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WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

by

Patricia V. Bird

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by

Patricia V Bird

has been approved

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APPROVED:

MARGE TYE ZUBA Ed.D., Faculty Mentor and Chair
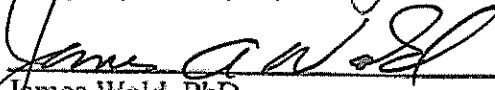
JoAnn M. HANSON, Ph.D., Committee Member

DOUGLAS BIRD, Ph.D., Committee Member

YING TAT LEUNG, Ph.D., Committee Member

SUSAN THOMAS, Committee Member

ACCEPTED AND SIGNED:

Marge Tye Zuba, Ed.D.

James Wold, PhD
Dean, School of Education

Abstract

This study determines the type of environment required to encourage employees who work in a warehouse environment to maximize their potential. In this study employees who currently work in the warehouse of a food distributorship company are encouraged to share their thoughts on the environment the company provides, and the type of environment that they think would encourage them to continuously advance their skills. The thoughts of these employees are compared to a representative sample of employees from the same company, who started in the warehouse, and are now top executives of the company. The concept of "user persona" is explored to provide a descriptive representation of employees who perform jobs in the warehouse, who possess potential to perform jobs far beyond their current position within the company. In this research they are described as "hidden giants."

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODCTION

Introduction to the Problem

In today's dynamic world of business, companies are beginning to focus more on their employee base realizing that employee development is the key to their continued success. An article by Fusch (2000) suggests that technology and the resulting global competition is fueling this change which compels companies to look inwards at their organization and the environment of their workers. In an attempt to provide a working environment that stimulates employee growth some companies provide training opportunities and encourage employees to increase or improve their skills. An example of this type of company is the study company. This company, founded in 1971, has 148 locations throughout the contiguous United States and portions of Alaska, Canada and Hawaii with approximately 49,000 employees who support its day to day operations (Baker, 2003). Members of the Operations department make up approximately 50% of employees performing duties such as, forklift driving, receiving, inventory, customer delivery, housekeeping, etc.

The study company, referred to as Env, provides employee on-the-job training opportunities and encourages employees who are motivated to build on their current skills to improve their opportunities with the company. Additionally, Env implemented a Best Business Practices (BBP) Web site where employees enter ideas for improving effciencies while performing daily work. However, although these opportunities are available only a small percentage of employees who work in the warehouse take advantage of these opportunities. In a discussion with the manager of the Training Department she disclosed that only 25% of Env's

employees engage in company provided educational programs and 30% enter their ideas for improving work procedures in the company's BBP system.

Based on the previously stated percentages, questions arise, how might Env encourage their warehouse employees to participate more in their own career development and how can they motivate employees to use their tacit knowledge to support the company in achieving its goals? This study attempts to capture employee's perceptions on their working environment, by surveying employees who are currently working in the warehouse environment and employees who started their career in the warehouse and are now top executives of the company. Encouraging these two diverse groups of employees who started with the company in the same position to share their ideas with the researcher provides the basis for a work environment that is conducive to company and employee growth (Management, personal communication, January 12, 2004).

Background of the Study

To gain an understanding of warehouses and the business context in which they operate, it is important to understand the Supply Chain and how warehouses are perceived within the Supply Chain. The Supply Chain is a complex network of tasks and procedures involving multiple segments of the business world such as product design, procurement, product distribution and post sales support. The focus of this study is the product distribution segment of the Supply Chain, referred to as the Warehouse or Operations Department.

In the dynamic world of business, the Supply Chain is continuously undergoing changes that directly result from changes in the business environment. Johnson (2002) suggests that as the Supply Chain continues to grow more complex, management are projecting increased focus

on the warehouse because of market trends, fueled by increased customer demands for product customization. The warehouse is gaining importance and visibility in the Supply Chain because the warehouse is fast becoming a direct sales channel between manufacturers and customers. In addition, there is a growing tendency to relocate final assembly tasks, for example, generating and applying customized tags to the product prior to shipment, to the warehouse (Y. Leung, personal communication, November 21, 2004). As a result of these changes in warehousing, members of the Supply Chain are beginning to look more to the warehouse for customer specific information. Results from a study by the (Warehouse Education and Research Council [WERC], 1998) showed that warehouses are playing a significant role in reacting to customer demands, thus making the Supply Chain more responsive to customer needs.

The results of this WERC (1998) study support the realization that warehouses are perceived as being critical to the supply chain. Managers are beginning to realize that warehouses are in the position to act as supply chain coordinators because of their direct customer contact and perceive them to be the knowledge center of the supply chain (Johnson, 2002). Managers are rationalizing that warehouse departments, such as, Customer Service, Transportation and Inventory Control are in direct contact with customers, resulting in the accumulation of customer-focused information which is of primary importance to related supply chain departments such as, Sales, Marketing, Merchandising and Logistics (Maltz, 1998).

Traditionally, warehouses were considered to be primarily for product storage, product consolidation, and inventory management, but this perception is changing. In an article by Maltz (1998) he projected thatalthough t hese tasks will continue to represent the primary role of warehouses, as the demands of customers increase, management will look more to the warehouse

to be an important source for cost reduction. Continuous focus on cost reduction involves maintaining an optimum level of inventory by ensuring that inventory flows quickly and efficiently through the warehouse, and employees share information pertaining to improving and maintaining excellent customer service. Critical to the success of the Supply Chain is warehouse attention to embracing new systems that improve work flow, optimizing time by improving job performance and building relationships with customers and Supply Chain partners (Maltz, 1998). Nelson (2002) contends that in conjunction, management must continuously work towards providing the type of working environment thatencourages their employee's to strive to improve their processes and procedures. Important components ofthis type of work environment pertain to encouraging employee-management, communication and collaboration, utilizing employee competencies and providing specific training to efficiently utilize employee skills.

An article by Johnson (2002) reported that employee training, for members of the supply chain has the potential to increase to 42% during 2003 at an estimate of $10.5 billion. This projected increase resulted from management's realization that the Supply Chain is constantly increasing in complexity and traditional means to improve efficiencies are unable to accommodate or keep up with the dynamic changes within the business world. This article also gives reference to the following statement by Mikurak, a partner in Accenture's Supply Chain Service Line and head of Accenture's Supply chain Academy who says, "As industry executives focus on this area, they find it a challenge to secure and maintain a top-notch supply chain workforce" (p. 8). Changes affecting this environment relate to:

1. The need for workers to continually retool to gain more advanced and complex skills.

2. The adoption of new supply chain technologies, which place increasing demands on effective training programs.

3. Diversification across geography, age, backgrounds and skill sets, which increases the complexity required of learning programs.

4. The need for learning tools that can quickly bring newcomers up to speed (p.1).

A further study by Accenture revealed that 73% of senior executives have come to the realization that trying to find talented employees is basically ongoing and 68% firmly believe that their primary focus should be on their current staff, and developing them to reach their maximum potential, rather than hiring new employees (Johnson, 2002).

Knowledge Management and Warehouse Employees

Employees in a warehouse environment perform work that provides the foundation for company growth. It is these workers, who perform the same job day-in and day-out, who are the primary reason for their company's success; they keep the trucks rolling. These employees really understand what is needed to increase productivity while simultaneously improving customer satisfaction. If these employees remain silent and just routinely perform their work without verbalizing their ideas on ways to improve their work, nothing would change, and change promotes growth (Tan, 2003). Employees are constantly constructing knowledge as they perform their work, and some of their thoughts and ideas can prove invaluable to the company. However, most of these thoughts are never verbalized, and remain in the recesses of their minds. A company's greatest asset is its' employees, but if management do not accept the challenge to unlock the minds of their employees, they lose the opportunity to utilize their most valuable resource (Harps, 2001).

While knowledge is intangible, it becomes a tangible force when shared through collaboration with other knowledge experts (Koskinen, 2004). Knowledge has the potential for action and is linked to performance. When provided with the type of environment that promotes knowledge sharing, employees are more inclined to discuss their ideas with co-workers who they perceive, share the same ideas. This type of communication motivates employees to use their intellect to promote themselves, ultimately sharing the knowledge they possess. Companies that have the ability to manage their internal knowledge base have the potential to maintain their competitive edge (Berger, 2003).

To achieve continuous growth, companies must provide an environment that encourages employees to share thoughts and ideas on how to improve daily processes and procedures that result in increasing the value of their work. To accomplish this, employees need to work in an environment that helps them to develop natural competencies and encourages them to be self-motivated to achieve (Kerpoe, 2001). Many of the principles of Knowledge Management (KM) clearly indicate that employees need an environment that encourages them to openly share their ideas with other people (Allee, 1997). Communication through collaboration develops knowledge that can be leveraged across the organization.

Additionally, Allee suggests the following guiding principles that promote the management of knowledge within an organization: (a) Consider knowledge as being connected to diversified pieces of information, (b) knowledge is generally organized by individuals; (c) knowledge is community based, (d) knowledge is always changing, and (e) knowledge is on-going following the laws of nature (Allee, 1997).

The following example is provided to illuminate and validate the need for providing a working environment that inspires employees to share their knowledge by working collaboratively to meet the needs of the organization.

Env is currently heavily involved in converting their suppliers from a manual trading process to an electronic process. This is a major change in the way the company prepares suppliers for trading. One of the main benefits of electronic trading is that it will improve the efficiencies of the warehouse by producing electronic transactions such as Advanced Ship Notices (ASN) to provide prior knowledge of incoming product. Information from the ASN assists warehouse management in planning employee time and daily work-load and increases their ability to accomplish the company's goals.

Supplier selection and preparation is performed by five departments at Env's corporate office: Supplier Adoption, Coding and Standards, Corporate Billing, Electronic Food Services and Pricing. Prior to the RDC initiative, these departments worked independently to accomplish their department's supplier conversion tasks. After reviewing each department's processes and procedures, Env discovered that their current processes must change. The major change involves creating one continuous end-to-end process that prioritize s and connects each department's tasks into one continuous work-flow. To accomplish this, departments must change their perception from individual supplier conversion goals to one shared goal by all five departments. Successful achievement of this change entails constant communication and collaboration between the five departments. This change provides opportunities for employees to use their collective minds "tacit knowledge" to identify and resolve issues and problems that impede the supplier conversion process. The result is that Env now has an efficient supplier conversion process that

allows them to achieve the goals of the RDC (Management, personal communication, January 12, 2004).

Inclusive Business Context

Studies performed by the Warehouse Education Research Council (WERC) identify the warehouse as being a key contributor to business success. Warehouses are a major part of the supply chain and the study of supply chain changes in industry, coupled with interaction between the component departments of the supply chain, provides focus on warehouse employees and identifies the need to provide an environment that fosters employee growth (Harps, 2001). Information received from the WERC research indicates that warehouses are now perceived as a major department of the supply chain. Today, companies that are cognizant of this fact are striving to create environments that provide: supervisor and employee training; career path development; employee coaching; and opportunities to encourage communication and collaboration (Harps, 2001). However, if Env is a representative example of warehouse employees and their motivation to take advantage of company provided opportunities to improve their skills, processes and procedures; a significant number of employees are not taking advantages of company incentives. As a result, employee skills and competencies remain hidden, ultimately resulting in loss to the company and the employee.

Companies whose business involves product redistribution are realizing that their ability to succeed in today's world of business is dependant on increasing the efficiencies of their supply chain by renewing their focus on external and internal factors that prevent them from being competitive. Env is a primary example; they performed a study in 2001 to learn more about current market trends. Research results prompted them to embark on their RDC (Regional

Distribution Center which initiated the change from manual to electronic supplier trading) project which is the most ambitious venture in the company's history. They are currently building their first RDC warehouse with the intention of building additional RDC warehouses after the first one is opened and running efficiently. The first RDC warehouse will service 13 warehouse operating companies, resulting in producing an optimized, more efficient and effective supply chain for these 13 warehouses. The first RDC warehouse will process the combined product demand for all13 warehouse s. The result will be: reduction in transportation costs; less inventory on-hand at each warehouse; reduced product handling; fewer business transactions and fixed capital.

After performing basic calculations, the company determined that if a major portion of the products currently purchased by individual warehouses are managed and shipped through RDC warehouses, significant cost reduction is realized. Improved efficiencies directly benefit customers and service providers by driving down the cost of handlingproduct s, while improving quality of service to customers. As stated in an article by D'Avanzo (2003), improved efficiencies can represent approximately 80% of a company's profits and 50% of their assets. To successfully accomplish the goal of RDC warehouses and receive projected benefits, many system, business processes and work procedures must change. Most of these changes affect the way that warehouse employees do their work and as a result, employees are considered to be a key component in successfully accomplishing the goals of the RDC.

Changes in industry

The realization that warehouses can play a key role in the product cycle has increased the demand for the use of advanced technology in the warehouse and changes in warehouse

processes and procedures. As previously stated, the old concept of warehousing is undergoing a transformation from being buildings for the primary use of storage to buildings where products constantly flow through its docks with decreasing need to use the facility as a storage receptacle. This concept, referred to as "cross docking" results in accelerating the flow of product through the supply chain. Cross docking is considered to be responsible for significant reductions in the cost of doing business. Companies that implement cross docking methods report that the majority of products are received and shipped the same day, greatly reducing the need for storage space. Consequently, all costs pertaining to handling, storing, inventory maintenance and product selection (picking) for customer delivery are either eliminated or considerably reduced (Napolitano, 2000).

Cross docking has the potential for warehouses to reduce costs, support customers immediate needs, allow efficient consolidation of products, decrease paperwork relating to inventory storage and ultimately attack the bottom line of business costs. Fred Meyer, a full-line discount department store approves of cross docking because it provides an efficient way of processing shipments from the supplier to the customer. This company contends that with the use of a cross docking strategy they are able to consolidate orders that are bound for the same destination and in many instances use faster and less expensive modes of transportation (Napolitano, 2000).

Another aspect of changes in this industry is advancing technology and the significant role this plays in increasing warehouse productivity. Companies are embracing new systems such as; Warehouse Management Systems (WMS); Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) resulting in real-time inventory updates; electronic bar code reading and automatic label

generation; Electronic Data Interchange (EDI); Transportation Management Systems (TMS); Interface to Enterprise Requirements Planning (ERP) systems; productivity tracking software and activity-based costing software (Maltz, 1998). In a study conducted by WERC (2000) the results generated acknowledged that implementation of new technologies plays a primary role in increasing productivity in a substantial amount of warehouses.

Another key reason for the relocation of warehouses to a more prominent role in the Supply Chain is the current industry move to Supply Chain Management (SCM) and Customer Relations Management (CRM). Realization of the synergies between SCM and CRM ultimately creates a pathway to achieving a competitive edg e. SCM relates to the process to increase the efficiencies of suppliers with primary focus on the cost of service, and CRM seeks to optimize demands by identifying and responding to customer needs. Collaboration and communication between these key players is important in the current economy of intense competition fueled by the need for companies to provide fast and efficient service, while maintaining an acceptable quality of service. This tremendous drive forces companies to explore the relationship between SCM and CRM and build a bridge between them to provide a venue for knowledge transfer, thus providing information that the Supply Chain needs to provide efficient, accurate and cost effective products, while supporting their customer's immediate needs (Lee, 2001).

Based on the prominent role that warehouses play in the supply chain and dynamic changes within the technical world, which contribute to the changing world of warehousing, it is evident that companies must provide the type of warehouse environment that helps employees become active participants of the change (Johnson, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on the internal environment in which warehouse employees work and how their environment contributesto their performance. Wegner (1998) explains that people learn through their participation with other people in their environment with whom they interact on a daily basis. He alludes to the fact that workers are continually processing thoughts internally and, owing to the dynamic environment in which they work, building and re-building knowledge constructs but their thoughts remain hidden within their minds. The problem is that there is a gap between the environment in which warehouse employees work, and their perception of the type of environment that encourages them to achieve their potential.

Within the pool of warehouse workers there is a wealth of knowledge that is virtually untapped. While performing their day-to-day work, employees continuously construct tacit knowledge that could prove invaluable if accessed and used to ameliorate deficiencies in business processes and procedures. Wegner suggests that tacit knowledge is internal and remains hidden until something in the environment triggers its communication. Communication and collaboration is the key to further developing knowledge and applying it to practical use in the environment. Davenport, De Long and Beers (1997) suggest that it should be an organization's goal to facilitate the exchange of tacit knowledge.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to develop an understanding of the type of environment that warehouse workers perceive to be conducive to promoting and sustaining

employer and employee growth. To obtain a clearer understanding of this concept, the researcher will perform a one-on-one phone interview with employees who are currently warehouse workers and employees who started as warehouse workers and are now executives of the company. Interview results from these two groups will be compared, analyzed and used to suggest the type of environment that encourages employee growth.

