gothamCulture®

HELPING NAVIGATE CHANGE®

CULTURE TRANSFORMATION

OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

About gothamCulture

gothamCulture is a management consulting firm that draws on our associate's comprehensive expertise and experience in the areas of culture, leadership, and people strategy to provide innovative solutions and client-service excellence. Our work is guided by our deeply held shared values, including a commitment to each other and our clients, unwavering integrity, the pursuit of excellence, relatable expertise, and authentic community.

For more information, visit **www.gothamCulture.com.**

Removing Cultural and Operational Barriers in a Large, Federal Agency

gothamCulture (gC) and partner GovStrive provided robust operational and culture assessments services for a 1,600 employee Business Center within a division of a 25,000 employee federal agency. The operational and culture assessment identified key areas for improving the processes, technologies, customer experience, and culture to enable the organization to deliver on its mission-driven strategic priorities.

Introduction

A division of a large, federal agency created a new "one-stop" shop business concept, through which internal agency customers obtain mission support services across business functions, including human resources, information solutions, finance, real estate, contracting and acquisitions, and homeland security. In just its third-year in operations, the Business Center had already experienced significant operational changes from the original business case agency. Leadership wanted to ensure that these changes were not inhibiting the organization's ability to realize the cost savings, efficiencies, and improved customer experience that were the original drivers for standing up the business center. gC was contracted to conduct a series of organizational assessments to serve as a diagnostic tool to help the division obtain performance data, identify factors that advance or impede service delivery, and develop strategic and tactical plans to achieve operational excellence.

The Need

The division is designed to standardize processes, enhance customer experience, improve mission support delivery, and enable agency staff to focus on service and program delivery. The division's 15 service teams support employees and customers within the Business Center and across three other mission area agencies– in implementing programs designed to provide benefits and to mitigate risks to program delivery.

Through the operational assessment initiative, the division leadership sought to evaluate operational effectiveness as it relates to its mission assignments and stakeholder expectations; and to define strategic and operational goals to drive continuous service delivery improvements.

The Intervention

To support continuous improvement, the Business Center partnered with gC to conduct a series of integrated assessments to understand the areas of strength and opportunities for improvement across the Business Center service areas. The assessment included a review of multiple factors to assess the following:

- **Effectiveness:** Is the Business Center accomplishing established goals and objectives?

- **Efficiency:** Are the Business Center's activities reflective of an integrated planning and budget effort?

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Is there a return-on-investment when comparing the Business Center's benefits and outcomes against the cost of producing them?

- **Cause and Effect:** Is there a discernible and direct link to outcomes of the Business Center operations, as opposed to other contributing factors?

- **Impact:** How do Business Center services and activities impact employee experience and the organizational culture?

gC collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data covering all aspects of Business Center operations and culture to identify key factors enabling the Business Center to achieve its objectives as well as high priority barriers that were impeding the organization's efforts to achieve the standardization, improved customer experience, and cost savings that were the central to the shift to the business center model.

Specifically, gC conducted four independent assessments and combined the insights to form a set of priority areas of focus for the organization to remove cultural and operational barriers:

1) Current and Historical Performance Assessment
The gC team collaborated with Business Center personnel to collect current and archival data on how the organization was performing against established key performance indicators. Additionally gC reviewed staffing levels, quarterly turnover metrics by business unit and job type, and budget and financial performance. Along with the review of existing data, gC conducted interviews with each of the 15 business unit leaders to gather their insight on areas of strength, opportunities for improvement, and barriers to success for their individual business unit and for the organization as a whole.

2) Employee Engagement Data Deep Dive Assessment
Each year federal government employees are invited to provide insights on employee engagement through the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). To understand the key drivers of employee engagement, how those drivers are reflective of underlying cultural norms, and how employee engagement may be impacting business results. gC analyzed the Business Center's data from the 2020 FEVS to explore employee's perceptions of key drivers of employee engagement and job satisfaction.

3) Organizational Culture Assessment
Using the Mosaic Organizational Culture survey, gC gathered feedback to gauge the alignment of Business Center staff on key areas of culture that are empirically linked to driving performance in organizations. Sustainable organizational performance is dependent on a multitude of factors that form a mosaic. Each must be carefully managed, balanced, and adapted to best meet the

The Intervention cont.

challenges presented both in the external environment and the internal context. The Culture Mosaic survey gathered feedback from approximately 30% of the business center's 1,600 employees to identify areas where underlying norms and expectations were not well aligned with the stated objectives and key performance priorities of the organization. Additionally, this assessment included the Culture Mosaic's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) sub-scale which collected feedback on how well the business center was doing in creating an inclusive environment that leverages the diversity of its employees to contribute to achieving mission objectives.

