

Departmental Certification Requirement:
The Home Depot Strategic HR Change Management Initiative

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HRMT605: Strategic Human Resource Management

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MEMORANDUM

To: The Home Depot Executive Leadership Team

From: Luke Hakanson, Senior Vice President – Human Resources

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Subject: Important Change: Department Supervisor Certification Requirement

The HR Departmental Leaders are writing this change initiative proposal to announce the certification requirement for every Home Depot retail store's certification requirement for the position of Department Supervisor. This change, with the effective date of June 1, 2025, is intended to improve our reputation and customer experience with a higher level of knowledge from the Department Supervisor. As you are aware, there are currently no certification requirements for this position, and be assured that this will not change. The completion of certification will be required within two years of assuming the position of Department Supervisor.

Communication with the store managers will be through virtual meetings and email with feedback from the lowest level of position received through surveys. A dedicated support team of ten corporate HR employees will lead this initiative. Your approval and participation in this initiative are vital for its accomplishment. Please provide feedback from this initiative and support this department upon questions and/or concerns over any details of this plan. As Senior Vice President of Human Resources, I am confident that my team will excel in improving the confidence, competence, and moral of the Department Supervisors along with expanding the reputation of The Home Depot's customer experience. Thank you for your time, collaboration, and dedication to this important educational initiative.

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Departmental Certification Requirement:

The Home Depot Strategic HR Change Management Initiative

The Home Depot's mission statement commits to the highest level of service to their customers. As customers enter the home improvement retail store, they are focused on finding the right product for their shopping needs. Home Depot's Front-Line Associates are readily available to assist these customers' questions and concerns about the products. What happens when customers' questions are too advanced in the product related industry category for the Front-Line Associates to answer? This is where each department at Home Depot employs a Department Supervisor for more technical support to the customers.

The Home Depot's Department Supervisor must possess a higher level of knowledge in relation to the home improvement industry. This supervisory position requires strong product and operational knowledge experience, but The Home Depot currently does not require a construction or home improvement certification for Department Supervisors (The Home Depot, 2025). The Human Resources department plans to enact a new change policy that requires a certification for the Department Supervisor to be more knowledgeable in the home improvement industry. This certification will not be a hiring requirement for the Department Supervisor position but will be a certification completion required in a timely manner upon hiring or for existing position supervisors. The following proposal will discuss the new certification requirement initiative's justification for change, implementation plan, recommendations, assessment plan, and the evaluation measurement during the implementation process.

Justification for Change

The Home Depot's new Department Supervisor certification requirement anticipates an overall goal to improve their customer's experience by ensuring each Department Supervisor has

a well-rounded home improvement industry knowledge. The increase in subject matter expertise will improve The Home Depot's global reputation for excellence in customer service. The new certification proposal will positively impact on the customers' shopping experience along with benefiting the Department Supervisor's resume. Corporate employers are abandoning some of their entry-level college degree and certification requirements to speed up hiring and broaden the pool of job candidates (Gee, 2018). The Home Depot's certification requirements will be attractive to hiring and keeping Department Supervisors, increase applications, and provide their employees with an education continuation sense of accomplishment.

The need for certification change is imperative for The Home Depot to maintain their reputation for being subject matter experts in each department. Developing and executing a certification program will improve Home Depot's employees and organizational success. This program will concentrate on the department's needs, swiftly altered to mirror industry shifts, boost internal employee value, provide cohesion with other positions within the corporation, and will be credible to both employee and business leaders (Tannenbaum & Alliger, 1998). One company that has proven success with certification training and completion is Walgreens. Walgreens developed Walgreens Front End Pharmacy Certification Program, which offers store leadership and select front end team members a pathway to national pharmacy technician certification which equips them with the necessary skills and experience to promote to their next-level employment (Walgreens, 2025). Like Walgreens, The Home Depot's certification program for Department Supervisor position will be a positive career opportunity for the employees to enhance their home improvement industry knowledge. Next, an implementation plan has been developed by the HR department that includes a five-step transformational change to guide The Home Depot's proposed certification requirement for the position of Department Supervisor.