Theoretical Framework

This study also highlights a competency based approach for employee advancement and discusses its value for the company and its employees. As stated by Kerpoe (2001), competencies provide the framework for individual employee training and development of employee training programs. This type of approach creates a flexible workforce and an environment where employees perceive that they are capable of performing different jobs and as a result, are more open to change. Jacobs and Jones (1995) contend that employee's who attain skills for other areas of their work benefit the entire organization and the employee (refer to Chapter 2 for a more detailed explanation of the Competency Based Approach).

Additionally, this study provides focus on Knowledge Management (KM) and the significant role it can play in identifying the conditions within an organization that promotes employee knowledge sharing. Davenport et al. (1997) define knowledge as intelligence attained from the combination of experience, the context of information and the ability to combine all three into reflective thought. Davenport and Volpel describe KM as the process of finding, organizing and managing knowledge within an organization and the ability to apply that knowledge to solve current problems. Knowledge inspires change in people and/or institutions and creates actions based on knowledge gained (Davenport, and Volpel, 2001). In accordance

with the concept of KM it is hoped that this study provides the initial steps to access and manage

the knowledge within Env and ultimately contribute to a growing body of knowledge.

The following quote from the IBM Global Service of Australia supports thebelief that

employee knowledge is the company's most valuable resource:

In today's commodity-driven environment, knowledge management helps an

organization enhance its competitiveness and for some, maintain viability. Organizations

need to rapidly understand:

1.   What they know.

2.   How to use what they know.

3.   How to learn more.

4.   How to apply it quickly (IBM Global Services, 2001, p. 10).

Hanson (2003) states that less than ¼ of American workers actually work to their

potential, therefore; it's impossible for employers to accomplish their goals. The skills required

for performing warehouse operations functions are hidden in the regular day-to-day jobs of the

warehouse. There is strong possibility that concealed within warehouse operations workers are

individuals who possess potential to elevate the company to higher levels within their business

arena. According to a study performed by WERC (2001) a manager of Metro Part Warehouses

(Anonymous, 2001) observed that some of his employees have abilities but no motivation while

others lack abilities but are motivated to succeed.

Rationale for the Study

A number of studies have been performed that focus on warehouses and employees who work in the warehouse. A review of studies performed by WERC provides information for managing warehouse environments, benchmarking, creating incentive programs, training, coaching and many other specific programs for the warehouse. While these studies provide information that is invaluable for warehouse operations, no study has been found that derives information by combining ideas from employees who work in the warehouse environment and employees who started in the warehouse and achieved top executive status within the company.

Information from these two distinct groups of employees should create an opportunity to reduce the gap between current warehouse working environments and the type of environment that warehouse employees perceive to be conducive to encouraging them to work to their potential. WERC studies suggest that warehouses are becoming a key segment of the supply chain and employers need to provide the type of environment that encourages their employees to use their skills and competencies to achieve company success WERC (1998).

Additionally, warehouses are increasingly being relied upon for customer specific knowledge required by other departments such as, Sales, Marketing, and Transportation to assist them in successfully meeting customer requirements. The reason why the warehouse is able to supply this type of support is that warehouses are a focal point because they are in continuous communication with internal and external customers. In conjunction, warehouse employees possess current information of the status of inventory, shipping trends and internal company issues that affect their ability to do their job. The findings of this study should add to the growing

body of knowledge on employee motivation and their work environment while helping to reduce the gap between employee's abilities and their accomplishments.

Research Questions

This dissertation research study seeks to gain insight and a deeper level of understanding into the warehouse environment from the perceptions of employees who work in the warehouse environment and former warehouse employees who have achieved top executive status. It is hoped that the results of this study contributes to determining elements required to create and sustain a working environment that identifies, supports, and encourages employees to work to their potential. Research questions focus on: (a) What do employees think are encouraging factors in their work environment, (b) do employees think they can achieve their personal work goals, (c) what are employee thoughts relating to the future of warehousing and the skills that will be required to perform their work?

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the type of working environment thatwarehouse operation's workers perceive to be supportive of their needs. Interview questions encourage them to share their ideas, experience and areas of interest. The following sections of questions will be used as the foundation of the research study providing a guide to explore the thoughts and perceptions of the study group. Questions pertaining to employee thoughts regarding their environment:

This section of the employee questionnaire attempts to explore employee perceptions within the warehouse environment and discover what they perceive to be elements of encouragement. The primary question is: What are the fundamental elements of a working

environment that inspires employees to work, and continuously work towards achieving their potential. Questions to solicit employee thoughts relating to:

1. What are the incentives provided by the company to assist employees in developing their skills and competencies?

2. What do employees think about incentives provided by the company and their relationship to employees achieving their goals?

3. How do employees perceive themselves within the working environment?

4. How do employees think that their work contributes to company goals?

5. What additional incentives should the company provide that would encourage employees to actively participate in promoting company growth.

Questions relating to employee perception of their abilities:

The purpose of this segment of questions is to promote reflective thought. Employees are encouraged to reflect on their own thoughts and ideas regarding their personal ability to succeed with their career goals and aspirations. Information obtained from this segment aids in constructing a picture of employee perceived strengths and weaknesses. The primary question is: How do employees perceive themselves and their ability to achieve personal career goals?

Questions to solicit employee thoughts relating to:

1. What are the employee's job aspirations?

2. What skills and competencies do employees think that they have?

3. What preparation does the company give them to prepare them for other jobs?

4. What is employee's perception of their value to the company?

Questions relating to employee perceptions on changes in the warehouse environment:

In this segment, employees are encouraged to relate their experiences on how the company assisted themin preparing for changes in their work. Additionally, questions encourage employees to share their thoughts on warehouse changes in the future and the willingness and ability of the company to prepare them to accommodate those changes. The primary question is: What are employee's perceptions of the future of warehouse occupations?

Questions to solicit employee thoughts are:

1. How has the warehouse changed since you started to work in a warehouse environment?

2. What changes do you anticipate in the next 10 years?

3. How do you think changes will affect your ability to work in the warehouse?

4. What are your perceptions on company willingness and readiness to prepare you with the skills needed to work in warehouses of the future?

Nature of the Study

This study utilizes a qualitative methodology from a phenomenological perspective. The reason for using the qualitative research methodology is that it is multifaceted, involving an introspective approach to the way humans interpret their world and the various phenomena of their environment. Qualitative researchers study people in their natural environment and try to interpret their thoughts, actions and reactions. They try to establish a platform from which readers obtain a deeper level of understanding (Stake, 1995). Researchers are deeply involved in interpreting meanings from the way that society determines reality and are emerged in the subject and environmental constraints that shape the enquiry. Qualitative researchers give full meaning to the phrase, enquiring minds want to know, aptly restated by Denzin, and Lincoln

(2000) "They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (p. 8).

The phenomenological approach involves introspective and reflective human thought. The researcher must in essence "listen with a third ear" while observing the research subjects in their situational environment and, in addition, possess the ability to incorporate the entire experience in constructing meaning. The purpose of this is to obtain an understanding of the information presented, from the participant's perspective (Creswell, 1998).

Significance of the Study

The successful operation of warehouses is largely dependent on the hourly workforce, blue collar workers, who perform the same work every day. These individuals are experts in their field and are the foundation of their company. If they don't perform their work, the company's customers will not be serviced. However, hidden in the recesses of the minds of many of these employees are innovative ideas with the potentialto contribute to their company' continued success. These workers need to be encouraged to reveal their ideas in a non-threatening environment and those ideas used as a catalyst to identify unique competencies. In today's dynamic world of business, companies are challenged to create an appropriate work environment for their workers. Management is presented with many issues that impede their progress and stifle their ability to provide the type of environment that encourages their employees. Some issues relating to management's dilemma are: A shrinking pool of skilled Warehouse Operations labor, relatively low hourly rates and the mundane and repetitive nature of warehouse jobs (Farmer, 1999).

It is hoped that this study will complement the studies performed by WERC and encourage additional studies to fill the void created by the lack of studies for this section of the working population. Additionally, the results from this study may provide a venue for identifying individuals who possess the skills and intellect to function over and above their current occupations yet keep their ideas hidden, and very rarely use them. Without identification, highly capable employees remain hidden within the organization, performing jobs that are far inferior to their intellect and their company remains unaware of this loss. Organizations cannot afford to waste their most valuable resource and must find ways to encourage these employees to aspire for advanced positions within the company. Employees need to be able to recognize that they possess skills to fulfill their aspirations, while assisting the company with goals and aspirations. While these employees generally perform an excellent job in their job function, many are capable of much more.

<div align="center">Operational Definition of Terms</div>

Cross docking.

Cross Docking is a process that optimizes the flow of product to the warehouse and minimizes movement and handling on the dock. Product is generally received at the warehouse in the same configuration as the customer ordered. Storage is minimal because, generally, the product is scheduled for delivery to the customer within the same work day (Napolitano, 2000).

Customer relationship management.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is used to accumulate customer information from internal company sources and if required, from external company sources. The purpose is

to provide a complete picture of customer needs and requirements. It is particularly used to assist employees in sales, customer support, and marketing to provide real time customer information. CRM provides the tools to improve customer service, increase the efficiencies of customer support centers, improve company ability to target customers for increased sales and aids marketing in improving their processes to obtain better results from marketing strategies (Company V.P., personal communications, August 25, 2003).

Electronic data interchange.

In reference to the Supply Chain, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) refers to system generated transactions for shipping, ordering, billing and logistics. Receiving and shipping transactions are system created, based on pre-set system parameter. One of the primary transaction sets is the Advance Ship Notice (ASN). The ASN is generated after product orders are entered into the system. They are a mirror image of expected daily receipts and are used by the RDC to plan their receiving and shipping day (Maltz, 1998).

Knowledge management.

Knowledge Management (KM) is the ability to gather information from all areas of the internal and external environment and, by taking a comprehensive view of this information, developing the applicable knowledge required to enhance current processes and procedures. Farver, Joslin, and La Bounty (2002) describe KM as being:

A discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving, and sharing all enterprise' information assets. These assets may include databases, documents, policies, procedures, and previously un-captured tacit expertise and experience in the minds of individual workers. The whole concept of KM is to

capture one of the most valuable assets within any organization: the knowledge, expertise and past experiences of its employees. (p.9)

On boarding.

On-Boarding at Env refers to the processes and procedures required to prepare Suppliers for the RDC. These processes pertain to several departments: Coding and Standards, Corporate Billing and Electronic Supplier Services. Coding and Standards ensures that all supplier contact and product information is correct in the system. Corporate Billing creates the billing and pricing records for supplier invoices. Electronic Supplier Services works with a third party service to create electronic transactions for ordering products from the Suppliers and delivery to the RDC (P. Tann, personal communications, September 15, 2003).

Regional distribution center.

A Regional Distribution Center (RDC) is a warehouse that stores products for all warehouse operating companies in a given region. For example, the research company has 12 operating companies in the SE region. The SE RDC will receive 75% of the products that each of these companies normally order directly from their suppliers. Instead of ordering directly from their Suppliers, each company will now order these products from the RDC. As a result of this change in procedure, supply chain efficiencies will be realized, such as, lower delivery costs, less storage facilities required across the region, increased productivity and greater ability to supply just-in-time service to customers (Company VP, personal communications, October 25, 2003).

Supply chain.

The Supply Chain consists of four main functions: processing customer orders, manufacturing product, delivering the product and post delivery support. Processing customer orders refers to entering or receiving products, verifying customer credit, filling orders and scheduling shipment. Manufacturing ensures that the raw materials is available for the end product, schedules production and completes the finished product. Delivery schedules the product for on-time delivery utilizing the most efficient and cost effective method. Post delivery maintains customer satisfaction by following up on the delivery, obtaining customer feedback and correcting any issues that arise (Maltz, 1998).

The persona concept.

A persona is a model of user goals, attitudes, and behaviors created from observing real people and presented as a vivid, narrative description of a single person. Personas are defined by their goals and the number of personas created for a site should be relatively small (between three and seven). Personas guide design decisions by identifying target users and their primary goals and are mainly used to steer company focus towards customer needs.

Personas maintain focus on specific customer requirements during the site design process. They are the result of translating business objectives into related user goals that successfully achieve customer satisfaction; ultimately achieving company goals. The persona concept provides the criteria for designing customer centric sites, while reducing development time and cost (Glaze, 2002).

Transportation management systems.

Transportation Management Systems (TMS) are computer systems that assist warehouses in improving their delivery efficiencies. Through the use of TMS businesses are better able to determine the geographical area for customer delivery and combine loads to reduce cost and delivery time. Transportation Management Systems provide warehouses with the necessary tools to determine customer deliveries that can be combined to reduce the cost of delivery and improve delivery times. These systems play a key role in assisting the RDC in achieving its goals (Maltz, 1998).

<div align="center">Assumptions and Limitations</div>

Assumptions

Assumptions of this study are

1. If the work environment is non-supportive, employees' become stagnant and lose interest in the company and their ability to succeed with their own personal goals and the goals of the company.

2. The work that a person performs does not define the person; people are much more than what they do or other people's perception of their abilities.

3. This study is a preliminary study performed to identify the elements required for an effective work environment.

4. The results of this project will promote additional research on the elements of an employee work environment that promotes employee growth.

5. Employers believe that it is the employee's responsibility to take advantage of company provided benefits such as, employee counseling, coaching and maximizing skills,

training, and career path programs. The general consensus is that if employees are not self-motivated to seize the opportunity that these benefits provide to assist them in achieving their goals, there is nothing employers can do.

6. The availability of company benefits does not mean that employees will take advantage of them. Employers need to proceed to the next level by creating an environment that identifies employees who possess hidden competencies.

7. Researcher experience and knowledge with employees in this environment is crucial to data interpretation.

8. Companies prefer to have employees who are interested in the success of the company and are generally willing to provide them with a work environment that promotes growth.

9. Communication and collaboration generates reflective thought and serve as a catalyst to develop a deeper understanding of phenomena.

10. Perceptions of trust promote reflective thought.

11. People are generally willing to share their ideas if they perceive that they can trust the interviewer.

12. Employees who are basically "hidden giants" are often unaware of their abilities and how to use them to advance their position within the company.

Limitations

This study involves employees who work in a warehouse environment and former warehouse employees who have achieved top executive positions within the company. The primary focus is employees who currently work in the warehouse environment. This study will use a foodservice marketing and distributing company. The company has many warehouses

located across the United States and employs approximately 24,500 warehouse employees. They provide food and related products and services to many restaurants, healthcare and education facilities, lodging establishments and other foodservice customers (Baker, 2003). In total, 47 employees will be asked to participate in the survey; 37 employees who currently work in the warehouse environment and 10 former employees who are now top executives in the company. It is anticipated that there will be 100% participation of this study group. The 10 executives represent the extreme case; therefore, they may not prove to be the typical type of warehouse operations workers.

An additional concern is researcher bias, which is an accepted reality of this type of research. In a phenomenological study, because the researcher is heavily involved in interpreting the data, researcher bias can play an unwitting part (Denzin, and Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, the researcher must be fully aware of beliefs that may skew data interpretation. Researcher disclosures are:

1. A strong passion for the underprivileged.

2. Personal belief that companies prefer to retain and maintain employees in mundane, day-to-day operations providing that they continue to maintain productivity levels required by the company.

3. A strong belief that companies are unaware of the strengths that they have within the company and prefer to keep employees in their current position to prevent loss in productivity while re-training.

4. A firm conviction that blue collar workers possess many skills that add value to the workplace.

Chapter Summary

The focus of this research study is the environment in which warehouse operations employees perform their daily work. This chapter describes the business of warehouses and provides an explanation of: (a) The research problem; (b) purpose of the study; (c) rationale; (d) research questions; (e) methodology; (f) significance of the study; (g) definition of terms; and (h) assumptions and limitations. Also described is an overview of the company of the research study. The research company is very interested in using the results of this study to assist them in creating a working environment that will increase employee efficiencies and ultimately, the company's ability to remain competitive.

