

You Decide | Case Study

Goal Setting

Doug is the general manager of a regional painting and home improvement contractor business. He has been working hard to create a goal-oriented environment. He is meeting with his painting-crew team leaders. One of the problems they are experiencing is a high number of complaints that require crews to return to the customer's home or office for additional work or cleaning. Currently, crews are returning to 37 percent of job sites to respond to complaints.

Doug's team leaders have identified a goal: "Improve customer service and reduce customer complaints." Doug takes the time to explain SMART goals and asks the team leaders to go back and reword their goal so it meets the SMART criteria. They return with the following: "Our goal is to reduce customer complaints to 15 percent."

The next step is to identify specific tasks that will help them achieve this goal. The team leaders make a lengthy list that includes everything from better up-front communication with customers to increased training for painters. One of the items they are implementing is a customer satisfaction checklist. Each painting crew will go over the checklist in detail with

customers to be sure they are satisfied before the crew leaves the work site. The expectation is that this will get potential problems resolved so customers will not need to call to complain.

The team leaders agree to monitor the use of the checklist on a weekly basis with their crews. Doug will monitor the number of complaints on a monthly basis to see if they begin to decline.

After the first month, Doug reviews the number of customer complaints. He discovers that the percentage of complaints has actually increased.

Questions

1. Does the revised goal meet the SMART criteria? If yes, explain why. If not, revise it so it does meet the criteria.
2. How would you recommend Doug handle the situation of complaints increasing after steps were implemented to reduce complaints? Explain in detail the steps he should take.
3. What can Doug do now to help his crew leaders be successful?