

XinCheng New Materials Co Ltd.

Executive Summary

Engagement Summary

Team Contracting

We began contracting as a team during our initial phone calls in March. We created a document sharing our individual gifts, what we wanted from this experience, and our own definitions of what success means and what it look like for us to be successful. By focusing on team building we were able to establish trust, which helped us in becoming a high performing consulting team.

Client Contracting

Contact with our client began March 29 to begin the contracting process with Ms. Qian (our client contact) and Paul Wang (our Pepperdine coordinator). Prior to the first conversation we had already had a phone call with the previous Pepperdine Team to learn where their work had left off, to better understand where our starting point should be. After weekly calls with Ms. Qian, and an in person meeting with the executives of XinCheng, we discovered that effective communication which leads to action and improved accountability was where our focus should lie.

Objectives

The desired outcome for this engagement was to develop more effective project communication skills illustrated by work plans and objectives aligned across departments. To achieve this outcome, our design incorporated the following objectives:

- Improve communication skills
- Ensure communication translates to action
- Integrate communication practices into current processes

Envisioned Future

Participants chose photographs that depict their dream for the future of XinCheng.



Back-to-Back Drawing

In groups of three participants learned the importance of two way communication.



Marshmallow Bridges

Working together the participants practiced communication and collaboration in teams.



RACI Charts

Departments worked together in creating a RACI chart for current processes to see where conversations need to be had.



Observations

- Contracting via phone calls with unfamiliar languages will provide limited data:
 - Multiple efforts to include Chairman and preparation meetings failed. The first in-person meeting, held less than 24 hours before the first engagement day, with heads of departments in attendance, provided the greatest insights into business needs.
- Managers at XCNM are eager to learn “scientific” (ie. more rigorous) methods and approaches for team management and quality assurance.
- Presence of familiar faces - Steve Pile, Michael Fang - contributed greatly to warm and relaxed tone with leadership team and during workshops. There was also a felt pre-existing trust between the client and Pepperdine team due to the work of the previous cohort.
- The best design creates a safe space and time to practice skills:
 - Insights for effective communication and obstacles to communication were gleaned from practice more effectively than from pure lecture. Participants exhibited ability to reflect and openness to share learnings with colleagues.
- Role definition can be a primary challenge to effective communication:
 - Supervisors at XinCheng did not see a clear distinction between the responsibility and accountability roles to complete work. This posed an unanticipated challenge to the RACI training we provided.

IDEAS FOR NEXT STEPS:

- Review whether and how the RACI tool has been adopted at XinCheng
- Deepen communication to action training by following up with Kanban or OKR tools
- Create a tool for communication that will be most effective for their work structure
- Explore structural supports to effective communication: What regularly scheduled cross-team meetings exist, what agenda and tools are used to guide these meetings, how is open communication supported/obstacles removed?
- Review input from participants on further training of interest:
 - Quality Assurance
 - Risk Analysis
 - Adapting in a changing market
 - SWOT Analysis



Attachments

- **Day 1**
 - A. Powerpoint Presentation: Bridge work from Sigma Prime; Set stage for positivity and intentionality; Experience and assess current strengths in one to one communication.
- **Day 2**
 - B. Powerpoint Presentation: Experience and assess current strengths in group communication; Training and Application of RACI tool; Close.
- **Day 3**
 - C. Powerpoint Presentation: Participant Feedback Analysis (not presented, but shared with client)
 - D. Power of Engagement Presentation: adapted from Datong conference (not presented, but shared with client)
 - E. Power of Engagement Handout (shared with client with Power of Engagement Presentation)
 - F. Program Evaluation