The authors propose the creation of a Dining Innovations Team (DIT) to spearhead the change initiative of creating new and exciting menu items that cater to clientele needs. It was determined that stakeholders including staff from the institution, students, and integral staff from the foodservice company must be included in the team. Parties from all these areas are needed to obtain a full perspective of the changes needed, the needs of the customer, and the execution of the initiative.

Teaching objective

This case highlights change management theories and models to guide students through the change process. The case aims to let students explore a change initiative, identify problem areas, initiate change, organize a team, identify resources needed to implement change, and evaluate the change implementation. Students should think critically, be creative and implement managerial skills being developed in the classroom. Change is inevitable and students will face it throughout their hospitality careers, as educators we must provide a tool kit for them to understand, initiate and implement change.

Target audience

The case is aimed at undergraduate and graduate-level hospitality students. This case will be beneficial to hospitality students and other students with concentration areas such as restaurant/food service management, hotel management, event management, tourism and recreation management, senior living, and any other area in the hospitality field. This case intends to provide students a real-world scenario to develop their understanding of change initiatives and steps to execute a plan to implement change in an organization.

Undergraduate instructors may adopt this case to highlight managerial decision-making in a strategy course or capstone course. These courses are aimed to develop the student's managerial skills and change management is an essential skill for career success. In addition, themes discussed in this case are varied thus providing undergraduate students with exposure to other aspects impacting the business such as the importance of customer feedback, change triggers, managerial decision-making, and team development. Required readings are aimed at providing undergraduate and graduate students with theories and models to build their knowledge of change management and help start building their management tool kit. Suggested readings are aimed at graduate-level courses since they will provide different applications and perspectives of change management theories and models.

Teaching approach and strategy

In-class discussion

The students will be assigned the case and other required readings at least one week before class discussion. The students will be required to submit the answers to the discussion questions outlined at the end of the case. Requiring the student to submit the answers to the discussion questions before class will ensure that students have read and are prepared for class discussion. Students should come to the discussion day fully prepared to be active participants in the discussion. This case is designed to be used in a 75-minute class.

Students will be asked to gather in groups of no more than 3-4, one student will be assigned to be the spokesperson for the group. In the first 15 minutes of class, the instructor will provide students time to review their notes and then have the class provide a summary of the case. Students will discuss the facts of the case, and discuss any other issues or questions that may have come up while reading the case.
Next, the instructor will use the discussion topics outlined at the end of the teaching notes to start a conversation on the main topics of the case. In this stage, an in-depth discussion of the models and their differences will be integral to having a successful discussion session. The discussion must lead to a deeper understanding of the theories and models used in the case and the nuances of each model. If conflicting ideas are shared by students, this is an opportunity to address and encourage discussion on different points of view. The instructor should allocate 30 minutes for this portion of the exercise.

The instructor will use the remaining 30 minutes of class to have all the groups answer the discussion questions, sharing their answers and ideas with the class. Opposing views and opinions should be encouraged, as they will provide for richer discussions. If differing ideas or answers arise from the discussion, the instructor should take this opportunity to act as a facilitator in the discussion. Students should be allowed the time and space to elaborate and clarify their ideas and different points of view. The instructor should strive for all discussions to take a managerial perspective. In addition, it would be beneficial for discussions to address and acknowledge the consequences of ignoring customer feedback and the ramifications to the different parties involved.

At the end of the discussion, the students should have a better understanding of change management and situations that may trigger a change in an organization. Specifically, students will have gained an understanding of change management models to follow when facing a change initiative, identify and allocate resources, identify key team members, how to implement, monitor, and evaluate a change initiative.

**Discussion topics**
1. Discuss Kotter’s (2012) change management model
2. Discuss the ADKAR Model (Hiatt, 2006)
3. Discuss the difference between the change management model (Kotter, 2012) and ADKAR (Hiatt, 2006)

**Discussion questions**
1. What are some of the factors that can trigger a change in an organization?
2. What prompted the change in this case?
3. What are some resources needed to implement change? Can you think of any other resources not mentioned in the case?
4. What are the steps in the change management process according to Kotter?
5. What are the key characteristics for successful change implementation according to the ADKAR Model?
6. What are some of the ways to evaluate the success of the proposed change?

**Assigned Readings**

**Suggested Readings**