INPS MOBILE COUNTER FOR DISABLED AND ELDERLY PEOPLE

ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DELLA PREVIDENZA SOCIALE Roma-Italy

THE ADDRESSED ISSUE

The mobile INPS counter has been created to meet several problems:

- The main problem that we wanted to address was the difficulty that elderly people or with serious disabilities meet when they go to our offices in such a big city like Rome where the large distances as well as others logistic difficulties make access not easy.

- Another faced major problem was to promote the integration of disabled staff at work and to offer them opportunities of professional growing both for the "value added", given by the particular sensitivity and the insight knowledge of issues directly or indirectly examined.

Other issues concern:

- The optimization and streamlining of services delivery provided by INPS

- the stimulation of the cooperation and involvement of other public administrations to the social aspect of disability

- the awakening of public opinion to problems related to the disability and discomforts of elderly people.
RESULTS AND BENEFITS OF THE MOBILE COUNTER

- The disabled and elderly people may, through a simple phone call or e-mail have the solution for the various Social Security issues without moving from home. In a year of activities no less than 1200 transfers were avoided to visit INPS offices in order to solve problems, whereas the resolution with only one access rarely happens.

- In a year of activities about 1200 issues have been resolved, 500 of which are highly complex which led to the involvement of various departments of the institute and also the involvement of other public and private institutions.

- The personnel have greatly increased their professional skills, have increased the motivation and the organizational well-being. Days of absence from work have decreased and staff worked with serenity and competence.

- The model of the INPS Mobile Counter has been already duplicated and is going to be duplicated in other INPS offices as Milan, Salerno, Tuscany Region, Emilia Romagna Region. In this regard, it is developing an operational manual that addresses all the issues had been resolved which we will publish before summer and it will allow a greater increase in the duplication of the model inside and also outside INPS.

Others benefits may include :

- Reducing queues at counters
- Optimizing IT Systems
- Less smog thanks to the reduction of transfers and to the issues solving by using IT systems.
TARGETS

- Make available INPS services to all citizens, including elderly people and those with disabilities. This especially considering that elderly people and those with disabilities have a high number of contacts with INPS as the Institute pays pensions, attendance allowances and a wide range of welfare benefits.

- Use the human and professional support of disabled staff who became the “value added”.

- Make best use of ex INPS employees, now retired, who still wish to continue to work for the Institute for free.

- Achieve the greatest result with the lowest cost. The cost of Mobile Counter is zero or almost zero as the only expenses regarded stamps for the dispatch of security codes. Everything that was done was to use at the best the existing resources.

This was possible thanks to:

- an excellent organizational structure

- the best use of IT systems

- the collaboration with other public and private Institutions (such as the Municipality of Rome, the Italian Blind and Partially Sighted Union).
STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

1) To realize the mobile counter INPS created a work team composed by 50% of disabled staff with different types of disabilities (blind, paraplegic, deaf), volunteers ex INPS employees (experts on pensions and IT) and a team leader psychologist, expert on organization. Every disabled person provided his skills and was trained to use procedures and communication processes included standard modalities to answer users telephone calls.

2) Were extrapolated from files the general data of the first group of users concerned that were blind and partially sighted people of Rome and elderly people aged over 80 with attendance allowance and a personal security code (PIN) was assigned to each of them.

3) Three dedicated telephone lines were activated and it was also created a network of responsibles of other INPS offices in the national territory

4) An informative letter was sent to every user to provide the security code and information on contacts as the Mobile Counter e-mail or times and days he could contact by telephone the mobile counter. The informative letter was in Braille for blind people and with "bigger print“ for visually impaired people.

5) The presence of employees at telephone lines in the fixed times and days and answering telephone calls. Control of data with a comparison of posted codes for security purposes.

6) Resolution of issues with the use of IT systems or with the collaboration of INPS agencies or other Institutions (such as the Prefecture as regards the regularization of carers) for complex cases. The access at home has been reserved only for cases which require the signature of the user such as proxies to receive the pension.

7) Continuous monitoring of activities and problem solving by organizing meetings with all Mobile Counter staff.

8) Continuous training of personnel to increase skills in INPS. This training was given mostly by the volunteers, retired INPS employees.

9) Continuous expansion of collaborations with other Institutions to facilitate the work in all its aspects.
INVOLVED ACTORS

BASICALLY THEY ARE:

- Interested users (disabled people of the city of Rome and its province and elderly people with the accompanying benefits and elderly people aged over 80 with attendance allowance) who question on Inps issues.
- In addition to the Mobile Counter staff, who have great ability to listen, are involved also internal structures such as INPS agencies of other regions to solve users problems
- The involvement of external organizations is important also for specific issues related to legislative changes such as in Italy the “One Counter for Emigration” of the Prefecture Office as regards the new law for regularization of carers.
- External bodies such as the category of the Italian Union of Blind and Visually Impaired people, family homes for disabled and elderly people, long-stay hospitals are useful for grouping user requests and their more quickly resolution.
The INPS Mobile Counter is easily reproducible thanks to its low costs and the little use of human resources. It is important to use at the best IT resources and not already existing in the various State Organizations. The basic thing is that the staff who work for the Mobile Counter have a great sensitivity and listening skills because the interested users need and deserve special attention. The lesson learned is to focus on the users listening to avoid administrative and human problems.

The model of the mobile counter is also easily reproducible because it was already well tested by a long period of experimentation that preceded the start up of the permanent project. This phase involved 3800 people (blind people, visually impaired and elderly people who were resident in Rome downtown) and lasted nine months. All possible issues were faced and an analysis of customer satisfaction was carried out to assess the social impact. Other INPS agencies are ready to open other Mobile Counters for disabled and elderly people on the model of the INPS Mobile Counter of Rome.
KEY LESSONS FOR PROMOTING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

The first essential element to promote a culture of innovation in the public sector is to understand well what resources are available and create a system for the best use of them from the instrumental and human point of view. It’s important to use at the best the existing resources. It means sometimes having the courage to pull up meaningless privileges and to remove when is not useful.

Knowing how to organize work well is essential to promote innovation in public service. That means making a in-depth study of the situation, means removing the work that can be avoided and give instead more attention, resources, time and energy to the most 'critical sectors'.

Using dialogue, listening, communication, meetings, interactions, collaborations to achieve common goals. The leadership should have the ability to listen first and be able to "group" to work well because the work must be the group identity with its mission to move first of all the work.

Ensuring that human resources find their right place in the organization, which increases satisfaction at work and improve the production and the social mood. Is the interest of the employee to love his job because it is its contribution which he offers to the society, it is important for his self-esteem and his sense of identity. The demotivated worker is often a person who has not found its right place in the organization. Who coordinates the work should give this opportunity to the employee by listening, supporting, helping and offering him the necessary tools (such as for disabled people), because everyone should have the right to have the opportunity to contribute to the well-being of mankind.

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