Case Study Analysis on the North Carolina Department of Corrections

**Case Study Analysis**

**The North Carolina Department of Corrections Case Study Analysis**

The North Carolina Department of Corrections strives to be a successfully ran correctional institution. The purpose of this analysis is to improve the rehabilitative capacity of the North Carolina Department of Corrections that will in turn lead to a situation that the recidivism rate among offenders is vastly reduced.

Challenges are inherent in any correctional facility. This analysis will in general terms help to reveal deficiencies in the present operational paradigms and methods of the North Carolina Corrections department, while also providing ways to address and remedy these issues (Jones, Sheitman, Edwards, Carbone, Hazelrigg and Barrick, 2011).

The main challenge for the North Carolina Department of Corrections is the need to increase the effectiveness and the ability to rehabilitate criminal offenders so that they can reenter society better prepared to be productive citizens. The recidivism rate is nearly 50% for offenders in this state that is very costly to the citizens of this state (Etheridge & Peterson, 2009). A reduction in the recidivism rate among offenders is for the purpose of helping protect the public from further crimes existing by individuals who are released as well as saving taxpayers a great deal of money by not acquiring to finance the re-incarceration of these individuals.

**Background**

This case study identifies the key aspects of organizational behavior that affects the operational capacity of the North Carolina Department of Corrections. The purpose of this study will contribute to providing the North Carolina secretary of corrections and the administrative staff with an analysis of the probable reasons for the ineffectiveness within the North Carolina Department of Corrections resulting in the high recidivism rate for offenders.

**Key Issues**

One of the main issues within the North Carolina Department of Corrections is that leaders must always display honest behavior that is easily verified because the correctional leader keeps honest and credible records of his or her actions as well as those on the staff. If the correctional leader is not honest, the rest of the correctional staff may engage in dishonest behavior that could lead to harm and negative policies for the North Carolina Correctional Institution. Correctional leaders must also always engage in ethical behavior themselves and demand their employees do likewise (Pearman, 2012).

Ethics is the primary way that a correctional leader can develop a culture of excellence and justice in the North Carolina Correctional Facility. An unethical leader will lead to criminal and harmful behavior committed by his or her employees against inmates.

Organizational values are established practices and views that influence the ethical and moral actions of an individual. In the case of the North Carolina Department of Corrections, its values are established over time and shared by the people who consider they may be members of it. The values of the North Carolina Department of Corrections relate to its culture and culture dictates the practices, standards, and actions an organization takes as a social agency/entity (Modaff, 2008).

**Issues Related To Correctional Facilities**

Although corrections may become more community-oriented and demand that offenders repay victims more often it will also become more dependent on incarceration for certain crimes where alternative programs have proven not to work. The public and legal officials are indeed tired on the more violent or chronic offenders, evidenced in the changes made to the North Carolina law, structured sentencing. Therefore, corrections may be more dependent on incarceration for these more violent crimes (by chronic offenders) to avoid these chronic offenders getting out via alternative programs and again commit horrendous and violent crimes (as evidenced by crime statistics). However, the reverse seems to be true for non-violent crimes with a steady increase in the use of intermediate and community corrections. For example, as a result of recent changes in sentencing laws, more violent and chronic offenders will be admitted to prison (North Carolina). It has also resulted in lesser crimes resulting in intermediate or community punishments (The National Institute of Corrections, 2012).

**Policies and Practices in Corrections**

The structure of the United States correctional system includes the U.S. federal prisons, military prison, state prisons, country jails, and prisons operated under contract to BOP by private companies or local government. The primary function in corrections is the administration of those sanctions (sentences) handed down by the court against a criminal defendant. These sanctions range from a fine (monetary penalty), to probation, to a suspended sentence, to time in a jail or state prison.

Components of the criminal justice system need to communicate to ensure proper and just adjudication of criminal offenders and to ensure community safety, e.g., when a pedophile is released back into the community. Correction agencies and officers need communicate to the appropriate law enforcement agencies; or when a murdered to being paroled, this needs to be communicated to law enforcement agencies (The National Institute of Corrections, 2012).

**Human Resources Policies and Practices in Corrections**

One of the major human resources policies practiced within the North Carolina Correctional Departments is seeking to attract, hire, retain, correctional staff with very high ethical standards, which includes no prior criminal history when possible. Correctional departments also seek to hire individuals with good psychological health, which are easily ascertained by having applicants to take and pass a psychological examination. Correctional human resources policies and practices also include training new applicants, keeping, and maintaining accurate records of these individuals, and ensuring that the most qualified applicants is placed in the department to which they would do the most good for the organization. Human resources policies and practices within corrections also handle the development and implementation of rules and regulations that are to be followed by all staff within correctional organizations, such as adherence to the sexual harassment policies within the organization for example.