Implementation Plan

The Home Depot's HR department oversees the certification requirement change strategy for their Department Supervisors. With all guidance coming from the corporate HR department, they will communicate the certification implementation plan down to the retail stores. Guidance will include communication procedures, training guidelines, change management activities, and supportive incentive programs. The implementation plan will include a five-step change management process the HR department will follow. These steps include preparing the organization for change, crafting a vision and plan for the change, implementing the changes, embed the changes withing the culture and practice of the company, and includes the review progress (Miller, 2020). The following HR implementation plan will follow the five-step management process for the new Home Depot certification requirement.

The first step the HR department will take includes preparing, through communication, their retail stores for the Department Supervisor's certification requirement. In the preparation phase, employees will learn the 'why' behind the need for change, which for this case, will be more knowledgeable Department Supervisor's (Miller, 2020). Topics that will be discussed include the complete roll-out plan and timeline, incentives, and an overall positive understanding of the new change requirement. Furthermore, Home Depot will gain a good understanding of the initial buy-in from their employees, which can help to minimize conflict and resistance as time progresses (Miller, 2020). The next step is to create a vision and plan for change.

After the communication to The Home Depot's Department Supervisors has been performed, now the vision and plan for the change will take place. The best way to perform the plan is to create a step-by-step guide for each level of employee in clear and concise instructions on their role in the certification requirement change initiative. An example of a company that has

successfully enacted change using a step-by-step guide is from Sophos, a leading global security company (Gupta, 2022). This company implemented a digital adoption platform for interactive training. The Home Depot will utilize the same platform Sophos used, which is called Whatfix, which will provide on-demand training to the managers detailing the change process.

Next, the HR department will provide the digital certification program, which will be certification outsourced by The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). This certification will be a Journey-Level Certificate focused on the specific department the Department Supervisor manages. For example, the Electrical Department Supervisor will obtain the NCCER online training and pass the Commercial Electrician evaluation to be compliant with Home Depot's new certification requirement (NCCER, 2025). This plan will be implemented gradually until all Department Supervisors are certified.

Implementation, or the third step in the change management process, of The Home Depot's NCCER certification will follow a two-year plan to train and certify all Department Supervisors. Ample time will be given to the employees to train and take the certification exams. This time will be paid and performed during work hours and will have a lump sum bonus given to the employee once they have successfully completed the certification. Furthermore, the Department Supervisor will receive a salary raise with further educational opportunities as well. Lastly, The Home Depot will maintain no educational requirements for the initial hiring credentials but will implement the same timeline and requirements for new hires to obtain their certificates in their respective departments. Next, the fourth step includes embedding the changes within Home Depot's culture and practices.

Once the roll-out of the certification requirement has been implemented, the employees will develop a culture of self-success. The NCCER credentials are recognized by contractors

around the world with many companies offering wage incentives to NCCER-trained employees (NCCER, 2025). They will not only be certified to meet The Home Depot's requirements, but will also receive the training free of charge, and will be able to attach the certificate to their personal resume credentials. This culture of training, certification, and salary incentives will help the new certification requirement to be successful (Miller, 2020). The last step is to review the progress and analyze the results.

This final phase of The Home Depot's five-step change management process includes conducting analysis and reviews on the Department Supervisor's certification requirement. Zurich Life is a global insurance company that successfully pushed their employees to reflect on the good and bad change initiatives through surveys (Gupta, 2022). The Home Depot will follow this strategy with periodic surveys before, during and after the certification requirement. For a preview of a survey, see the example survey in the Appendix of this initiative. Furthermore, The Home Depot will utilize 'secret shoppers' that will pose as customers. They will ask the Department Supervisors more advanced industry questions in relation to their department. These surveys and secret shoppers will give the HR department a good understanding of the sustainment's and modifications needed to keep the certification requirement program implemented. Next, the final recommendations will include the potential risks and mitigation strategies.