The remainder of this proposal is described in the two remaining chapters. Chapter 2 is the literature review for this study. This review covers elements of a working environment that contributes to worker efficiencies and skill level such as KM, employee motivation, employee competencies and the types of training that are effective in a warehouse environment. Chapter 3 details the methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to Literature Review

Warehouses, an important segment of the evolving world of the Supply Chain, perform a prominent role in assisting companies in meeting changing customer needs. To remain in business, all businesses constantly adapt to change by modifying processes and procedures to accommodate and satisfy increasing customer demands for customized deliveries and faster service, at optimum prices. In a study performed by WERC (1998), survey results determined that because of their physical position in the supply chain, warehouses are often in possession of customer centric information communicated to their employees while performing their work. Study results proposed that the working environment of warehouse employees must be conducive to fostering employee growth and encouraging employee communication and collaboration. This same study identified and highlighted the need for companies to provide employees with the type of working environment that fosters growth, cooperation, and willingness to actively assist in achieving company and employee goals.

In accordance with study results from WERC (1998), the focus of this research is on the importance of business to harness, manage, develop and leverage employee knowledge throughout the organization for the benefit of the company. If, as determined by this study, warehouses are to be successfully relocated to the position of Supply Chain Coordinator, employee motivation, inspired from their perception of their working environment plays a prominent role in achieving company success. Businesses need to

create a working environment where employees are encouraged and assisted in developing their skills and are motivated to openly share ideas that assist the company and employee in achieving their goals. This chapter provides information to aid readers in understanding the warehouse environment and the components required to create and sustain a working environment that fosters and supports employee growth. Areas covered relate to: Knowledge Management, Employee Motivation and Employee Competencies.

On-the-job Training

These four areas are presented because they provide readers of this study with information on theories that pertain to employees and their working environment. A recurring theme throughout this study is the ability of employers to provide the type of environment that inspires their employees to continuously use their knowledge, skills and competencies to help them and the company achieve success. Understanding the importance of KM, employee motivational factors and employee competencies are primary keys to unlocking the minds of employees and the discovery of what they perceive to be motivating factors in their environment. In relation to employee abilities, On-the-Job training is the primary and most successful method of employee training and is therefore presented here to enhance the readers understanding of its purpose and process. The researcher has chosen to highlight these areas (Knowledge Management, Employee Motivation, Employee Competencies and On-the-Job-training) to heighten the awareness of readers to assist them in perceiving the importance of this study and the necessity to perform additional studies relating to warehouse employees and their work environments.

Introduction to Knowledge Management

Imbedded in employees' minds are knowledge assets, Malhotra (2004) describes this as segments of an individual's knowledge base that lie dormant until motivated to spring into action. A research article conducted for the United Nations by Malhotra (2000) stated that the knowledge possessed by people and management of that knowledge is significant in determining a country's growth potential. The same inference can be applied to companies and their ability to function successfully in their dynamic business environment. Knowledge Management (KM) is generally referred to as the process of identifying, collecting, organizing and storing information to facilitate knowledge transfer. Businesses use KM systems to store company information that when assessed and implemented, is perceived to promote increased efficiencies (S. Vasudevan, personal communications, July 2003).

This research study promotes the idea that managing knowledge pertains to the ability of a company to provide the type of environment that their employees perceive to be supportive of their personal career goals and that of the company's. This study seeks to support the concept that employees who perceive this are more willing to share their tacit knowledge and continue to seek ways to further develop knowledge to assist their company in achieving its goals. Companies that are successful are able to harness employee knowledge, store it in KM systems, retrieve it when needed and continuously review and change as business experiences change. In essence, they are able to use their KM system as a tool to leverage employee knowledge across the organization and

maintain accurate and reliable knowledge storage (Davenport., De Long, and Bears, 1997).

<p style="text-align:center">Knowledge Management</p>

Knowledge Management relates to managing information that resides in the external environment of the company and within employees. O'Dell, Grayson, and Essaides (1998) defined KM as "A framework, a management mind-set that includes building on past experiences (libraries, data-banks, smart people) and creating new vehicles for exchanging knowledge (knowledge-enabled intranet sites, communities of practice, networks)" (p. 6). Allee ((1979) referred to knowledge as being experience that can be shared. In this quote he encourages people to think about their experiences and use them to build on their knowledge "Think about all the information you have acquired, now process it, sort it, categorize it, store it, and use it to build knowledge and make meaning" (p. 4).

Nonaka (1991) alluded to the fact that, to meet the challenges before them, organizations must constantly re-define themselves and continuously evolve to become learning organisms with the ability to translate knowledge into wisdom. To accomplish this, organizations must enlist employee assistance and involvement to capture, define and re-define knowledge by leveraging it across the entire organization. The main purpose of KM is that if applied, it changes the way that work is performed, by promoting the best work standards through the application of Best Business Practices (BBP). Work standards created from BBP's are extracted from information gathered from all sources of the organization, aggregated into knowledge and constructed into wisdom

(pp. 23-45). Sveiby (1997) suggested thatentire organization s must work collaboratively to feed the formal feedback system with new ideas and actively participate in selecting and utilizing the best ideas for the organization. As stated in this quote "Knowledge grows by sharing" (p. 23).

Malhotra (2002) considered that today's business world is enveloped in dynamic and discontinuous change. As a result of this, organizations are in a continuous mode of change that necessitates reassessment of employee processes and procedures, decision making strategies and company wide best practices. From a similar perspective O' Dell et al. (1998) suggested that people actively process information and continuously create new knowledge to accommodate new situations. Therefore; practices originally thought to be the best practices soon outlive their usefulness and are modified or discarded and replaced with current information (p. 60). Sveiby (1997) suggested that most employees are knowledge workers; the majority of their work-day consists of changing information into knowledge. As a consequence, continuous employee input, perceived and developed from day-to-day involvement in the work they do, has the potential to create new best practices that aid companies in achieving and maintaining their competitive edge.

Today, information processing systems, referred to as evolution information systems, are used to capture and store information that when used, is perceived to increase employee efficiencies. Information systems are used to capture, store and create intelligence required for business functions. They have progressed in three phases: automation, rationalization of procedures, and re-engineering. Automation increased the efficiencies of every day mundane operations, while rationalization of procedures

enhanced the efficiencies that automation provided by eliminating areas of congestion and confusion. In contrast, re-engineering introduced radical re-design of the way businesses function by revamping work flows and processes (Malhotra, 1999). Although these three strategies served to, in general, increase efficiencies, very little emphasis on actually re-thinking business and how they function within current and future business environments have been taken into consideration. The information processing view of knowledge management relates more to a company's success in benchmarking and storing best practices, O'Dell, Grayson and Essaides (1998). The main assumptions of the information processing view relates to time and the historical context of organizations as a whole rather than on an individual organization and its unique context.

The information process view assumed that the ability of an organization to adapt to current and future environments is based on explicit knowledge of employees that is stored in databases and technology KM repositories (Oxford, 2000). This interpretation of an organization considers KM systems to be a reliable source and predictor of company success and ignores the fact that these systems store static tacit information disregarding the fact that change is discontinuous and that KM systems need to be imbedded in this phenomena. Davenport and Volpel (2001) considered that this static representation of knowledge fails to consider how employees process, store, retrieve and share new knowledge. He contended that information systems treat knowledge in a simplistic way and ignores the fact that knowledge is constantly undergoing change. Malhotra (2003) suggests that this treatment and view is uncharacteristic of the world of business and fails to support reality, which is that businesses function in a world of

constant change. Sveiby (1997) explained that Knowledge is dynamically created by employees from their inner representation of personal experiences and subsequent perception of current incoming information. In relation to this explanation, knowledge cannot be assessed from a collection of stored information in a KM system but is dynamically created by users reacting to different types of information (p. 23).

Knowledge Management is not just about information awareness and profiting from it but carefully looking at what employees know and redefining their knowledge as changes occur, to stay ahead of the competition. Failure to do this provides opportunities for other companies to gain advantage by implementing changes that obsolete what is known. Success in business heavily depends on the company's ability to react quickly to change, which can only be accomplished by employees continuously questioning, re-interpreting and redefining information based on changes in their environment and prior knowledge that allows them to interpret new information (Malhotra, 1999). O'Dell, Grason, and Essaides (1998) maintained thatthe environment of a business can change over time resulting in a change in focus for the company. Garvin (1998) stated that successful companies utilize knowledge pertaining to the behavior of their customers, their business, the economy and technology, at a faster pace than their competition. Successful companies are able to adapt quickly to market changes by seizing opportunities to excel when changes occur that provide them a window of opportunity. In conjunction, they are able to re-invent themselves to accommodate current and future change in their marketplace (Garvin, 1998).

In summary, KM research suggests that the fundamental purpose of KM is to

build communities of people that are able to work together collaboratively to define and re-define company information and construct knowledge that is compliant with current and future changes of the business O'Dell et al. (1998). Companies need to create the type of environment that fosters employee growth by providing appropriate training, coaching and opportunities that allow them to communicate and collaborate with each other, resulting in improving employee ability to contribute to company success. Paramount to the success of this type of environment is respect for the company and each employee that works for the company. Additionally, employees need to be able to perceive that the company cares for them and that they are adequately compensated for their efforts. Employee motivation is a key indicator for company success and the work environment plays a prominent role in employee motivation (Nocolaides, 2003). Sveiby (1997) subscribes to the belief that people are the most important aspect the workplace, as described by this quote "People are the only true agents in business. All assets and structures-whether tangible or intangible-are the result of human actions; all depend ultimately on people for their continued existence" (p. 8). Additionally, Sveiby (1997) suggested that employee competence plays a major role in an organization's ability to succeed.

Introduction to Motivation

Maslow (1943) developed a theory on motivation, built on the premise that humans have basic needs and these basic needs must be satisfied before they can focus on other things. His theory provided a hierarchical view of human motivation. The premise was that if lower level needs are not met, human beings cannot move to the next level

because these needs are so strong that they prevent the progression and subsequent achievement to the next level. His theory relates to human needs and desires, based on each individual's perception in relation to his needs hierarchy (psychological, safety, love, esteem, the desire to know and understand and the need for self-actualization). Maslow's belief was that these needs are hierarchical, resulting in the previous need being satisfied before realization of the following need. In summary, this theory states that psychological needs relate to the basic physical needs of every human being, such hunger, thirst and air. After the basic necessities of life are satisfied, safety comes into play. When both psychological and safety needs are satisfied, feelings of love are able to flourish. Esteem needs refer to the ability to see ones self as an important part of the internal and external environment, as having a place of prestige, relative to current social beliefs and trends. To achieve the final stage, self-actualization, humans must achieve a non-superfluous level of understanding of the world they live in and realize a keen drive for knowledge seeking and construct-building. The final stage, self-actualization, is the most difficult to accomplish. It entails the successful accomplishment of all previous stages and the additional ability and opportunity to achieve all desires (Maslow, 1943).

Farmer (1999) suggested that employee motivation is dependent on the relationship that exists between organizations and their workforce. He contended that it is the force between them that encourages workers to perform at their best and the feelings of satisfaction or lack thereof that workers derive from their work. In accordance with this concept of motivation, companies that fail to inspire employees to do their best work are doomed to fail. According to Farmer, motivation is the force inside of people that

encourages them to make choices that contribute to their success and this force is nourished through their relationship with the organization and their perception of the organization. Employee behavior is influenced by this perception which propels them into achieving their desired goals or burying those goals and performing at their minimal level. Mabel (2002) reflects on motivation as being an individual phenomenon and the actions produced out of motivation, or lack thereof, as being intentional.

Mabel explains that motivation can be external and intangible, such as pertaining to: pay increases; job security; safety programs; promotions and improved pension and retirement plans. Motivation can be intrinsic and intangible, such as: opportunities to excel; positions perceived as challenging; tasks that convey a sense of achievement; personal growth; positive recognition; being appreciated; and being able to perceive that one is valued and respected in the workplace. A motivated and supported workforce creates challenges for themselves to achieve organizational objectives while staff de-motivation promotes non-constructive behavior, frustration and inappropriate attitudes that hinder productivity (Mabel, 2002).

Sumita (2004) has a similar view suggesting that people work for different reasons, for example, monetary reasons to fulfill their basic survival needs while others use work to fulfill their self-esteem. He maintains that motivation can be adequately described and summarized with three concepts: (a)direction, (b) intensity, (c) persistence.

Effective Motivation Techniques in the Warehouse

A study performed by WERC (1999) identified successful motivation techniques used by companies whose primary workforce is blue collar workers. They mailed approximately 2200 questionnaires to members of the supply chain in areas of manufacturing, retailing, wholesaling and third party warehouses. The study focused on techniques pertaining to the use of group activities, services, workplace environment, rewards and those that fell into a miscellaneous category. Table 1 and 2 details these categories.

Analysis of survey results from all companies that participated in the study identified the following as being the 10 most effective motivation techniques:

1. Monetary awards (38%), used by most companies but difficult to implement and can result in being a costly venture.

2. Incentives pertaining to safety and attendance (24%), used by most companies and has the potential to benefit many employees. Companies find this easy to implement and fairly inexpensive to maintain.

3. Parties and lunches on company time (22%), used by many companies, low in cost and fairly easy to implement and maintain.

4. Formal recognition plaques (18%), used by many companies, benefits all employees and fairly low in cost.

5. Performance awards (15%), moderately used benefits large groups of employees, easy to create and implement and is inexpensive.

6. Flexible schedules (13%), moderately used by companies, benefits many employees and is fairly inexpensive to maintain.

7. Company picnics (10%), used by most companies, easy to implement and is inexpensive.

8. Employee-of-the-month (6%), not very widely used, benefits many employees and virtually inexpensive.

9. Group outings (6%), moderately used, average to implement, benefits many employees and is fairly inexpensive.

10. Structured advancement program (4%), not widely used because it can be difficulty to implement but is inexpensive. (Farmer, 1999)

Table 1
Motivation Techniques Studied WERC (1999)

Group Activities	Company-sponsored athletic teams
	Company picnics
	Parties/catered lunches on company time
	Group outings
Services	On-Site Daycare
	Mass transportation
	Laundry drop-off
	On-site gym or recreation center
	On-site cafeteria
	Financial planning seminars
	Career counseling
	Personal counseling
	Stock purchase plan
Workplace Environment	Flexible schedules
	Company newsletter
	Incentives (safety, attendance)

Table 2
Motivation Techniques Studied WERC (1999)

Rewards	Formal recognition ceremonies
	Plaques, trophies, certificates
	Monetary awards
	Employee of the month awards
	Stock bonuses
	Recreational travel
	Dues reimbursement
	Tickets to events
	Company logo merchandise
	Gifts certificates
Other	Merchandise discounts
	Tuition reimbursement
	Scholarships for associates' children
	Structured advancement programs

Selecting Incentives for Employee Motivation

The WERC (1999) survey provided an insight into employee incentive programs currently being used, as a guideline when trying to determine incentive programs that foster employee motivation. However, Harps (2001) believes that employee incentive programs need to be attached to defined roles and performance measures that are aligned with employee productivity. The WERC (1999) survey did not focus on this aspect of motivation which is a key measure of the success of motivational programs. In conjunction, employees must be provided opportunity to make suggestions on the types of incentives provided by their company. As discussed in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the value of incentives is relative to the individual's perception of its value. For example, an employee who is struggling to keep food on his family's table (Psychological needs) will appreciate and value monetary rewards much more than formal recognition. Conversely, an employee who has already accomplished basic needs is motivated by incentives that promote feelings of accomplishment and recognition such as, formal recognition and being chosen as employee-of-the-month. These employees have a desire to feel that their company respects what they have to say and perceive them as being competent. Employees that have reached this level are inspired by opportunities that prove their level of competency and their productivity is tied to their sense of job satisfaction. These employees are intrinsically motivated and require appropriate incentives to foster this need (Maslow, 1943).

In relation to the theories on motivation discussed in this review, it can be determined that employees are the best source for determining incentives that will be successful and those that will not. Generally, the result of employee' input into incentive programs is that it generates incentive strategies that meet the needs of all employee levels of motivation. Employees need to know that their company care about them and the work that they perform. Incentive programs that are created from employee input are perceived by employees to be reflective of their needs and as a result of this perception, produce higher levels of motivation. Farmer suggests that to accommodate the dynamic environment in which companies operate today, companies must also be willing to constantly assess their motivation programs. To accommodate business changes, organizational goals are continuously restructured and as a result, motivational programs must be re-analyzed to ensure that they still meet employee and company needs.

