

InReach: An Analytical Dive into Normative Commitment

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MGMT 3140

April 24th, 2019

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History of InReach

InReach is a non-profit organization that provides housing, jobs, and community support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in, and around, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. In the mid 1970s, four families in the Charlotte area, all of whom had grown adult children with disabilities who were searching for some type of independent lifestyle. Initially, the company started out as Charlotte Rehabilitation Homes in 1974, and has changed its name three more times before settling on InReach in 2010. Since then, InReach has grown to acquire fifteen group homes, provides job placement services and have a daycare center for adults with disabilities. InReach is accredited by CQL (The Council on Quality and Leadership) for their “commitment to quality services and improvement of personal quality of life” for all those that they care for. The staff is comprised of 600 full and part-time employees, along with contractors and volunteers contributing to operations. The majority of the staff are called direct support professionals and work directly with individuals with disabilities (“InReach” 2019).

Organizational Problem

The problem that InReach is facing, in regard to the twelve instructors we surveyed, is the fact that there is not much opportunity to grow or advance within the company. The current structure for day support staff does not provide much potential to advance or grow to a managerial role down the road. The current day staff employee structure of the company provides limited managerial positions with only two direct supervisors for the day staff employees. These two supervisor roles require a traditional four year bachelor's degree in

some form of social work and also prior experience dealing with individuals suffering from mental developmental disabilities. This structure affects the employees mindset towards the company through complaints about limited growth due to lack of opportunity to fully interact with the direct superiors. InReach currently invests considerable time and money to hire and train staff members up front, so it is essential to retain them once they are on-board and working in the field. Based on this, our goal is to help InReach by determining what strategies can be put in place to retain Direct Support Professionals and to encourage and motivate them to progress into independent managerial roles.

Organizational Behavior Analysis

After communicating with InReach, Group Five concluded that InReach is having an organizational commitment problem. To best measure this, Group Five tested the overall loyalty of the employees by way of normative commitment. We also concluded that job satisfaction and transformational leadership may also be indicators as to why employees are leaving the organization. Group Five will test normative commitment quantitatively, and test job satisfaction and transformational leadership qualitatively.

The first measure that Group Five will test is normative commitment. Normative commitment is the desire to stay with an organization due to a feeling of obligation (*Performance and commitment*, n.d.). We chose this to gauge the loyalty of the employees at InReach. The data from this section will indicate how loyal InReach's employee base is. Each employee that InReach hires is a huge investment for them, because they offer each employee training and certification. Since InReach already invests a lot into their employees, it is normal for them to feel obligated to stay with InReach. With this in mind, Group Five would

like to determine whether loyalty from obligation is a key factor in employees staying with the organization. Depending on the results of the quantitative data, Group Five can make recommendations to either continue investing in employees to increase normative commitment or engage in actions that increase other types of commitment, such as affective commitment (in which employees stay with an organization due to emotional attachments) or continuance commitment (in which employees stay with an organization because they have no other choice) .

The second measure that Group Five will test is transformational leadership. This will be tested through the qualitative section. Transformational Leadership is a leadership that “motivates people to transcend their personal interests for the good of the group” (Bateman & Snell, 2008). These leaders influence people to go beyond their perceived goals to help the entire organization. This is done by motivating enthusiasm and innovation in others. Transformational leaders tend to be charming, give personalized attention, provide mental stimulation for their subordinates, build trust, and have a positive self-regard (Bateman & Snell, 2008). Group Five chose this as one of the qualitative criteria because transformational leaders are able to influence employees to better themselves for the sake of the organization. Testing this will gauge whether InReach has a presence, or a lack thereof, of transformational leaders. If they lack this, we can make recommendations on how InReach can develop transformational leaders.

The third measure that Group Five will test qualitatively is job satisfaction. According to Colquitt, “job satisfaction is defined as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (*Job Satisfaction*, n.d.). Job satisfaction has a

positive correlation with organizational commitment, so pinpointing whether or not InReach employees are satisfied with their job is one of Group Five's objectives. After we test the overall job satisfaction, Group Five can pinpoint what is causing low or high job satisfaction based on The Value-Percept Theory of Job Satisfaction. This theory states that job satisfaction is the result of how a person perceives their job fulfills the things that he/she values.