**Hierarchy and Group Structure**

The hierarchy and group structure within the North Carolina correctional organization follows a paramilitary format, to ensure the effective operations of the organization. The hierarchy and group structure will follow the following format from the top down for the majority of correctional institutions:

Correctional Administrator or Warden: Responsible for the operations of a correctional facility.

Assistant Correctional Administrator or Assistant Warden: Responsible for executing the directives of the correctional administrator for the operations of a correctional facility.

Programs Administrator: Responsible for the vocational, recreational, and educational programs that are offered to inmates within the institution.

Human Resources Administrator: Responsible for the recruiting, training, and hiring of correctional and administrative staff within the correctional institution.

Correctional Captains: Responsible for operations of particular departments within a correctional institution, such as the operations department. There are usually at least four captains at a major correctional institution.

Correctional Lieutenants: Correctional lieutenants are responsible for the custody operations within particular units within a correctional institution. There is usually one lieutenant for each correctional unit, which are usually comprised of approximately 192 inmates.

Correctional Sergeants: Correctional sergeants are responsible for executing the directives of correctional lieutenants within correctional units, by the direct supervision of correctional officers within that unit.

Correctional Officers: Correctional officers Are Responsible for the direct supervision of inmates within their particular units (The National Institute of Corrections, 2012).

**Proposed Solutions**

**Work Teams**

Work teams within the North Carolina Department of Corrections are a very important aspect of the correctional operational paradigm. Because the safety and welfare of staff is highly dependent upon their ability to work cohesively; this is especially true within correctional units housing dangerous inmates. Work teams usually comprise of correctional officers who work a particular shift together, and these individuals coordinate the activities with the directives of their correctional Sgt. to provide the custody and security of the inmates within their unit. Work teams also involve an administrative staff broken down into teams of individuals who work together to solve administrative issues. Both kinds of teams require that there be cohesion, respect, good listening skills, and good communication skills, between the members of these teams (Pearman, 2012).

**Communication**

Communication within the North Carolina Department of facility and throughout the correctional operational paradigm is very important. This is due to the fact that the very lives of correctional officers depend upon their ability to communicate their situations, and inmate activities between one another. Most of the communication that takes place within correctional institutions takes place via radio, the to the fact that each correctional officer has a radio by which to communicate with his or her supervisor and other staff simultaneously, that all members of the staff within a particular unit hear the transmissions taking place. Verbal communication also takes place within correctional units, administrative offices, and throughout the correctional institution, which requires that all individuals use good listening skills, courtesy, respect, and good speaking skills in communication with one another (Bradshaw & Steven, 2002).

**Leadership**

Good leadership is an absolute essential within correctional institutions as well as within the overall correctional operational paradigm. This is due to the fact that a correctional institution is only as effective as its leadership, which means that the leadership within correctional institutions must be of the highest caliber because of the importance of these facilities to the safety and well-being of society in general. It is important that the leadership of a correctional institution has a great deal of knowledge of correctional methodologies as well as a great deal of management knowledge and skill (Vander Veen, 2010). The leadership within a correctional facility or institution must also have a proven track record of success in leadership in the past as well as a great deal of experience in correctional operations. Correctional leaders must also have tremendous human relations skills and to treat their staff members with the courtesy and respect that they deserve, so as to gain the allegiance and respect of these individuals. Correctional leaders must also be very proactive in taking advantage of opportunities that can help to make their institutions run more efficiently. Correctional leaders must be highly disciplined individuals as well, to develop a well-structured and organized facility or institution.

**Power and Politics**

Power and politics are very important in the correctional operational paradigm due to the fact that politics often decides where a correctional institution is placed, based on the lobbying of politicians for the building of correctional facilities within their congressional districts. In addition, politics help to determine the number of inmates that are supervised within correctional institutions, due to the fact that get tough on crime legislation has led to overcrowding in many correctional institutions (Kiekbusch, 2012). Power and politics have also led to the growth in the number of privately owned prisons around the country, due to the fact that politicians believe that this would help to save taxpayer dollars, but it also appears that this trend will fill the pockets of the constituents of politicians who profit from the ownership of privately owned facilities (Kiekbusch, 2012).

**Conclusion**

To conclude, to increase the organizational performance and effectiveness of the North Carolina Department of Corrections, implementing a plan in which it requires inmates to attend educational classes or work during every weekday, increase the level of vocational training within the department, ensure that promotional opportunities are awarded fairly to officers and staff, only about education no program to be shown on correctional facility televisions, and to increase the level of anger management programming that is available to inmates.

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