Additionally, as employees mature with the company and their career and salary goals are realized, their perception of company incentives may change. Current company incentives may relate to Psychological, Safety and Love Needs but employees have surpassed these basic needs and are at the Esteem level of Maslow's hierarchical structure. At this level they are motivated by incentives that provide opportunities that they perceive prove that they are highly valued by the company. To maintain their level of effectiveness, current motivation strategies must undergo constant change to reflect changing employee motivational requirements.

Comparison between WERC Study and Current Study

The WERC (1999) study surveyed WERC members in the manufacturing, retailing, wholesale and third-party sectors of warehouse operation's businesses to determine the motivational techniques that they consider to be most effective. Questions focused on motivational and retention techniques for hourly workers of the warehouse. Management was asked to reflect on their motivational techniques and rank them according to their perception of their strengths and weaknesses. The survey was mailed to each company with a request to fill out the survey and mail back to WERC. Survey respondents that wanted to share more insights beyond survey questions were invited to communicate their insights through a phone conversation with WERC.

The current study differs from the WERC study because it involves employees who work in the warehouse and employees who started their career in the warehouse and progressed into executive positions within Env. In this study, survey participants are encouraged, during a phone interview, to reflect on their environment, discuss their thoughts and ideas and make suggestions on the elements that they think support an effective work environment. Survey questions encourage them to go beyond the motivational techniques identified in the WERC study and think about the elements of their entire working environment required to motivate them to perform to their best abilities. Questions such as, "Do you think that the company encourages you to advance your skills? If yes, how do they do this?" and "What has hindered you from accomplishing the type of growth that you would like to achieve?" These types of questions are asked to encourage employees to reflect on their past experiences, think

about themselves in relation to their environment and identify what is needed in their environment to truly motivate them.

The major difference between the WERC study and this study is the inclusion of executives that started their careers in the warehouse, performed warehouse operations tasks, and were able to rise to executive positions within the company. This study compares the results of these two groups of employees in an attempt to discover similarities and differences between them that could be the determining factor between employees that are motivated to succeed and those that are not. It is hoped that the knowledge gained from this type of comparison provides insights into what hinders employees who possess talents beyond their current occupation from striving to further develop their skills. While this research does not make the assumption that everyone wants or needs to achieve executive status it is trying to lay the foundation for companies to assist employees in achieving the level of success that they desire for themselves, while ultimately helping the company to better utilize their primary resource.

In addition, the knowledge gained will aid Env in realizing and understanding what they are losing by their inability to provide a working environment that encourages a larger proportion of their employees to further develop their skills and, if they desire, seek opportunities for advancement within the company. Employee retention is highly reliant on the company's ability to provide a working environment that identifies, utilizes and further develops employee competencies (Farmer, 1998).

Introduction to the Employee Competency Based Approach

Kerpoe (2001) related competencies to segments of knowledge constructs that, when used, attribute to the successful performance of a given role. Historically, employers focused on selecting employees for tasks required for specific jobs, basing their reason to hire on the applicant's ability to perform job specific tasks. Many employers failed to consider the relationship between different jobs and that mastery of one type of job could provide the skills needed for a similar or related job (Kerpoe, 2001). An alternative to this process is a competency based approach to employee selection.

Competency-based selection allows the employer to select applicants that possess clusters of related identifiable skills needed for several jobs, rather than just one job. This change in a company's employee selection process is very beneficial to the company and in addition, provides the company with employees who can master different jobs within the organization. For example, employees could be hired as blue collar workers, but, based on the relation of employee's skill mix to comparable white collar jobs they have the ability to perform or learn to perform either job; sometimes training or additional training is required to enhance employee's current competency level. As stated by Kerpoe (2001), competencies (a) Affect a major part of one's job, (b) correlate with performance on the job, (c) can be measured against well-accepted standards, and (d) can be improved through training and development (p. 2).

Kerpoe suggested that to accommodate a competency based approach, companies must change their traditional hiring methods to using a Competency based hiring process.

Some of the reasons why this is appropriate are that(a) Competency-based approach initiates a consistent process for hiring, (b) is generally intermingled with organizational goals; (c) creates a workforce that is flexible and interchangeable, (d) helps employees to move closer to becoming self-actualized, and (e) assists the human resource department in assessing candidate proficiencies (p. 2).

In an article by Tan (2003) he suggests that improving employee performance is not just about building competencies, it's about the company's ability to motivate employees to use competencies that they possess and inspire them to build on those competencies. In his opinion, Managers must find ways to get to know their employee's and the competencies that they posses and devise ways to assist them in fully utilizing their skills, knowledge and experience. He alludes to the fact that some managers are afraid of employees who appear to be competent and possess skills that are beyond them while others are afraid to delegate tasks in fear that they will not be completed to their satisfaction. Tran rationalizes that managers need to be confident in their ability to function as facilitators to inspire their employees to use their skills even if they are aware that their employees possess abilities that they lack. Successful managers are able to help their employees to grow and are able to use employee skills to accomplish company goals.

In summary, a companies' strength, resourcefulness and creativity is heavily dependent on its employees, therefore; companies need to access employee competencies and leverage those competencies across the organization. Tan (2003) contends that employees that are encouraged to utilize their competencies on the job are more inclined

to work towards further developing their competency level to achieve more results on the job. He implies that companies must provide training that aids employees in maximizing their skills.

Employee Training Methods

Traditional On-the-job Training

On-the-job training (OJT) focuses on teaching employees in their work environment. Co-workers, trainers, or knowledge experts that are available to teach during the required time frame, generally perform OJT. The purpose of OJT is generally to assist employees in improving their ability to perform their job. Jacobs and Jones (1995) contend that OJT benefits employees by reducing their learning curve. Carnevale (1989) found that employers actually train more people than the traditional higher education system. Figures produced are identified in table 3.

Table 3
Annual Expenditures and Enrollments

Institutions	Expenditures (billions)	Enrollment (millions)
Elementary & Secondary Schools	$157	46.6
Higher Education	$95	12.3
Military	$18	2.0
Employer	$30	14.0
Federal Programs	$4	2.0

Rothwell, and Kazanas (1990) explained that historically, OJT has been the primary form of employee training because management's perception has been that it is cost effective, and an effective process for employee training. The general consensus, in this environment, is that co-workers who are proficient at their jobs or have performed the same job over a period of time have the necessary skills required to train. However, this belief is not necessarily true because these employees generally lack skills required to train other employees. The result is that employees are inadequately trained and are left to fend for themselves, and experience difficulties when trying to perform the job. In addition, management think that employees are trained and able to perform the tasks required of the job, as a consequence of this, their expectations are beyond the employee's current ability.

Another aspect of OJT is that it generally focuses around a specific job; employees are only taught the tasks required to accomplish the job they are expected to do. It is generally an informal approach to training lacking the structure of a formal training approach (Rothwell, and Kazanas, 1990). To circumvent the absence of structure and improve OJT a new form of OJT formed during World War II, which revolutionized OJT producing dramatic increases in productivity. The name given to this form of OJT is JIT, or as it is know today, Structured OJT (Rothwell, and Kazanas, 1990).

Structured On-the-Job Training

The primary goal of Structured OJT is to improve the training employees receive on the job. This approach keeps training in the work place and aids in improving the training approach, thus enhancing OJT. Structured OJT is a dynamic systems approach to

planning and implementing employee training that takes into consideration the changing environment in which businesses operate. Because it is a systems approach, it considers the inputs into the organization, the processes used on the inputs and the expected outputs. Structured OJT is a training system that interacts with the organization and its day-to day workflow, providing a value added service.

Advances in OJT, and now Structured OJT, developed from the work of salaried government officials, organization managers and industrial trainers, who were the first to develop OJT during the first and second world wars. The views of these pioneers on training, employee expertise and organizational change are still considered to be relevant today (Jacobs, and Jones, 1995).

The Definition of Structured OJT

Rothwell, and Kazanas (1990) defined Structured OJT as a method of employee training that differs from other types of training because it incorporates a planned process for the development of task-level expertise, trained by experienced employees in or near actual work settings. They suggested that the ability to transfer task level information on a one-on-one basis is proven to be a more effective method of knowledge transfer than group instruction or the use of training documents. Unlike OJT, structured OJT requires time and effort to plan, create and implement. The following tables, Table 3 and Table 4, identify the differences between these two types of training on the job.

As defined in Table 4, Structured OJT differs from OJT because it is a system's approach, as opposed to Table 5, which is unstructured, using more of an add hoc method

of training. Structured OJT follows a planned system's approach that details the entire

process. It is a system's approach that improves the efficiency and effectiveness

of the learning process. Structured OJT is designed from a system's perspective and is

related to organizational performance. It assists employees in achieving a level of

expertise that has the potential of increasing their productivity and overall quality of their

work. Ultimately, employees are more equipped to assist the company in achieving

company goals because it is measured against the company's Return on Investment (ROI)

after the training is completed. Jacobs, and Jones (1995) described Structured OJT as a

system comprised of interrelating parts working collaboratively to succeed in achieving

common objectives.

Table 4
Types of On-the-Job Training

Self Directed Discovery	Coaching	On-the-Job Training
Employee learns by doing with limited information and is intentionally placed in the work setting to guide learning.	Employee learns by working alongside or nearby an experienced employee, who seldom knows exactly how or when to intervene as the task is performed.	An experienced employee performs the training but the employee's experience as a trainer is likely to be limited; skill level might also be questionable.
Employee must figure out each part of the task without assistance. False assumptions and errors are the result.		Training content, methods and outcomes vary across employees.

Table 5
Structured On-the-Job Training

Self-Directed Discovery	Coaching	Structured On-the-Job Training
Employee learns while doing, usually information engineered into work setting to guide learning.	Employee learns by working alongside or nearby an experienced employee, who uses systematic knowledge of the task to know when and how to intervene.	An experienced employee who has expertise as a trainer and in the task trains employee.
Employee can trust the system to help make learning easier and reduce frustration.	Training outcomes are relatively predictable.	Training content, methods, and outcomes are consistent across employees.

The Structured OJT Process

The Structured OJT process consists of the following six primary steps:

1. Decide whether to use Structured OJT.

2. Analyze the tasks to be learned.

3. Select train and manage the trainers.

4. Prepare training modules.

5. Deliver the Structured OJT.

6. Evaluate and troubleshoot the Structured OJT. (pp. 41-137)

Skill Development and Career Ladders

In the warehouse environment OJT is the primary method of training for skill development and pseudo career paths. In the US OJT is generally unstructured and as a result of this, often falls short of its goal. In a study by the Institute of Industrial Relations University of California, Berkely "NCW," they determined that in Japan they use OJT more effectively because Japanese companies use Structured OJT to improve worker efficiencies resulting in higher productivity. In Japan, they determine the skills required for each task and expose their employees to learning experiences that increase their efficiencies over time. Brown, and Reich (2003) report that Japan's system results in higher earnings for employees as they mature in age and experience. In contrast, OJT in the US is often informal and used on an as needed basis, rather than being part of a structured program that results in increased productivity and incremental gains for employees, over time. They state that, "as a result, high school graduates who perform blue collar jobs generally only earn 40% more at age 45 than at 25" (p. 25).

On-Line Training

Another form of employee training is On-Line training which can be used quite effectively for warehouse employee training. Evolution of this type of training can be traced back to the early 1960's when the US Government realized that communications would be destroyed in the event that a nuclear war developed. To research a solution, the RAND Corporation was commissioned by the US Government. Networks that connected

all states, was the solution. This was the beginning of the Advanced Research Projects
Agency Network (ARPA) which quickly grew and was instrumental in networking all
military institutions around the world. The ARPA Network was the beginning of the
Internet that we know today.

The ARPA Network is a decentralized network and because of this all compatible
systems can link into the system. This occurred during the mid 1970's – 1980's and at
that time the Education system, businesses and government institutions began to develop
programs that utilized networks (Nesbay, 2000).

The 1970's produced the first computer conferencing system, which made it
possible to hold group discussions through network technology. Additionally, the first
bulletin board for personal computers emerged making it possible for a larger group of
people to communicate through computer connectivity. The 1970's proved to be the
decade for experimenting and producing information-retrieval systems, resulting in the
advent of interconnectivity (Kang, 2000).

The 1980's expanded on this trend and further developed database technology.
During this time educational institutions started to incorporate computer conferencing
systems into their curriculum and continued to utilize this technology to link learners
locally, nationally and internationally. Learners were able to share information, discuss
global questions, be involved in project-based education, and in general, collaborate with
each other through this medium. Currently, universities, colleges, schools and indeed all
educational institutions are using this technology to supplement their educational
programs. The current term for this technology is Computer-Mediated Communication

(CMC). Today there is a collection of CMC based educational programs, some of which are totally Web based, computer mediated or a blend of the two. CMC programs of the 2000's are the result of the early development of computer network systems, in the 1970's (Kang, 2000).

Computer Mediated Communication

Today, CMC supports instruction and learning by enhancing traditional education systems and is one of the primary sources for adult education. This medium has enhanced educational communication by promoting learner-centered education, thus forcing learners to take control of what they learn, how they learn and the extent of the knowledge gained from their educational experience; CMC motivates participants to be actively involved in their learning experience.

CMC offers a variety of advantages such as, convenience and equality for all students, regardless of age, race, geographical location, gender, or physical disabilities. In addition, CMC encourages focused and reflective student dialogue and fosters increased interaction among students (Jonassen, 1996). Currently, on-line education is delivered synchronously or asynchronously. Asynchronous (delayed) communication allows students time to digest and reflect on information accessed or retrieved. Learners are able to decide on commenting immediately or take time to process, reflect and construct their comments. This time lag encourages quality in problem solving which results in an in-dept exploration of the subject matter.

Like traditional education, CMC provides the ability for real-time interaction between teachers and students thus supporting collaborative communication and

introducing new elements into the learning process. Unlike traditional education, CMC is primarily text-based interaction through keyboard entry with a blend of audio communication. Owing to the text-based aspect of CMC, learners are exposed to a variety of media consisting of, postings, online journals, and online conferences (Jonassen, 1996). This type of media allows for faster information exchange and easy data retrieval, providing learners with more opportunity to develop critical thinking skills. Additionally, CMC provides the ability to distribute documents via the network and present multimedia (text, images, sounds and animated pictures) to increase student ability to understand textual information. The open-ended structure of CMC creates an environment for all learning styles (Kang, 2000).

Adult Learning

Adult learners have a wealth of knowledge that, if they are motivated to learn, can be applied to acquire new knowledge. Knowles (1978) coined the term *andragogy* to prescribe a theory for adult learners. His theory is based on four assumptions: (a) as children mature into adults they change from needing to be directed in learning to becoming self-directed; (b) adults learn by applying prior knowledge to new experiences and by involvement through group discussions, team work, and active association with knowledge experts; (c) adults understand the value of life experiences in acquiring knowledge that can be leveraged across their lifespan; and (d) adults are motivated to learn if they perceive that the new skill is required to accomplish immediate goals.

Ribler (1983) contended that for adults, motivation to learn generates from their perception of the urgency and need to learn new skills. Training needs can arise from

career changes, technological changes in their working environment, process and procedural changes in their job or changes in their personal lives. Motivation can be enhanced by keeping the adult learner at the center of their training to ensure that they are cognizant of what they need to learn and how they will learn. Adult motivation to learn is: (a) enhanced by communicating the importance and urgency of the training in relation to their jobs or situation; (b) involving employees in deciding what and how they learn; and (d) providing incentives that employees value.

Facilitating Learning

Effective adult learning is fueled from a facilitative perspective, where the instructor is a catalyst for knowledge acquisition. Facilitators guide students in the learning experience by expanding on their ideas, encouraging them to question and actively seek answers to new information that catapults them into a state of disequilibrium. Facilitators work with adult students in drawing from prior experiences and using applicable experiences to aide them in making sense of new information. Learning takes place when prior knowledge can be used to convert new information into knowledge. The result is that knowledge is stored in the adult's knowledge base and is ready for retrieval, when needed. The ability to retrieve this knowledge brings the individual back into equilibrium (Knowles, 1978).

The User Persona Concept

A Web site user persona is a model that is created to provide a vivid, narrative description of a single site user. This single user or "persona" is developed through

composite research and interviews conducted with real and potential site users. Results from the research is analyzed and used to develop an archetype, a representative model, of a specific user group. The persona profile includes demographic data such as age, education, job title, and specific user requirements such as site information, site navigation, site preferences and site screen attributes.