According to this theory, these values include pay satisfaction, promotion satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, coworker satisfaction, and satisfaction with the work itself (*Job satisfaction*, n.d.).

Pay satisfaction is the degree to which a person perceives their pay, reflecting on how much they deserve, and if their pay is enough to afford essential and luxury items. It should be noted that pay satisfaction has the lowest correlation to overall job satisfaction. Next is promotion satisfaction, which is the degree to which employees perceive "that promotions are frequent, fair, based on ability." Supervision satisfaction is the degree to which employees perceive their boss as intelligent, friendly, and a good communicator. In addition, coworker satisfaction is whether the employees have positive feelings regarding their coworkers. The last value is satisfaction with the work itself, which is whether employees enjoy their daily job tasks. This value has the strongest correlation to overall job satisfaction. By pinpointing which of these five values is causing InReach to lose employees, Group Five can make recommendations on how to solve this problem (*Job satisfaction*, n.d.).

These three measures work interdependently. Job satisfaction and transformational leadership directly influence the normative commitment that employees feel. If employees have low job satisfaction, they will be less loyal to their organization (*Job satisfaction*, n.d.).

This is similar for transformational leadership. If there is an issue in the leadership of the organization, employees will be less likely to be loyal to that organization. This can be best viewed in our research model located in the appendices.

Survey Data - Quantitative

The quantitative survey was administered online through Qualtrics and was completed by twelve participants. The quantitative questions from our survey were taken directly from a previously established and credited survey on normative commitment by J.P. Meyer and N.J. Allen. The participants were asked to rate their agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 through 7: with 1 being “strongly disagree,” 2 being “disagree,” 3 being “somewhat disagree,” 4 being “neither agree nor disagree,” 5 being “somewhat agree,” 6 being “agree,” and 7 being “strongly agree.” There were three questions phrased in negative connotations in the quantitative survey (marked with an (R) in survey questions model), so the data from these questions will be reversed scored to display an accurate assessment.

The data from the quantitative section is displayed in the quantitative model. The average for each question ranged from 3 to 7. The lowest average score was for question nine which asked if the participants would experience personal guilt if they left InReach. The average for this question is 3.67, which indicated they somewhat disagreed. The overall average of the quantitative survey is 4.93 and standard deviation is 0.71. Since the standard deviation is less than one, this means that was a low variation in the responses given. So this data is a good indicator on how this particular group feels about these normative commitment questions. In addition, an overall average of 4.93 falls between 4 and 5 on our agreement

scale. This can be interpreted that the employees who took this survey leaned towards being loyal, however they feel no obligation to stay loyal to InReach.

Survey Data - Qualitative

The qualitative section was administered online through Qualtrics and was completed by ten participants. The five qualitative questions were created to focus on specific problems that relates to job satisfaction and transformational leadership. Question one focused on the career development and promotion opportunities, which is a subgroup of job satisfaction. The second question also pinpointed job satisfaction by asking employees about the satisfaction they receive from their work. Question three and four pinpointed both job satisfaction and transformational leadership by making the employees elaborate on the satisfaction with their supervisor and how it can be improved. The last question asked if there was anything that can be improved in InReach, which would satiate any missed opportunities of recommendation.

Themes

For the first question regarding InReach's contribution to career development, most of the 12 employees interviewed felt that InReach provided adequate opportunities through workshops and encouragement of making an impact within their community. These responses are grouped under the theme of *Learning Opportunities*. Another theme was *Career Advancement and Salary*, to which one individual responded that he wished to move up the ladder within the company and get compensated appropriately; indicating that he wants to work for the company for a decent amount of time. The third theme was *Organizational Support* and the responses were positive in terms of how InReach cares and assists their employees through specialized

training for CNA positions and being thoughtful of their employees when they are going through a rough time.