Final Recommendations

There are a number of reasons for how change management strategies fail. Reasons for failure include starting with a poor strategy, too rigid of a strategy, lack of effective communications, failure to identify and address resistance, disconnect between strategy and culture, setting unrealistic expectations, and not creating and celebrating short term wins

(Emerson, 2022). The HR department at The Home Depot plans to mitigate these potential risks and failures. Through internal strategy reviews and analysis, the HR department will consistently analyze the vision, plan, implementation, and cultural changes during the roll-out of this certification requirement.

The Department Supervisor's certification requirement will follow a good strategy with a variety of communication techniques. The strategy is flexible with a two-year certification goal along with continual resistance identifications through the surveys (see Appendix). The expectations are not unrealistic and the short- and long-term wins include self-worth for the employees and salary compensation upon certification completion. The Home Depot will avoid failures by investing significant time to the strategy, revisiting the plan frequently, ensure everyone clearly understands the plan, have a two-way communication for resistance, manage expectations, and build the achievable outcomes into the results (Emerson, 2022). Regardless of how prepared the strategy will be, the HR department is trained to address changes as needed during this change initiative. The last part of The Home Depot certification requirement for the Department Supervisor includes the strategy the HR department will utilize to assess and measure the change.

Assessment

To measure the success of the certification requirement, Home Depot will utilize a purpose-driven assessment. This assessment is called SMART, which is an acronym meaning specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time-based goal (Nieto-Rodriguez, 2023). This outcome and benefit delivered assessment focuses on a better environment for employees, returning customers, and more sustainable practices. The Home Depot will assess the real-time

effects of less employee turnover rates and customer feedback on the knowledge of their Department Supervisors.

Upon plan implementation, The Home Depot will evaluate their success through a benefits plan that measures the main benefit of requiring a certificate for this position. The Home Depot's benefit plan includes the measurement of improved efficiency, increased responsiveness to customers questions, enhanced customer experience, and increased revenue (Nieto-Rodriguez, 2023). By using this approach, The Home Depot will see a higher level of engagement and buy-in from the Department Supervisors. This is due to the higher level of employee confidence as a result of gaining more knowledge from the online certification requirement. As a result, The Home Depot will see a positive difference in the confidence of their Department Supervisor's, and more satisfied customers.

Reflection

Supervisor-supported higher level of department knowledge is the foundation of trust between the customers and the overall reputation of The Home Depot. By initiating an NCCER certification requirement for the Department Supervisor, there will be a greater level of departmental subject matter support for the customers and their reputation. The Department Supervisor certification will require a two-year start to completion with compensation and resume benefits. The results will be positive by being more attractive to new hires, sustainment of current Department Supervisors, and will give their employees a sense of accomplishment. Furthermore, it will create a culturally professional learning environment with opportunities to promote and move up to management positions. From plan implementation and recommendations to assessing success before and during the execution, The Home Depot HR

department is fully prepared to roll out the Department Supervisor NCCER certification requirement.

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Appendix

Department Supervisor Survey

Basic Understanding of the Certification

1. Do you understand the reason behind the new certification requirement for your position?
2. What is the timeline for the certification to be completed?
3. What are the benefits that you will receive from the certification?
4. Will this certification aid you in your future? How?

Communication

1. Did your supervisor give you every opportunity to ask questions about the certification?
2. Are your leaders effectively communicating all information regarding the certification?
3. Do you currently have a login for the NCCER certification website?
4. Do you have any questions about this certification?

Satisfaction

1. Are you satisfied with the certification plan?
2. Are you satisfied with the compensation and resume benefits?
3. How do you feel this will improve your success in the future?

Support

1. Is the organization supporting you through this change?
2. What support do you feel would be helpful to complete this certification?

Improvements

1. What month towards the certification deadline are you currently in at this time?
2. What improvements could be made at this time?
3. What suggestions do you have?