The user persona concept originated from Alan Cooper, the creator of Visual Basics and the author of *The Inmates are Running the Asylum*. In this book he explains his ideas on improving the design process by developing personas. The persona concept is not totally new, it is a common process used in marketing. Glaze (2002) explains the difference in personas used in marketing and software design as "The goal of the marketing team is to produce the maximum appeal to their audience" (p.4). "In software design, our goal is to develop a product that best meets the needs and goals of our users" (p.5). A user persona is intended to guide Web design decisions by identifying target users and their primary goals. Research indicates that success is achieved by providing a model for site designers. This model, or persona, helps to maintain focus on specific user goals and serves as a guide for designers during the design process.

In summary, persona creation and use allows a company to establish clear objectives for site design and or site redesign. The user persona improves a company's ability to clearly identify customer motivation, goals and cross channel behaviors. Companies that have access to this type of user information are better equipped to create Web sites that provide positive user experience, ultimately increasing customer loyalty. Sites that are tailored to specific user needs and goals deliver consistent, long-term,

positive Web experiences. Additionally, because personas represent clear design objectives, time and cost is reduced (Glaze, 2002).

The user persona concept is used in this study because developing an appropriate Web site for users, and creating a working environment that meets employee needs, require the same type of research, analysis and focus as the site design process.

Learning Organizations

In today's highly technical and dynamic world of business companies are struggling to harness knowledge within their organization and capitalize on their knowledge to assist them in maintaining their position. Management are beginning to realize that as leaders of their organization they need to create a working environment that provides the tools, techniques and processes that challenge and support their employees. Learning Organizations (LO) provide this type of support through their understanding of the dynamics of change in relation to their ability to succeed. This type of organization encourages and supports employees to continuously inspect their mental models and re-align their thoughts and ideas with changes within their internal and external environment.

Senge (1997) completed an extensive review of systems theory which resulted in providing businesses with effective tools to understand changes in the world of business and how these changes affect organizations. In his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, he describes five learning disciplines that he perceives are the main factors of a learning organization: personal mastery; building a shared vision; working with mental models; dialogue and team learning; and, systems thinking. The first four disciplines all relate to

an environment that promotes employee personal growth; and, employee ability and desire to share their knowledge with other employees to collectively support the organization. The fifth discipline, systems thinking, enhances the company's ability to, in essence, "see the forest for the trees" (p. 127). Normally, a company's focus is on their internal environment and interactions within their environment. The underlining cause of change, as a result of actions and reactions, is seldom understood. The fifth discipline provides focus on the internal and external environment, changes in the environment and the effect and affect of those changes on the company and its employees. Applying this discipline enhances the company's ability to understand the origin of the change and the actions required to combat or accommodate change.

In conjunction, these five disciplines: personal mastery; building a shared vision; working with mental models; dialogue and team learning; and, systems thinking, create the foundation of a Learning Organization. Companies that implement these disciplines create an environment that encourages employees to aspire to maximize their potential. Employees openly share their knowledge and thoughts with other employees and in the process, gain a deeper level of understanding of the complexities that surround them.

In an article by Kerfoot (2005) she explains that true Learning Organizations present an atmosphere of teaching and learning. Employees in every level of the organization assume the role of teacher and learner and the assumed role is dependant only on the situation and the need. All employees are perceived to have knowledge to share that is required for continued company and employee success.

An article by Remedios (2004) further explains Learning Organizations as organizations that provide an environment that encourages knowledge transfer between all levels of the company. The environment sustains employee' belief that their ideas are acknowledged, discussed and examined for possible implementation; and, employees perceive that they are involved in the decision making process of their company. He explains that individuals value this because they value autonomy, they need to believe that they are self governing, which helps to foster a sense of freedom.

In summary, the necessity for companies to become Learning Organizations will become even more important as the baby boomers begin to exit the work force. This group of productive workers consists of approximately 82,826,479 of today's employees in diversified occupations, data taken from the 2006 US Census. Their exit will leave a tremendous gap which will need to be filled; companies will be faced with back filling these positions that are crucial to their ability to continue to succeed in their work space. In an article by Van Dam (2005) he explains that by 2008 there will be a deficit of skills and experience in the world of business as the first members of the baby boomer generation begin to retire. To combat this mass exit and simultaneously accommodate the dynamic world of business, organizations must be willing to continuously examine themselves and use insights gained from self-examination to continue to make their shared vision a success. In a quote taken from (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth, & Smith,1999) from the book *The Dance of Change* this concept is explained as " 'Profound Change' moving toward the fundamental" (p. 15), with profound change there

is learning. The organization doesn't just do something new; it builds its capacity for

doing things in a new way, it builds capacity for ongoing change.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Review of the Methodology

This study examined the perceptions of 45 employees who work for Env. Study participants comprised of 35 randomly selected warehouse employees who work in 10 of Env's 138 operating companies. The other 10 employees were randomly selected from the small group of employees who started in the warehouse and progressed to leadership roles within the company. The 10 executives represented a small percentage of warehouse employees who were able to use their work environment to work their way up into executive positions within the company. These employees are in the minority and are very important to the focus of this study in relation to the question, what do employees need in their working environment to encourage them to continuously strive to achieve company and employee goals? Alternatively, this study will promote questions such as: how many more employees who perform warehouse operations' functions possess abilities to achieve this status? What are companies losing by not providing a working environment that inspires workers to excel to achieve their potential?

Statement of the Problem

The problem is thatthere is a gap between th e environment in which warehouse employees work, and their perception of the type of environment that encourages them to achieve their potential.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of these selected employees by encouraging them to share their thoughts on the type of environment that they perceive will encourage them to continuously work towards achieving their career goals and, ultimately, the company's goals.

Research Questions

Research questions pertained to, and focused on discovering answers to the following questions:

1. What are the fundamental elements of a working environment that employees perceive will inspire them to work, and continuously work, towards achieving company goals?

2. What are employee perceptions concerning their ability to achieve personal career goals?

3. What are employee perceptions of changes in the warehouse environment?

Methodology of the Study

To encourage employees to think introspectively and communicate their experiences and thoughts from their perspective, a qualitative methodology was used. Interviews, data collection and data interpretation utilized a phenomenological approach. The reason for using this type of qualitative research is that it is multifaceted, involving an introspective approach to the way humans interpret their world and the various

phenomena of their environment. Stake (1995) refers to qualitative research as thestudy of people in their natural environment and the interpretation of their thoughts, actions and reactions. Qualitative researchers try to establish a platform from which they can begin to obtain a deeper level of understanding. During this type of research they are deeply involved in interpreting meanings from the way that society determines reality and are emerged in the subject and environmental constraints that shape the enquiry. Qualitative researchers give full meaning to the popular phrase "enquiring minds want to know." Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that "They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (p. 8).

The phenomenological approach, which is a qualitative method, was used because it involves introspective and reflective human thought. While conducting this research, the researcher used insights gained from past experiences with research subjects, to perceive the environment through the eyes of the research subjects.   A phenomenological study strives to probe below the surface of the phenomena with the intention of uncovering the "true" meaning of the phenomena. Information is gathered from several individuals, as opposed to a biographical study which reports the life of a single person.

In this phenomenological study participants were encouraged to delve into the recesses of their minds and relate their experiences and thoughts according to their own interpretation of reality. Participant's perceptions were solicited through open-ended questions during a phone interview. Having worked in this environment directly with warehouse workers the researcher was able to create a virtual environment where trust was assumed.

Data analysis began with searching the data for prevalent themes throughout all of the survey results. These themes were converted into representative categories thatwere used to create a table of summary information. The researcher then carefully reviewed this information and developed an insightful summary that is representative of participant's beliefs.

Limitations to a Phenomenological Study

The main limitation of a phenomenological study is the ability of researchers to separate personal pre-conceived ideas about the research population from data interpretation, when attempting to analyze data from a phenomenological perspective. Researchers must be able to temporarily separate and suspend their personal thoughts of reality so that they can focus on the representation of reality presented in the data. Successfully accomplishing this enables them to perceive the environment from the perspective of research subjects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The success of this study relied on the researcher's ability to reflect on past experiences with employees in a warehouse environment and apply knowledge gained when attempting to interpret information received from the research subjects. Prior to the interview the researcher developed interview questions for the research.

Data Collection

This study examined the perceptions of selected employees of Env. The target group was divided into two sub groups. Group A consisted of company executives that started with the company as employees in the Operations Department. Group B

comprised of employees who work in the warehouse environment. The same research

questions were used to interview both groups and the results were analyzed. After

analysis, the results from the executive group A, was compared to warehouse employee

group (B), and relationships between the two group's perceptions were identified.

For Group B, email communication was sent to each operating company president

to explain the purpose of the research and request permission to interview randomly

selected employees from the warehouse, for one hour of their work day. This email is

provided in (Appendix C). After receiving the employee list from the Personnel

Department and permission to contact employees, the researcher called each employee

and arranged an appropriate time to conduct the one hour phone interview. During this

time, the researcher explained to the employee the purpose of the interview and

communicated thattheir name was ra ndomly selected and the answers they give will be

anonymous. The researcher explained that information obtained from employees will be

placed in an Access database without their name or operating company name.

For Group A, the researcher contacted each of the 10 executives by phone,

discussed the research project and requested an appropriate time to perform a one hour

interview for the survey. They were also assured that information gathered from the

interview will be stored without their names or place of work.

At the agreed upon time of interview, the researcher called the selected employee.

For employees from Group B, the researcher explained that management had agreed that

the time taken for the survey would be counted a part of their normal work day.   The

researcher then reviewed the purpose of the interview and re-affirmed to the employee

that everything was confidential and would be recorded without the employee's name or company name. The researcher endeavored to ask each survey question in the order of the survey and, for the most part, was able to complete the survey. Some of the questions were answered by participants before the researcher got to that section of the survey and some participants tried to intersperse with questions relating to their own personal agenda. However, all questions were successfully answered by most participants and the researcher was able to complete 45 surveys in total. During the interview the researcher used speed writing techniques to capture the conversation. Immediately after the interview the researcher transcribed this information and entered it into an Access database, created for this research project.

Sampling

The population of this study included 37 current employees in the warehouse environment and 10 employees who started as warehouse employees and achieved top executive status within the company. The sample group of current warehouse employees was randomly selected from 10 of the target company's 138 warehouses. Within the population of current employees who work in the warehouse environment, only employees who performed warehouse jobs at the company for five years or more were considered for this sample group. All of these randomly selected employees began their careers as warehouse workers and although some of these employees are now at supervisory and management levels, most of their workday consists of either performing warehouse jobs or communicating with warehouse employees. The ten executives were

randomly selected from the population of the entire company, inclusive of the company's corporate office.

To randomly select research subjects from the pool of employees who currently work in the warehouse environment, the researcher composed and sent an email to the President of each of the 10 target companies. This enabled the researcher to obtain permission to work with the Personnel Department to randomly select four employees who worked in the warehouse environment for five or more years. The names of employees that fit the criteria were placed in a box and randomly selected.

Executive employees were randomly selected from employees who began their careers in the Operations Department and achieved top executive status within the company. To accomplish this, the researcher contacted an executive member of Env, explained this research project and requested a list of employees who meet the research criteria. The executive contacted had the authority to request this information and obtained it from employee records. The same random generator selection method was used to select these 10 employees.

Validity Testing

Validity refers to the test and its ability to actually measure what it is intended to measure. To ensure that the research questions could inspire participants to share their thoughts with the researcher and the information received was valid for the test, the researcher performed a survey questionnaire test using the following questions: Will the questions inspire participants to think introspectively? Will the information received contribute to historical and current studies on employee motivation? Will this information

contribute to reducing the perceived gap? Will it aid in determining the type of working environment that provides achievement motivation?

Survey Questionnaire Validity Test

The survey questionnaire and the researcher's questions, listed in the previous paragraph, were sent to the VP of the Corporate Training Department and five training directors. These employees were chosen because of their vast experience with employees in the warehouse and their knowledge of training and education in this environment. They were instructed to review the survey questions while considering the researcher's questions to see if the survey questions would produce the required responses. Additionally, the Validity Test (see Appendix B) was provided to guide and structure their feedback

In general, respondents thought the survey contained the right questions to encourage survey participants to share their thoughts and experiences on their working environment. Suggested changes pertained to expanding some of the closed questions by adding additional open ended questions. For example, some of the questions had yes or no answers and respondents suggested modifications to encourage survey participants to elaborate on their answers. The current survey (see Appendix A) reflects the suggested changes.

Testing the Accuracy of Survey Data

After all interviews were completed the researcher verified that all of the interview data was entered in the database by comparing entries in the database with the

documented notes from each interview. In addition, the researcher randomly selected two

participants from group A and five from group B and requested their assistance in

verifying information captured from their interview. All five participants verified that the

information captured from their interview represented their communication with the

researcher during their survey interview.

Reliability Testing

Reliability refers to the consistency and accuracy of data; can the same test be

repeated and produce the same or similar results? The reliability of this survey

questionnaire is not an issue in this study because it is highly unlikely that a qualitative

survey would produce the same results each time it is used or is expected to. Denzin and

Lincoln (2000) explain in the book *Handbook of Qualitative Research* that reliability in

its traditional sense does not always have a place in a qualitative study (p. 393-394).

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researcher used the features of the Access database to

develop reports from each section of the survey (motivation, employee perception of self

and company, etc.) then studied the reports to identify themes and develop categories

from the themes that were representative of the information presented (Gall, Gall and

Borg, 1999). Identified categories were used to develop a descriptive table of each

participant's answers (see Appendix D - G). Each category was taken directly from

interview results to ensure that they represented the survey participant's answers This

type of categorization helped the researcher to analyze the data and interpret the results.

In conjunction, the researcher requested assistance from the VP of the Corporate Training Department and the same five training directors used for survey questionnaire validity testing to obtain an interpretation other than the researcher's interpretation. This process reduced researcher bias which promoted the use of the iterative process and served to improve the validity of data interpretation (Cresswell, 2003).

Results from data analysis was documented with narrative descriptions thatexplain each group's individual perceptions, the combined group's perceptions and the insights gained from this research study. This study will ultimately produce elements of a warehouse environment that are perceived, by employees who work in the warehouse environment, to bridge the gap between their present environment and the type of environment that they perceive will encourage them to achieve their potential.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF SURVEY

Overview of Chapter 4

This chapter presents the results of survey questions organized by the themes depicted in the resultant data. Themes are categorized as: company and employee training; employee working environment and their perception of their environment; company incentives and employee thoughts regarding incentives; and, a summary of their thoughts. First, this chapter provides a description of survey participant's demographic information, detailed in Table 6 and 7. Second, a summary of each group's perceptions pertaining to the company's training initiatives, in relation to employee perceived training requirements, responses are located in Appendix D. Third, this chapter discusses each group's perception regarding their working environment; responses are located in Appendix E. This section of questions helped the interviewer to tap into each survey participant's true and honest thoughts regarding their company, their working environment, future changes in their work, perceived opportunities and job aspirations.

The fourth section of this chapter presents survey participant's thoughts in relation to company incentives and their thoughts about these incentives. This segment encouraged employees to think about what motivates them to strive for continuous improvement; responses are located in Appendix F. The final segment of this chapter presents a summary of survey participant's thoughts regarding their work environment and their perceptions of the aspects of a working environment that will help them to achieve; responses are located in Appendix G.

Survey Administration Summary

The process of asking questions of these survey participants generated thoughts that tapped into their innermost memories of their experiences, thoughts and feelings. Initially, survey participants that currently work in the warehouse (Group B) were hesitant to be involved in the survey because they were afraid that their answers would get back to management. They explained that if their managers heard that they had said anything negative about their environment they would receive a poor review on their next evaluation. To circumvent these thoughts, pre-survey communication with each participant was primarily devoted to building trust. The interviewer's ability to share mutual experiences was instrumental in helping participants to perceive that their confidence would not be betrayed.

Discussions of mutual concerns about the warehouse environment and employees encouraged survey participants to openly share their thoughts and to perceive that their answers would not be traced back to them, when shared with management. The ability to communicate with survey participants from their perspective was crucial to fostering feelings of trust between interviewer and survey participants. Many participants said "It's good to speak with a corporate employee who has worked in our environment and understands us." The success of this survey could not be accomplished without the interviewer's experience and background in this environment.

Conversely, survey participant's that are now executives did not require this time to build trust. The initial statement that their answers would be recorded anonymously was accepted, understood and believed. One participant summed the feelings of this

group with this statement "I have worked with you during our system conversion and know first hand that you are a person who can be trusted." These ten participants were quite willing to openly share their thoughts and expressed that the survey results might be beneficial for the company.