4) Customer Experience Assessment

To gather direct feedback from the Business Center's internal agency customers, gC created a customized Customer Experience (CX) survey. The survey was distributed to all 25,000 agency employees requesting feedback on the Business Center overall and for each division the respondent had worked with in the prior 6 months. The survey evaluated the following:

- Overall customer experience
- Timeliness in response of service
- Quality of interactions
- Ability to find the information needed
- Knowledge of Business Center staff
- Ability of the Business Center Division to successfully resolve an issue
- Sense of feeling to be "a valued customer"

Data Analysis

Leveraging data collected through the four assessment efforts, gC identified areas for potential improvement by triangulating qualitative and quantitative insights organized around our Mosaic Performance Framework. The Mosaic Performance Framework is based on our belief that individuals, teams, and organizations must continuously and effectively manage a wide variety of competing tensions and dynamics in order to perform. These dynamic tensions require organizations to place value in different things over time in order to be most effective in responding to and adapting to changes in their environment. This thinking stems from the Competing Values Framework[1] which suggests that high-performance is driven by the ability to effectively manage key aspects of performance that, oftentimes, are at odds with each other. For example, sustainable performance requires the ability to align resources around a clear and compelling path forward (vision, mission, strategy, etc.) while at the same time, ensuring that members of the organizations are equipped to deliver. The four Mosaic factors - Adapt, Inspire, Enable, and Deliver - gather insights on how well the organization's current focus and expectations are aligned to deliver the mission results the organization desires. The Mosaic provides a structured framework for categorizing elements of individual, team, and organizational activity and performance to enable gC to collate and organize data from multiple sources to draw insights on areas for improvement.

gC began the analysis process by examining the Business Center level Culture Mosaic data as an initial lens identifying areas of potential concern. gC then reviewed the other data sources to validate if the risk area identified was also highlighted by the results of the remaining assessments. gC created an initial set of hypotheses to describe the observations of the operational and cultural phenomenon we observed in the Business Center and outlined the potential risks created for business center performance based on these observations.

The Intervention cont.

Insights & Recommendations

After analyzing and further refining key themes and impact areas identified in our initial analysis, gC developed a series of recommendations to address the key opportunities for improvement. These recommendations provided actionable areas for the Business Center to make targeted improvements in the operations and culture of the organization. gC identified the key to improving the culture and employee experience of the Business Center was engaging in inclusive and intentional change processes as the organization worked to implement our priority recommendations.

The priority action areas identified were:

Priority Area	Actions Identified	Potential Impact
Build a Shared Vision for the Business Center	• Clarify the core value proposition of the Business Center and the division's commitment to the Business Center as a fourth Mission Area Agency (MAA) • Articulate the value the Business Center creates and how that translates to improved mission outcomes	• Align incentives for improved partnership between the Business Center & Mission Area Agencies • Clarify authorities and accountabilities for executing Business Center services
Strengthen the Customer Experience Capability	• Identify CX future state capabilities required for the customer experience team to become a key enabling capability of the mission • Define the tools, process, and staffing needed to provide CX expertise to drive a leading customer experience for internal and external customers	• Consistent, high quality CX through uniform processes & tools for customer relationship management • Higher quality, more effective customer experience for internal and external customers
Shared Services Organization Optimization	• Clarify the types of services the Business Center offers (shared services versus business services) • Establish Operational Agreements with MAAs based on the type of service provided	• Improved collaboration between the Business Center and MAAs focused on delivering the division's outcomes • Clear expectations and accountabilities for the Business Center and MAAs support continuous improvement of service delivery
Optimize Current Business Center Performance	• Clarify how performance metrics are being used to drive Division level and Business Center decisions • Refine and refocus performance metrics on indicators with clear connections to strategic priorities and/or high impact processes & services • Integrate measures of organizational health into Executive level reporting to elevate the importance of people and culture to the Business Center and the division	• Improve the quality and usefulness of performance measurement & reporting • Reduce the burden of measurement & reporting by focusing only on metrics useful in making key business decisions • Maintain insight on actionable elements of the employee experience to improve job satisfaction and employee engagement which are key drivers of delivering quality customer experience

The Impact

gC's assessment effort provided the Business Center with their first ever comprehensive evaluation of how organizational culture and business administration and operations were aiding or inhibiting the organization's efforts to achieve their performance objectives. gC provided the Business Center with detailed improvement plans that will enable the organization to make immediate changes to better align behavioral norms and expectations to drive execution of core business processes that will improve customer experience and organizational performance. Through our assessment process gC was able to complete a comprehensive look at the cultural and operational factors impacting performance in 120 days, rapidly providing the business center with implementation ready steps to drive near term improvement.

The Future

At the conclusion of the engagement, gC transitioned the improvement plans to accountable individuals within the Business Center for implementation. Because the process for designing the action plans was collaborative, leveraging gC's expertise and the deep understanding of how the Business Center operates that is resident in its key leaders and individual contributors, gC provided the organization with a road map for successful change to be introduced in the next four to six months following the engagement.

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[1] Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (2005). Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.