The 2nd question inquired about how InReach affects the everyday life of the employees and how it has affected their outlook on life. There were five apparent themes, the first being *Passion*; one individual looked forward going to work and enjoyed the work thoroughly. The second theme, *Coping and Interactive Skills*, portrays how InReach is supportive, and makes it easier to work for the company. In addition, InReach also taught the individual on approaching problems, how to assess the situation, and to implement the best possible solution to resolve the issue. The third theme is *Sense of Purpose*; three individuals responded by stating that by working for InReach, they feel driven and accomplished in life by helping those with mental disabilities. These employees felt a sense of compassion from their peers, and felt that they should show that same compassion towards their coworkers and clients. Also, one interviewee commented on how effective the team that they worked in was due to the friendly atmosphere at work, and how that carried over to their customers. Another individual commented on how InReach changed them as a person in various, positive ways which has made them stay with the company for 26 years. The last theme is *Job Skills*; the responses under this category were mixed with one being neutral and one being negative. The neutral response stated that it helps the employee to think about more career options after acquiring job skills by working for InReach. The negative response stated that the job skills obtained at work do not enrich their professionalism and only focus on telling their employees what can and cannot be done.

The third question asked the survey group how to describe the relationship between themselves and their direct supervisor, which had mixed responses. The general theme is *Good*

Relationship, which essentially represents the viewpoint of the majority of responses; the supervisor is friendly and accommodating. A random theme, *Time*, was created to categorize two responses that expressed how their supervisor was new to the job, and that time is a factor to see how well the chemistry between supervisor and the supervised is. The final theme for this question is *Trust and Communication*; one employee is dissatisfied and has issues trusting their supervisor, however, the reason as to why they felt this way was not given. The other response regarding communication stated how deaf people should be accommodated better by having an ASL interpreter or a part/full-time supervisor who is well trained to improve communication between employees and supervisor.

The fourth question inquired about how frequent feedback was and how the process could be improved, if necessary. There were three overall categories; *Frequent Feedback (Good)*, *Consistent Feedback (General)*, and *Self-Seeking Feedback*. The first theme, *Frequent Feedback* has good in parenthesis due to the fact that most of the responses regarding frequent feedback were positive. A few of the responses stated that they get daily feedback and often welcome said feedback, because to them this feedback presents an opportunity to improve the quality and understanding of the impact of their work. The *Consistent Feedback* theme is similar to the previously mentioned theme, however, the responses under this theme were neutral. Some of the instructors answered that the feedback received was more so due to the fact that a lot of changes were occurring in the workplace. The other responses just simply stated that feedback was given often and as necessary. The *Self-Seeking Feedback*, consisted of the employees who went to get feedback on their own accord, without the supervisor providing it. One instructor mentioned that improvement could occur if the supervisor would encourage and provide advocacy for

interactions with customers. This could be possible if the supervisor has been working with the instructor for a long time and has previously helped them before.

The fifth question asked about how the interviewees felt about the overall experience working with InReach, and if there was anything they could change, what exactly would that be. Five different themes were created to categorize the answers, *Good Experience (Care & Opportunity)*, *Challenging (Good)*, *Challenging (Critical)*, *Good Experience (Advancement & Salary)*, *Good Experience (Employee Treatment)*. The first one, *Good Experience (Care & Opportunity)*, consists of the responses that stated that the overall experience working with InReach is positive. In addition, they stated that they enjoy being a part of the company due to how the company shows that they care for its employees, and wants them to succeed by offering them various opportunities to learn and grow. One of the responses stated that the work is challenging but in a good way as it provides stimulation and engagement. Another response also stated that the work is challenging, but in a negative manner, as they are deaf and InReach has limited staff that know American Sign Language that can communicate with employees and clients who are deaf. The individual also suggested that similar managerial positions be created for deaf employees. Two of the responses stated that they have had, and continue to have, a good experience, however they would like to change their position within the company or get better compensation for the work that they currently do. Another two interviewees answered that they have a good experience working for InReach, however, the way the company treats their employees should be improved. One of the responses stated that while in the beginning everything was running smoothly, but over time, the individual's team did not receive the

validation and recognition for the hard work that they had done. Overall, these were the prominent themes Group Five noticed while analyzing the results of the qualitative questions