The original number and makeup of participants planned for this survey was 10 executives of the company who started their career in the warehouse environment Group A, and 37 employees who currently work in the warehouse environment Group B. All 10 of the participants from Group A were able to complete their surveys. Of the 37 from Group B, 35 completed the survey. The reason for this was that one participant from Group B would not complete the survey because he was uncomfortable with being part of the survey; he said "I think that you are trying to throw a negative light on the company." Additionally, due to communication and timing difficulties, (they are night workers and found it difficult to set a time for the survey) five Participants from Group B needed to have their surveys mailed to them and only 4 were returned. The requirement to mail out five of the surveys also extended the survey completion time by two weeks.

Performing this survey was interesting and sometimes quite challenging; it was sometimes difficult to keep participants from Group B on track. In particular, four of the participants had their own agenda and tried to interject with questions relating to their own personal issues with the company. They appeared to relish this personal one-on-one time to communicate personal grievances with management that were outside of the scope of this study but were valid for their managers to hear. It was apparent that these individuals were frustrated and perceived that they did not have an avenue to

communicate their issues. There were many times during the interview of these four participants when the interviewer had to gently steer them back to the questions and the focus of the survey.

Demographics of Survey Participants

Group A was comprised of employees who started with the company as warehouse workers. They performed jobs such as selecting, inventory control and supervising the day shift and night shift. In this group, employee consecutive years with the company range from 11 to 30 years with an average of 22 years. On average, employees in this group have maintained the same position for eight years. All of these employees started in one of the company's warehouses and through the years managed to work their way up the corporate ladder into executive positions within the company. One of these participants said:

> I did anything that was asked of me. At that time every task was manually performed and we all did what ever was needed to get the groceries in and out of the warehouse. I have received product, stored it, selected it, loaded trucks and even driven a delivery truck.

Current positions of members in this group include Presidents and CEO of operating companies across the US and Canada, VP of Distribution services, VP of Multi Sales Units and Senior VP's and Managers of Business Process Units.

Group B, comprises of employees who currently still work in the warehouse, some of them are now performing supervisory and management positions in the warehouse while other employees are in frontline warehouse positions. Although all of

the employees in this group are not frontline workers they have all worked in the warehouse and communicate on a daily basis. Employees in this group have been with the company in the range of 5 – 31 continuous years for a total of 423 years. On average, employees have worked 5 years with the company with an average of 4 years in their current jobs.

Table 6

Survey Category – Demographics

Group A	Group B
Range of consecutive years with company: 11 – 30.	Range of consecutive years with company 5 – 31.
Group total: 218 years	Group total: 423 years
Job Titles: President and CEO, President, VP Multi Sales, SR/VP Operations, VP Operations, Regional VP Distribution Services, Business Process Manager.	Job Titles: SR. Warehouse Business Analyst, Supervisor Inventory Control, Day Warehouse Manager, Director of Warehouse Operations, Systems Analyst, SWMS Coordinator, Assistant VP of the Warehouse, Manager, Inbound Scheduler, SR. Night Operations Manager, SOS and RF equipment Supervisor, Director of Transportation, Inventory Control Manager, Driver Check-in Supervisor.
Range of years in current job: 2 – 21.	Range of years in current job: 1 – 8 years.
Group total of 82 years	Group total: 126 years.
Group average 8 years	Group average: 4 years.
Beginning job titles: customer Service Representative, Night Warehouse Supervisor, Order Selector, Warehouse Worker, Inventory Control Associate, Night Warehouse Associate, and Warehouse Supervisor.	Beginning job Titles: Inventory control Clerk, Dry Loader, Dry Selector, Warehouse Order Selector, Night Supervisor, Selector, Driver Return Clerk, SWMS Coordinator, Loader, Janitor, Clerk, Forklift Driver, Receiver.

Survey Responses

To encourage survey respondents to think introspectively about questions pertaining to the themes of: training; employee working environment and their perception of their environment; and, company incentives and employee thoughts regarding incentives are interspersed throughout each survey segment. Additionally, many of the questions interrelate resulting in answers that are applicable to more than one theme and are dependant on survey respondent's interpretation of the question. The order of responses within each category is not important.

Training Perspective

This section provides a summary of responses to training questions on the survey (see Appendix A for full survey). Questions pertaining to training are located under the following categories of the survey questionnaire:

Motivation - Questions (1, 2, 3, 4 & 6)

Do you think the company encourages you to advance your skills?

Do you get any rewards after successfully completing a class?

What type of rewards should the company provide to encourage you to attend training classes and in general advance your skills?

What type of recognition should the company provide to encourage you to attend training classes and in general advance your skills?

Do you think that management wants you to take classes and advance your skills?

What would motivate you to take training?

Employee Perception of Self and Company –Questions (1, & 5)

> Do you think that management is supportive of you taking courses to advance
>
> your position within the company?
>
> Do you think the company provides enough training and coaching to prepare you
>
> for other jobs or changes that cause you to perform other jobs?

Employee Perception of Change – Question (4)

> What are your perceptions on company willingness and readiness to prepare you
>
> with the skills needed to work in warehouse of the future?

<center>Training Perspectives – Group A</center>

Participants expressed that the company is very willing to provide training to improve employee efficiencies. Most of these participants communicated that they have attended Regional training; Corporate based training; and, independent training that was specific to leadership development. Several participants expressed that the company provides access to training through on-line programs such as Netg and opportunities to attend seminars. Respondents indicated that the company believes that employees need continuous training and that they provide many opportunities for employees to attend training. Participants stated thatthere are many op portunities for them to train through, on-the job sessions, e-Learning and traditional university level courses.

Some participants expressed that tuition reimbursement is provided to cover a percentage of the cost of university level courses but somœcour ses are not covered by the company. One participant expressed the group's ideas regarding this with his statement "Company should reimburse for extra curricular courses that are universally job-related

and attended outside of the company." Participant's conveyed that employees who have the drive and desire to increase their knowledge should be encouraged and rewarded. Several participants expressed that the company should consider reimbursing for courses that are considered to be unrelated to their current environment but are universally job-related.

Participants suggested that successfully completed courses should be added to the employee's permanent record and referenced during employee performance evaluations. Several participants said "Completed trainig should be evaluated and used as a basis for additional training and career advancement." The following comment from several participants represents a strong message in the survey data "Employees that desire to advance their careers need career ladders that are tied to advanced positions." See Appendix D for survey respondent comments.

<div align="center">Training Perspectives – Group B</div>

Group B communication, is almost identical to Group A. Comparison of survey results from this segment demonstrates that both group's opinions are much the same with the exception of the following comments quoted from participants of Group B "Sometimes permission to attend training is manager dependant." "Company needs trainers in all departments." "Employees can usually get permission they aggressively pursue." See Appendix D, for survey respondent comments.

Training Summary

In general, all participants communicated that the company always prepares employees for changes within the industry that affect their ability to perform their jobs. However, many employees communicated that the company should create processes that formally tie employee training and educational achievements to the review process. Comments from both groups suggested that Supervisor training is not adequate for their job responsibilities and the company needs to provide more focus on this most important job in the warehouse.

In regards to education, several participants stated that the company supports employees that are interested in advanced degree programs by providing a tuition reimbursement program, but the reimbursement is not enough. Employees who are interested in attending advanced degree programs are unable to afford the remaining cost after the reimbursement is applied. Participants from both groups said they would like to see the company increase tuition reimbursement because it would encourage more employees to aspire for a higher level of education.

Participants' Perceptions of Working Environment

This section provides survey questions pertaining to employee working environment under several survey questionnaire categories (see Appendix A for full survey).

Motivation – Question (8)

In your working environment, explain what has helped or hindered you in your achievement of career goals?

Employee Perception of Self and Company – Questions (2, 3, 5, & 7)

Are there other jobs at Env that you would like to do and think that you can do?

What skills do you think you have that would enable you to do this job?

Do you think the company provides enough training and coaching to prepare you

for other jobs or changes that cause you to perform other jobs?

Do you think that you are a valuable employee at Env and management

appreciates the work you do?

Employee Perception of change – Questions (1, 2 & 3)

How has the warehouse changed since you started to work in a warehouse

environment?

What changes do you anticipate in the next 10 years?

How do you think changes will affect your ability to wok in the warehouse?

Participant's Perceptions – Group A

Participants in Group A stated that their primary skills relate to: people skills;

management abilities; change management; technical ability; experience in finance;

tenacity for work and company; warehouse experience; team building skills. They report

that management demonstrates interest in their ideas, encourages them to communicate

their ideas and refine them through discussions. This group perceives that they are of

value to the company and report that they have received rewards that support the

company's belief in them. Conversely, they suggest that the "worker bees" of the

company are not properly recognized for their work. Some participants expressed that

management often takes credit and receive rewards that should go to the employees who actually did the work.

In regards to promotion opportunities, participants report that requirements for promotions are extremely "blurry." Opportunities for promotion are posted on the company Web site up to and including positions for Directors and requirements for these positions are posted with the jobs. However, perspective applicants are still unsure of the requirements for positions that would promote them to management positions within the company; there are no set guidelines. Alternatively, posted positions that fall below management level contain very clear and specific requirements.

When asked about the warehouse environment and perceived changes participants communicated that the warehouse is already in a state of change as is evident by the replacement of traditional manual operations, with computer supported tools. Many participants started their careers in the warehouse during the time when they received products by recording product and customer information on a paper log. At that time, employees in the warehouse had to visually remember where product was stored, the quantity in the slots and the condition of the product. Inventory accuracy and the condition of inventory was not only the responsibility of the Inventory Control Department, but the entire warehouse. Customer orders were verified and recorded manually by employees.

Today, computer systems are used to record and direct employees to the location where inventory is stored and these systems maintain inventory accuracy. Participants suggested that technology will bring more automation to the warehouse, increase

efficiencies and produce higher productivity. However, increased technology in the warehouse will result in a reduced workforce. Many participants expressed that "humans will always be needed to perform work in the warehouse but automation will reduce the number required." Several participants communicated that"o pportunities will always be available for employees that show willingness to accept the inevitable changes that new technology will bring to the warehouse." See Appendix E for survey respondent comments.

<div align="center">Participant's Perceptions – Group B</div>

Participants from this group, report that management is supportive of training and the education needs of their employees, particularly on-the-job training. Management's actions demonstrate that they believe that knowledge improves employee performance. However, permission to attend training is sometimes dependent on their managers and the required time to attend training. Participants stated that "the company encourages employees to take advantage of training opportunities and appear to be very interested in employees attending training that improves their on-the-job skills."
Participants communicated that training has increased their skills and helped them to advance within the company. Most of the survey participants have attended On-Line training through the Centra system and have been involved in on-the-job training. Some participants said that "Training is encouraged as long it does not interfere with my work."

Participants communicated that their skill set includes financial experience; good leadership; tenacity for work; operating company experience; warehousing knowledge; good people skills; previous management experience; business and product line

knowledge; ability to learn quickly; good communication skills; a drive not to fail; technical ability; customer knowledge; understanding of how different personalities interact; and, inventory control skills.

In regards to promotion opportunities, answers from Group B participants are very similar to Group A. Most participants were not clear on the requirements for upper level management positions. They expressed that their understanding of the requirements for positions up to the Director level is fairly specific; beyond the Director level is very cloudy. As a result of this, some participants expressed that they were unclear about how to get to higher levels from their current position.

Some participants remarked that management is generally interested in their ideas and try to provide a forum for discussions to refine their ideas, which are sometimes implemented. Other employees expressed that the company has grown too big to really value their employees and management should always take time to listen to their ideas. In general, manager-employee communication is considered by employees to be good but still needs improvement. Some participants relayed thatmanagement needs to be more willing to discuss employee job aspirations but most employees expressed that the company and management are generally good to them. Participants expressed that they are of value to the company.

Regarding the future of the warehouse, participant answers from Group B are similar to Group A, with some additional thoughts. They expressed that there will bea stronger focus on accident prevention, better targeting of employees to improve their abilities and a higher degree of ethical behavior in the warehouse. They communicated

that in the future warehouses will operate with more unmanned equipment causing a reduction in the labor force. Increased automation will result in the requirement for less people but those who are employed will need to become more technical. In general participants communicated that they believe the company will provide training required to work in the warehouse of the future.

In answer to the way that future changes will affect participants and their ability to accommodate those changes participants considered that change is inevitable. They expressed that warehouse workers will need to stay current with the changes that affect their ability to work in the warehouse but the company will provide the necessary training. See Appendix E for survey respondent comments.

Summary of Participant's Perceptions of Working Environment

In summary Group A and Group B had similar perceptions. In reference to their perceived skills both groups conveyed that they had good people skills, technical ability and warehouse and product management expertise. However, Group A focused on their management and team building abilities while Group B provided a broader focus of their abilities. The skill mix of Group B encompassed management, product, customer, warehouse and personal strengths, such as: drive not to fail and personality interaction.

In regards to promotions there was general consensus between the two groups that the requirements to obtain upper level management positions are very obscure and as a result are kept beyond the reach of non-management employees. In general, management demonstrates that they are interested in their employee's ideas and provide a venue for further discussion to refine their ideas. Most employees perceive that they are valuable to

the company and the company demonstrates their appreciation by providing training, employee reimbursement and employee rewards.

Participants from both groups are very positive about the company and think that the company treats them well. However, participants from Group A communicated that worker bees, warehouse employees, are not properly recognized for their work and management often takes credit for their work. Group B did not mention this in any of their interviews.

Both groups shared that the warehouse will become even more automated than it is today and employees will need to become more technical to keep up with changes. The majority of participants communicated that the company will gain from these changes which will result in improved efficiencies for the company and their customer base. Participants agreed that the company will always provide the required training but employees will need to be prepared to accept change.

<div align="center">Participant's Perceptions of Incentives</div>

This section provides survey questions pertaining to company incentives and employee thoughts regarding incentives under several survey questionnaire categories (see Appendix A for full survey) and a summary of respondent answers.

Motivation – All Questions

Do you think the company encourages you to advance your skills?

Do you get any rewards after successfully completing a class?

What type of rewards should the company provide to encourage you to attend training classes and in general advance your skills?

What type of recognition should the company provide to encourage you to attend

training classes and in general advance your skills? (Certificates, newsletters,

president recognition, boss recognition, etc.).

How valuable do you think the work you do is to the company?

Explain how the company shows that they appreciate your efforts?

What would motivate you to take training?

In your working environment, explain what has helped or hindered you in your

achievement of career goals?

Employee Perception of Self and Company (2, 3 and 6)

Are there other jobs at Env that you would like to do and think that you can do?

Does your company provide clear requirements for promotions and/or transfers to

another job?

Do you think that management is interested in your ideas for improving

warehouse efficiencies?

Do you think that you are a valuable employee at Env and management

appreciates the work you do?

Participant's Perceptions of Incentives – Group A

Participants expressed, that the company is supportive of employees who want to

improve their skills and provide training opportunities but workload often prevents them

from taking advantage of this benefit. One employee explained that "Skill advancement

is a part of the company's culture with focus on leadership training."

Feedback received from this group demonstrated that these individuals are primarily self-motivated and are not expecting the company to provide incentives for them to attend training. Many of these participants communicated that their incentive is that the company pays for training to help them to continue to perform more efficiently and, in many instances, to advance their careers. Most of these participants expressed that they are not aware of any specific rewards and did not believe that the company should provide rewards because employees need to be self-motivated. One participant expressed disgruntlement with the company with this statement, "I know I provide value but am not sure how much the company appreciates me – very little recognition for job well done – not sure if the company would notice if I left."

Participants suggested that the company just needs to provide an environment where employees can find out what they need to do to advance. Several participants expressed that employees should be made aware of opportunities at all levels and the requirements for the job. Some participants suggested that a mentoring program would be beneficial. Most participants agreed that appropriate rewards might be in the realm of company picnics, plaques, company recognition, certificates, acknowledgement in company newsletter, etc. General comments referred to the lack of time to attend training but, participants were in general agreement that the work and company requirements must come first. See Appendix F for survey respondent comments.

<center>Participant's Perceptions of Incentives – Group B</center>

Participants reported that the company has a good track record for promotions from within but career development should be the main focus of employee reviews, at

least once a year. Many of these participants explained that it is up to individuals to make their career aspirations known to management and strive to achieve their aspirations. Participants expressed that the company provides training opportunities but it is the responsibility of the employee to take advantage of those opportunities.

Participants communicated that rewards should be the learning experience received from training classes, involvement with the company and the privilege of working for the company. Additionally, rewards could be: special note books; jackets; shirts; prizes; time off; pay raises; gift certificates; paid time off; reimbursement for non-degree college courses; dinner and lunch vouchers; etc. Some participants expressed that employees should be self-motivated and their reward should be the opportunity to train and improve their skills. A few employees commented that their reward comes from the opportunity to attend training without worrying about their job.

Several participants expressed that they are recognized through certificates or professional certification, their names in news letters, verbal recognition, pay raises, opportunities for promotion, recognition ceremonies, recognition by peers and boss recognition. Several participants commented that training accomplishments should be a part of their review and "serious consideration given when advancement opportunities arise." One participant suggested that "training should be tied to pay increases and job advancement."

Most participants think that management perceives that they are valuable to the company but one participant said that "managers should ensure that employees understand the overall company business and how their work contributes." Another

participant complained that the company only uses some of his skills and suggests that he also focuses on the same skills. See Appendix F for survey respondent comments.

<div style="text-align: center;">Summary of Participants' Perceptions of Incentives</div>

In summary, both groups recognize that the company provides training, advancement, opportunities, appropriate rewards and recognition for their achievements. In general, they express that they believe that they are valuable to the company and the company demonstrates that they value their employees and the work they do. Although both groups agree that the company provides training and opportunities for advancement Group B express that career development should be formally discussed at their reviews.

Participants in Group A generally express that they are self-motivated and the drive to succeed must come from the individual, not the company. In Group B, participants express that they are also self-motivated but incentives such as, paid time off to attend classes, pay increases, rewards and recognition also play a role in their drive to succeed.

<div style="text-align: center;">Survey Summary</div>

Group A

Participants from Group A suggested more diversity in management with the inclusion of a higher number of women in warehouse management. In this group, employees are motivated primarily by intrinsic rewards, most of these employees are self-motivated, but extrinsic rewards also contribute to their motivation. Continuous training, recognition and formal career ladders that lead to advanced positions are key

suggestions. Additionally, they expressed that improved employee and management communication is required to discover employee career goals and competencies to achieve those goals. Participants suggest that the company needs to create an environment that promotes inclusive behavior that   inspires employees to be self-motivated to improve their skills and position within the company. The Best Business Practices system is considered to be a valuable tool for employees to submit their ideas and obtain recognition for implemented practices. See Appendix G for survey respondent comments.

Group B

Participants from Group B appreciated training opportunities provided by the company but would like to see successful training accomplishments formally rewarded. They suggested that current rewards should be modified to include different types and levels of rewards, such as: opportunities for advancement; paid time off to attend training and education classes; and, recognition for contributions to improve efficiencies in the warehouse. Additionally, demonstrated skill improvement should become the primary indicator to identify employees for advancement in the company, as opposed to the current seniority system. Participants also suggest that the company provides training to help employees to believe in themselves and their abilities.

A major concern of this group pertains to the skill level and people management skills of warehouse management. Participants expressed that there is a lack of training in this area and in technical training for all employees in the warehouse. Technical training is available but training needs to be customized to meet the needs of all levels of

employees. In relation to training provided by the corporate office, participants expressed that corporate trainers need more exposure and experience in the warehouse to assist them in understanding the true needs of warehouse employees.

In regards to communication, participants think that the company provides opportunities for employees to express their ideas and aspirations but should provide more guidance on how to obtain jobs that are outside of the warehouse environment. Some participants expressed that employees in there environment possess skills that are not shared with management and perceive that they are trapped in their environment. See Appendix G for survey respondent comments.

CHAPTER 5. RESEARCH SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction to the Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the survey data, provide an interpretation of the results, suggest a model to guide the development of the working environment of employees who work in a warehouse environment, and identify areas for additional research. The discussion includes major findings, the relationship of findings to current research, and the impact of findings to the motivation of warehouse employees. Knowledge gained from the process of data collection and analysis is used to explore the concept of "User Persona" and suggest the creation of a Persona to represent frontline employees in a warehouse environment. This chapter is organized by the following segments: Introduction to the Discussion; Discussion Summary; Analysis of Current Environment; Env as a Learning Organization – Future Warehouse Environment, Archetype – Environment Persona, Implications of the Research, Suggestions for Future Research; What is the Future for Warehouse Employees?

Discussion Summary

This study explored the perceptions of executives of a food distribution company who began their careers in the warehouse and employees who currently work in a warehouse environment. The perceptions of these two groups were solicited and studied

to discover, based on the ideas of these two groups, the type of environment that encourages warehouse operations employees to aspire and succeed in "being the best that they can be." Chapter 1 outlined the need for a study that provides focus on the warehouse, its position within the Supply Chain and the importance of the working environment of warehouse employees. This chapter identified the root of the problem by posing this question. How might Env encourage their warehouse employees to participate in their own career development and how can they motivate employees to use their tacit knowledge to support the company in achieving its goals?

Warehouse workers are considered to be a segment of the overall category of blue collar workers but this study does not pretend to encompass this entire segment of the working world. This study focuses on employees that currently work in a warehouse environment and a representative sample of employees who started their careers in this environment and are now top executives of the company. Due to the researcher's extensive background and experience with employees in a warehouse environment, researcher bias is identified as a concern and possible limitation of this study.

Chapter 2 discussed literature related to; managing and sustaining tacit knowledge within an organization; employee motivation; and, continuing education for working adults. The primary focus is adults and the elements required in the work environment to encourage adults to continue to strive to accomplish personal and company goals. The "Learning Organization" is presented as a collaborative approach to create and maintain an environment that encourages and supports employees in formulating and maintaining a shared vision, that meets employee and company needs. The concept of "User Persona"

is explored to represent the group of employees that are the focus of this research. The persona concept is suggested as a tool to guide the environment development process.

Chapter 3 discussed the research design of this study; participant selection process; a survey questionnaire test; and, data collection and data analysis procedures. The phenomenological methodology from the qualitative approach to research studies was used to provide tools that enabled the researcher to look beyond the data and into the thought processes that fueled survey participant's words. Although the researcher's work experience in the warehouse environment was identified as a possible limitation to this study, it is primarily perceived as being very beneficial to this study and critical during the data interpretation process.

Chapter 4 presented the results of the survey organized into the following four themes depicted in the survey data: company and employee training; employee working environment and their perception of their environment; company incentives and employee thoughts regarding incentives; and, a summary of their thoughts. These themes were identified by initially entering the raw survey data into an Access database and creating reports to assist in data interpretation. Reports were studied by the researcher and four co-workers to identify these major themes. The four co-workers were included in data interpretation to reduce researcher bias. The themes depicted in the reports related to the three major questions that guided this study:

1. What training does the company provide and what are the employee's ideas about training?

2. What are employee thoughts regarding their working environment and their ideas for a working environment that promotes employee and company growth?

3. What are employee thoughts of company provided incentives and employee required incentives?

<div align="center">Analysis of Current Environment</div>

The analysis of survey responses clearly identified that employees respect Env and perceive that the company makes a conscious effort to provide them with an adequate working environment. Their responses indicated that they are encouraged to improve their efficiencies by involvement in internal and external training opportunities. They expressed that their primary exposure to training and education programs is through Netg, OJT, Env University, company sponsored seminars, community colleges and online training courses. They have the option to attend traditional education programs through the Tuition Reimbursement program but most employees are unable to pay the balance of the tuition. They would like to see the tuition reimbursement increased. Some of the participants commented that they don't have time to attend training classes because of their work load but they would like to be able to attend. Some participants expressed that they would like the company to give them time off work to attend higher education classes, but they all agreed that the work comes first.

The company's Best Business Practice (BBP) system was highly praised as a tool for employees to submit their ideas for work efficiencies. Employees believe that management is genuinely interested in and value their ideas. In the current environment company incentives are mostly extrinsic in the form of gift certificates, meals with the

President, monetary rewards, plaques, verbal praise, time off to attend training classes and tuition reimbursement for C+ average. The analysis of survey data also reflected that most employees believe that they are valuable to the company and the companyshares that belief. They also believe that their work contributes to company success. Most of the survey participants expressed that Env treats them with respect and always provides them with the training they need to perform their jobs as efficiently as possible.

<div align="center">Env as a Learning Organization – Future Warehouse Environment</div>

Senge (1990) describes a Learning Organization (LO) as one that is continuously processing and learning from elements of change that affect the organization. Learning Organizations understand that change is inevitable but they seek a thorough understanding of how changes can affect them and as a result, are able to use change to positively affect their organization. The primary strength of an LO comes from its employees who are all perceived by the organization to be learners and teachers. At any given time employees from all levels are collaborating with employees within the company and employees from other companies to understand and resolve organizational issues.

In the book *The Fifth Principle* made the statement "In building learning organizations, there is no 'there,' no ultimate destination, only a lifelong journey" (p. xv). The previous statement gives rise to the thought that all companies can become LO's of the future because they are on a continuum of change. Env is already positioned along this continuum with employee training incentives, BBP and employee rewards and

benefits that they consider to be appropriate. Additionally, survey participants expressed that their management shows them respect and listen to their ideas.

One of the major complaints from survey participants is the lack of "tie in" between employee training, education accomplishments and job opportunities. Employees from both groups voiced a concern that they are unaware of the requirements for positions within the company that are external to the warehouse. Additionally, their education and training accomplishments are not presently incorporated into the review process. Employees expressed that if they are not "lucky" to be in the "right place at the right time" it is very difficult to advance with the company.

The research provided evidence that some employees desire and would benefit from an environment that provides them with some form of career development program. Most of the survey participants believe themselves to be self motivated individuals and expressed that people need to be self motivated to achieve. Based on these statements, if these employees were provided with information and assistance in developing a personalized career program, they would increase their ability to realize their potential. An article by Fitzer (1997) supports this research with the statement "Employers who fail to offer some form of employee career development are missing out on a proven opportunity to regain employee commitment, motivate better performance and upgrade the general workforce for the future" (p.148).

There is a perceived gap between employees who desire to advance and the path that they need to travel to demonstrate their true abilities. Employees in this category, previously termed "hidden giants" are the main reason for this research because there is a

possibility that they posses abilities that are valuable to the company's success, now and in the future. Covey (2005) believes that employees are precious stones waiting to be discovered. In his article "Envision Greatness" he explains that most people don't fully realize their own potential and companies are not aware of their employee's full potential. As a result of this, employees who have the ability to advance remain within the work environment, performing the work they are assigned without fully realizing their potential. Companies that follow and live by the principles of an LO are able to discern employees with hidden competency because they create an environment where employees are encouraged and involved in open exchanges of ideas. This type of environment promotes knowledge transfer while providing opportunities for employees to clarify and enhance their knowledge base. Suzette (2004) explains that "A learning community is a place where people constantly look for ways to create a better future together. Being part of a learning community means being part of something larger than yourself; learning communities stimulate cohesion and inclusion" (p. 17).

In the context of an LO, a company's ability to engage the minds of their employees in processing thoughts and ideas to help the company and themselves is paramount to their success as an organization. In the words of Senge (1990) "As a systems thinker, you would first identify that key problem symptom, and then the symptomatic and fundamental responses to it" (p. 120). The analysis of this research data clearly identified that employees are committed to the company and genuinely believe that Env is a good company, which is evidenced by the many long term employees. However, as identified from the survey analysis, a key problem is that they lack a clear

vision on how to achieve their perceived potential at Env. Alternatively, the company is unaware of the effect on their business if even a small percent of these employees are successful in achieving their potential. Dubin (2005) describes this phenomenon as:

> Commitment, if it is to be sustained, ought to reach beyond the organization to each individual's stake in a successful outcome. The benefit to both the company and the individual must be clear and compelling. The not-so-secret ingredient for high performance is to compel the people in the company with a new possibility. They become stakeholders who commit to the venture's success because they see the benefit to themselves as well the company. (p. 46-47)

Research results from this study paint a picture of the requirements of employees who work in a warehouse environment and the elements that they perceive will assist them in achieving their potential and the company's goals. To provide an inclusive description of warehouse employees in this research and highlight the results of this research study the Persona concept is used. A Persona is a unique representation of a group of people and is often used when designing Web sites to represent specific groups of Web site users.

Archetype – Environment Persona

Goodwin (2005) describes a Persona as being an epitome of single Web site user that represents a group of people with the same requirements. In Web site design the Persons concept is used as a guide in the Web site development process. In this research, the concept of Persona is used to create an identity for the "hidden giants" who work in a warehouse environment. The description of this persona depicts the synthesis of research

findings to represent the segment of warehouse employees who could have the potential to advance with the company. Following is an example of a Persona called John who represents the type of employee in a warehouse environment who could have unrealized potential.

John "Hidden Giant"

      Occupation: Warehouse Associate

      Self motivated

      Loyal to the company

      Consistent worker

      Years of employment with Env – 10

Goals:

      Continue to work with Env

      Develop skills required to advance with Env

      Be involved in projects that help the company's bottom line

      Advance his education

      Build a career path for continuous development

      Work with a mentor

      Gain recognition and rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic) for his ideas

      John comes to work each day and performs his job. He is married with two school age children. John thinks that he has the ability and desire to advance his career with Env. He is comfortable with his job but knows that he can do more and would like to do more.

He is skilled and experienced in all of the warehouse jobs (Forklift Driver, Inventory Control Associate, Receiver, Selector and Janitor).

John is: self-motivated to learn; quiet about his accomplishments; willing to take training classes; wants to elevate himself within the company; and earn a higher salary. John needs assistance in assessing and comparing his skills to other jobs within the company, that he is interested in performing. He does not know if he will ever reach the heights of an executive within the company but would like to have the opportunity to try. John has many ideas in his mind, conceived over the years of working in the warehouse but lacks confidence to verbalize them.

Implications of the Research

The research suggests that, although the environment is positive and supports employees in efficiently meeting their daily task requirements, it does not assist employees in maximizing their potential. Based on research findings, employees who want to excel and have the potential, need assistance in creating their career path to provide a frame work for their training and education courses, job experiences and skills. A career path will also give them a tool to track progress towards their chosen career goals. In addition to the elements of their current environment, employees need access to information on all occupations in the company. Env has an excellent Knowledge Management system that is available to all employees. A segment could be added where employees can search for an occupation that they are interested in and obtain information on the requirements. A Mentorship program could be implemented where employees who are interested in becoming a mentor could enter their biography for employee access.

Employees can then choose a mentor who works in their area of interest or has experience in their chosen field. Based on the research findings, this research suggests that Env should:

1. Continue to offer their Training and Education Programs.

2. Assist employees who desire to attend training and higher level education classes to in allocating time within their work schedule.

3. Increase Tuition Reimbursement after the first year of obtaining a B average.

4. Ceate a Mentorship prog ram to allow employees to request a mentor from their area of interest.

5. Create an additional segment in the BBP system with descriptions of all company occupations with required education, experience, skill level and examples of the type of experiences required for obtaining the skill level required for each position.

6. Provide management, mentors and employees with the tools to assist employees in creating a personalized career program (voluntary participation).

7. Implement a company policy and process to review employee resumes when positions become available in the warehouse and external to the warehouse.

8. Add employee education and training accomplishments to the review process and provide employee suggested incentives to encourage employees to further their education.

9. Perform yearly warehouse surveys to continue to maintain management's awareness of employee requirements and to monitor the effect of the implemented changes.

10. Provide more opportunity for employees to share their thoughts in a non-threatening environment.

11. Improve the quality of warehouse management training.

12. Create an employee benefit that allows paid time off to attend training and higher level education classes.

13. Prior to conducting training classes for employees of the warehouse, involve trainers from the corporate office in warehouse operations to provide them the opportunity to understand the warehouse and its employees.

14. Review and modify employee incentives to include employee suggested incentives that relate to all employees in the warehouse.

15. Provide technical training that is customized to the needs of warehouse employees.

16. Assist warehouse employees in acquiring skills that will help them to transition from jobs that will become extinct in the future of the warehouse.

Suggestions for Future Research

The primary focus for this research was employees who succeeded in achieving top executive status and employees who currently work in a warehouse environment. The main reason for this research was to discover the elements that warehouse employees require in their environment to encourage them to work, not only on their current jobs,

but to look inwardly, access their knowledge and work towards achieving their personal and professional potential.