Our Recommendation

The problems that InReach is facing are able to be corrected with limited investments and, for the most part, only dedicating time from the leadership staff to implement and formulate new focuses within the company. Our recommendations are the following:

1. InReach is a non-profit organization and classified as a 501(c)(3) by the Internal Revenue Service. This opens up a new avenue for the company to reach out to individuals and companies that are willing to do “pro-bono” work for non-profit organizations. By having an outside entity meet with InReach, and give a new perspective, new ideas will be given and motivation will potentially increase exponentially. The leadership staff will gain knowledge and mindsets to create these new visions, so that they can trickle down the ladder.

2. Performance managing the leadership staff and employees that are unwilling to conform to the company vision. Group Five discovered that quite a few people in leadership have been with the company for long periods of time. The loyalty of these individuals is without question, however the willingness to change seems to be an issue. By developing new skills and thought processes that can be implemented, the transformational leadership model will evolve into today’s business needs.

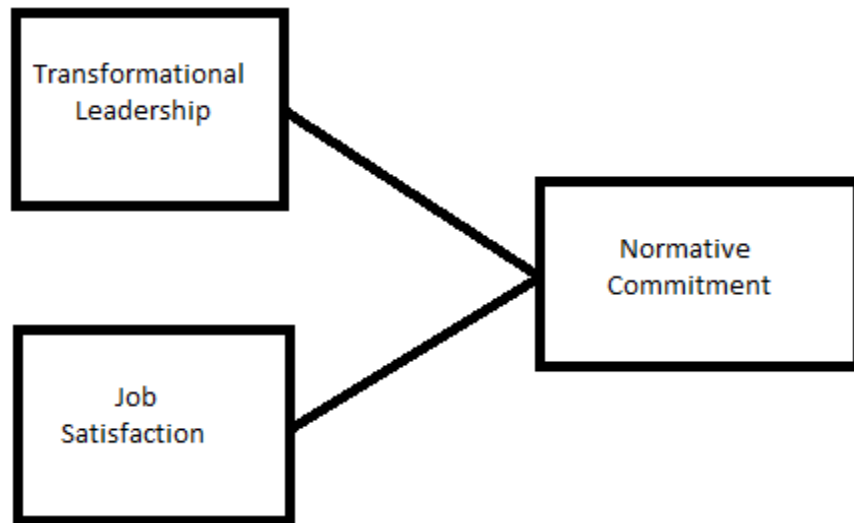
3. Group Five also recommends that the Human Resources officer should create a development plan for promotions, develop a self-help FAQ sheet to outline further educational grants and scholarship opportunities, and create a “Train the Trainer” program. This will allow employees and leaders to become more cohesive and increase job satisfaction.

References

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Appendices

1.) Normative Commitment Survey Model:



2.) Survey questions:

Quantitative Questions

1. I feel that people move from company to company too often.
2. I do not believe that an individual always has to be loyal to the company they work for. (R)
3. Jumping from company to company does not appear unethical to me. (R)
4. A major reason I work for InReach is because I feel loyalty is important, and therefore I have a moral obligation to InReach.

5. If I got a better job opportunity from a different company, I would not accept it for I feel it would not be right to leave InReach.
6. I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization.
7. I believe that people are better off staying with one company for their career rather than working for multiple organizations.
8. I currently feel no obligation to stay with InReach. (R)
9. I would feel personal guilt if I decided to leave InReach now.
10. InReach deserves my loyalty.
11. I would not leave InReach at this time because I feel a personal obligation to the company.
12. I owe a great deal to InReach.

Qualitative Questions

1. How has InReach contributed to your career development? How can InReach provide better opportunities for development?
2. How does InReach affect your everyday life? How has InReach affected your outlook on life in general?
3. What is your relationship like with your supervisor? How could it be improved?
4. How often do you get feedback from your supervisor? How could this process be improved?
5. How do you personally feel about your overall experience working with InReach? If there was one aspect you could change, what would that aspect be?

Qualitative Data Analysis:

[illegible]