Although this research covered many aspects of a warehouse environment and contributes to the body of knowledge currently available on blue collar workers, it is only the tip of the iceberg. The changing dynamics of today's businesses and the need to maintain focus on employees and their work environment has many implications for future research. It is hoped that other researchers will adopt this topic and perform studies relating to some of the sub-topics uncovered by this research.

Sub-topics include: Mentoring warehouse employees; Career paths and the tools required to assist employees in building their own career path; the concept of Persona to guide the creation of a physical environment; the results of implementing a graduated Tuition Reimbursement program that encourages continuous improvement; the affect and effect of these initiatives on company success.

Additional suggestions for future research are sub-segments of the research population such as: employees who left the company; employees who had the opportunity to advance to executive status but were unsuccessful; levels of education; and, gender differences. These exceptions could not be covered in this small research but are important inclusions for future research on this research subject

What is the Future for Warehouse Employees?

Most of the employees in this research expressed that warehouse occupations will become even more automated than they are today. For example, wireless technology and robotics will be used to perform most of the work. However, as stated by some of the

employees "humans will still be needed" but perhaps not as many. Prior to this becoming a reality, companies need to create an environment that prepares employees who desire to remain in the warehouse, with the skills required to work in the warehouse of the future. In conjunction, management must have the ability to identify employees who work in the warehouse with ability and desire to perform other jobs in the company, and create the type of working environment that is conducive to their success. These employees have the potential to be the company's executives of the future.

This research is a small but important step in seeking the knowledge required to provide warehouse employees with the type of environment that they need to help them to realize their potential and ultimately, the company's goals. Additional research, with the inclusion of the suggested topics will add to this body of knowledge.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH SURVEY

Introductory Questions (Demographics)

1. How long have you been with Env?

2. What is your current job title?

3. How long have you been in your current job?

4. What job did you start out with at Env?

Motivation

1. Do you think the company encourages you to advance your skills?

    a. If yes, how do they do this?

    b. If no, what behaviors have you experienced to give you this impression?

2. Do you get any rewards after successfully completing a class?

3. What type of rewards should the company provide to encourage you to attend training classes and in general advance your skills? (compensation, prizes, time off, etc.)

4. What types of recognition should the company provide to encourage you to attend training classes and in general advance your skills? (Certificates, newsletters, president recognition, boss recognition, etc.)

5. How valuable do you think the work you do is to the company?

6. Explain how the company shows that they appreciate your efforts? Do you think that management wants you to take classes and advance your skills?

    a. If yes, what types of classes would they suggest and what types of classes would you like to take?

  b. If no, why don't you think management wants you to advance your skills?

7. What would motivate you to take training? (Supervisor mandate, rewards, recognition, opportunities for promotion, time to take training at work, etc.)

8. In your working environment, explain what has helped or hindered you in your achievement of career goals.

Employee Perception of Self and Company

1. Do you think that management is supportive of you taking courses to advance your position within the company?

  a. If yes, why do you think this?

  b. If no, why not, can you elaborate on this?

2. Are there other jobs at Env that you would like to do and think that you can do?

3. What skills do you think you have that would enable you to do this job?

4. Does your company provide clear requirements for promotions and/or transfers to another job?

  a. If yes, what are those requirements?

  b. If no, what should those requirements be?

5. Do you think the company provides enough training and coaching to prepare you for other jobs or changes that cause you to perform other jobs?

  a. If yes, what does the company provide?

  b. If no, what do you think the company should provide?

6. Do you think that management is interested in your ideas for improving warehouse efficiencies?

   a.   If yes, how do they convey that they are interested in your ideas?

   b.   If no, how do you think that they should convey to you that they are

         interested and why?

7.   Do you think that you are a valuable employee at Env and management

     appreciates the work you do?

   a.   If yes, how does Env show that the company values you as an employee?

   b.   If no, why do you feel that you are not of value to the company?

<u>Employee Perception of Change</u>

1.   How has the warehouse changed since you started to work in a warehouse

     environment?

2.   What changes do you anticipate in the next 10 years?

3.   How do you think changes will affect your ability to work in the warehouse?

4.   What are your perceptions on company willingness and readiness to prepare you

     with the skills needed to work in warehouses of the future?

<u>Summary Question</u>

1.   What are some things that you think the company should provide to encourage

     employees in the warehouse to take advantage of training programs, submit ideas

     for best business practices (BBP), and in general, strive to improve their skills?

Please study the survey questions and respond to the following:

Instrument Construction:

A (1) Are the instructions clear?

Yes   No

Yes – provided the following modifications are made:

_____

_____

No – please explain

_____

_____

Content Validity:

B (1) Will answers obtained from the questions adequately represent the intention of

the survey?

Yes   No

Yes – provided the following modifications are made.

_____

_____

No – please explain

Information Validity:

(1) Will these questions inspire both groups to share their perceptions?

Yes   No

Yes – provided the following modifications are made. No – please explain

_____

_____

(2) Will expected answers contribute to determining the type of working

environment that provides achievement motivation?

Yes   No

Yes – provided the following modifications are made.

_____

_____

No – please explain

_____

_____

APPENDIX C: OPERATING COMPANY E MAIL

E-Mail Communication to Company Presidents and Vice Presidents of Operations

This e-mail will be sent to the randomly selected Operating Companies where the President started in the Operations Department.

I would like to request your assistance in helping me to gather research data for my PHD dissertation subject is the Warehouse Operations Department and the components of this environment that foster employee growth. I chose this subject because of my interest in employees of the Operations Department and the lack of research pertaining to the type of environment that employees perceive inspires them to work to their potential.

To accurately represent this group of employees I will need to interview a randomly selected group who currently work in the warehouse environment and employees that started in the warehouse that have achieved executive status.

To successfully accomplish my goal, I am requesting your assistance in allowing me to:

- Contact your Personnel department to request their assistance in randomly selecting 5 employees from the warehouse that have been with the company for at least five years.

- Schedule a 1 hour phone interview with each of these employees to complete the survey.

- Interview you, as an executive who started in the Operations Department.

With the omission of employee and company names, survey results will be analyzed and summarized. This summary will be shared with the leadership of the company and a copy sent to you for your perusal. Survey results will present valuable information to the company in its continuing effort to provide a working environment that is conducive to encouraging employees to work to their potential.

I personally assure you that all survey information will be anonymous; employee and company names will be omitted from stored and published data.

Your assistance and cooperation is much appreciated

APPENDIX D: SURVEY RESPONDENT DATA TRAINING

Table D1a
Survey Category – Training – Group A - B

Group A	Group B
Employees receive OJT training for each task.	Employees receive OJT and cross-training to learn work-related tasks.
Company provides tuition reimbursement.	Company provides tuition reimbursement.
E-Learning courses and conferences provide and support training.	E-Learning courses, Env-U and conferences provide and support training.
Strong company focus on Leadership Development.	Strong company focus on Leadership Development.
Employees need continuous training.	Employees need continuous training.
Employees would like allocated time from job responsibilities to attend training.	Employees would like allocated time from job responsibilities for training.
Employees need the opportunity to attend training to build on their skills.	Sometimes permission to attend training is manager dependent.
Employees that desire to advance their careers need career ladders that are tied to advanced positions.	Employees that desire to advance their careers need career ladders that are tied to advanced positions.

Table D1b
Survey Category – Training – Group A - B

Group A	Group B
Successfully completed training classes and attendance in conferences should be included in the formal evaluation and review process.	Successfully completed training classes and attendance in conferences should be included in the formal evaluation and review process.
Completed training evaluated as basis for additional training and career advancement.	Completed training evaluated as basis for additional training and career advancement.
Company should reimburse for extra curricular courses that are universally job-related and attended outside of company.	Company should reimburse for extra curricular courses that are universally job-related and attended outside of company.
Company does not do a good job of training Supervisors.	Company does not do a good job of training Supervisors. Managers need training on how to manage people.
Company always prepares employees to handle change.	Company always prepares employees to handle change. Employees can usually get permission they aggressively pursue.
	Company needs trainers in all departments.

Table E1a
Survey Category – Employee Perceptions – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
Company supports advanced degree programs but not enough tuition reimbursement provided to encourage professional advancement.	Management is aware that knowledge improves employee performance; they are supportive of training classes and on-the-job training. Sometimes, permission to take training is dependent on timing and the individual manager.
Yes-would like to advance my career with the company.	The company encourages employees to take advantage of training opportunities and appear to be very interested in employees attending training that improves their on the job skills. Company understands the need for better skilled employees and the need to attract new talent.
Company encourages employees to advance their careers.	Training has increased my skills and helped me to advance; much time is devoted to on-line training. Training is encouraged as long as it does not interfere with my work. Management needs to be more willing to discuss employee job aspirations without repercussions. There are jobs that I know I can do because of previous experience, abilities and my belief that I can do it. I have aspirations to achieve high level management positions.

Table E1b
Survey Category – Employee Perceptions – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
Perceived skills: People management, change management, technical ability, financial knowledge, tenacity for work and company, Operating Company experience, ability to build a smart team to support my efforts.	Perceived skills: Financial, good leadership, tenacity for work, operating company experience, warehouse knowledge, good people skills, previous management experience, understanding of the business and product line, fast learner, good communication skills, technically inclined, customer knowledge.
Management interest in employee's views: Yes, by encouragement discussions, implementing suggestions, providing avenues for feedback, creating special committee groups, listening to ideas to improve efficiencies, seeking to understand why the perception, operation's council meetings with Presidents and VP's.	Management interest: Encouraged to discuss ideas through different venues such as Operations Council, management enquiry, crew meetings and open dialogue. Management always encourages discussion of new ideas and assist employees in coming up with new ideas.
Promotions: Not sure what the requirements are, all jobs have job descriptions. Minimum education, training and performance should be part of a job description. Requirements for promotions are blurry; right place at right time situation. Job specific information is posted up to the Director level but beyond is very blurry. All jobs up to Director level are posted internally.	Promotions: Not sure what the requirements are. All jobs have job descriptions. Everyone has the opportunity to apply for posted jobs. Job acquisition is very much "right place at the right time" because the company does not do a good job informing employees of the required skills for open jobs. Company is very specific on jobs that are up to the Director level; blurry beyond Director level. All jobs are posted and all applicants are interviewed.

Table E1c
Survey Category – Employee Perceptions – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
Employee perceived value to company: Worker bees are not properly recognized for job well done; management takes credit. Employees are recognized by pay and bonus, career advancement opportunities and monetary values. Perceived valuable to the company if requested to assist other companies. Rewarded with compensation, included in special committees, allowed to make decisions.	Perceived value to company: Need more communication from management, verbal and written, often receive verbal appreciation. Management considers quality of life and employee concerns. Receive incentives such as: pay raises, praise for job-well-done. Company has been good to me. Years with company is a good indicator that company appreciates me and values what I do. Company has grown too big to really value employees. Employees are given 5,10 and 15 year stock incentives. Company very good at making sure their employees feel valued.
Changes in warehouse: Technology brought efficiencies, computers and barcode scanners, mechanization and standardization, increased productivity, improved safety, tremendous improvement in systems and expectations.	Changes in the warehouse: Computers and automation improves efficiencies, technology advancements – RFID, movement from pencils to computers, on-line systems that accurately tracks data. Company is starting to look at workers and target better employees. More focus placed on accident prevention and ethics. Improved opportunities for advancement with higher performance levels; employees better trained to do their jobs.
Future of warehousing: More automation, humans will always be needed, smaller footprints, better product selection, robotics, voice activation, choices in voice, improved RFID.	Future of the warehouse: Wireless capabilities with increased automation, reduction in manual labor costs, further advances in the Supply Chain Management philosophy and methodology.

APPENDIX F: SURVEY RESPONDENT DATA - MOTIVATION

Table F1a
Survey Category – Employee Motivation – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
Skills: Workload leaves no time to improve skills. Would like to focus on improving presentation skills. Need to be more involved with Net-g, seminars, training classes and study groups. Skill improvement is part of the culture. Involved in independent and corporate leadership training. What ever skills we think we need; company will help us to achieve. We need tuition reimbursement for courses taken outside of the company. Company provides in-house class room training through e-Learning, offsite conferences and seminars.	Skills: The good track record of promotion from within is the best encouragement. Career development should be discussed at least once a year. Skill achievement depends on the individual's drive to succeed. Employees need to make their desires known and need to strive for advancement. Regional and in-house training is provided. Skill set advancement is incorporated into individual's goals for review. This is an ever challenging environment and employees must strive to improve their skills. We have the ability to change jobs, cross train, attend Supervisor and Management classes, attend workshops and take advantage of the warehouse core curricula. I have been slow to attend training.
Rewards: Increased responsibility which is reward enough for me and is personally satisfying. Classes can provide an opportunity for personal and company growth. I am self-motivated; no reward needed. Successful completion of courses, learning new skills and gaining opportunity to further my career fosters my motivation. Company paying for my courses motivates me.	Rewards: If training is off-site during the evening employee should be allowed to go home early. Training helps employees to advance and reward should be what you learn to improve yourself. Money is not a good motivator. Company should pay for college courses that pertain to the company but are not degree courses. Employees should not need rewards; they should be self motivated. The reward is the opportunity to attend training classes.

Table F1b
Survey Category – Employee Motivation – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
Reward type: Not aware of any rewards; recognition should be sufficient; company should make clear what opportunities are available on completion of class and the performance required. All the company needs to do is provide the type of environment where employees can find out what they need to do to advance. Employees need to be self-motivated and allowed to attend courses. Picnics, banquets, plaques; none are necessary. Company should not provide rewards; it is up to the individual to want to attend courses. Company should allow flexible work schedule where possible, reimbursement for pre-approved external classes.	Reward type: Training during work-hours and the opportunity to attend training classes. Company covering the cost for training and to attend training courses. Special notebooks, jackets, shirts, prizes, time off, pay raises and gift certificates. Dinner tickets, paid lunches, compensation at review time, company paid professional membership fees, dinner certificates that allow me to take my family out to dinner; all are good reward types. Training should be tied to pay increases and job advancement.
Recognition: Group parties, Certificates, name in newsletter, President recognition and boss recognition. Successful completion of training classes should be listed in employee file and made part of the review process. It should serve as a basis for advancement and future training. Supervisor should acknowledge employee success and encourage continued success.	Recognition: Certificates or professional certification, mention in news letters, verbal recognition, pay raises, opportunity for promotion, recognition ceremony for graduates. Recognition by peers, boss recognition, part of the review process and serious consideration when advanced opportunities arise. I don't think any individual skill advancement needs to be publicly recognized. Skill advancement should be a job requirement. Employees should be self-motivated and seek opportunities for advancement. Opportunities should be discussed with the employee.

Table F1c
Survey Category – Employee Motivation – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
Value to the company: I know I provide value but am not sure how much the company appreciates me; very little recognition for job well done and I am not sure if the company would notice if I left. I think I am very valuable to the company and the company also thinks that I am.	Value to the company: Extremely valuable to the company. Tough question to answer; everyone likes to think that they are valuable. The skill-set I arrived with is not being used; my company is only using what they need and told me that I should build on only that portion of my skills. Being a teacher to other employees is very valuable to the company. I maintenance the equipment which is very valuable; company needs technology to survive and the equipment must be reliable. I think I am very valuable and hope the company agrees. My employees look up to me because I have been where they are and they feel that if I can advance then they also can. Inventory efficiencies go straight to the bottom line. Employees who receive the product accurately are valuable. Night shift employees are very valuable to the company.
Appreciation: The company would like me to take more classes but work must come first. I get pay increases, opportunities for advancement, increased responsibility and verbal thanks and recognition.	Appreciation: At my level, opportunities for appreciation are limited. I receive verbal recognition, promotions, special projects and management encouragement. My efforts are rewarded with: opportunities to work and learn new things; classes to enhance my technical knowledge; annual incentives and pay raises. When the company sends employees to classes they show appreciation by their investment

Table F1d
Survey Category – Employee Motivation – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
	in training and education. Management agrees to training classes and listens to my ideas. Management do not always show appreciation but when they do it is in the form of verbal thanks, pay increases and advancement. The president often expresses to the entire company that he appreciates the employees and their efforts to meet company goals
Self-motivated: Self-motivated to achieve and if training helps I take training. I don't believe that I need to be motivated; I am self motivated. Perceived personal value and time to take training is my motivation. Management should not need to do anything; employees should be self-motivated.	Self Motivated: Self-motivated by perceived personal value; opportunities for promotion and time to take training; management does not need to do anything to motivate me because I am self-motivated; goals for bi-annual review and personal growth; opportunities for on-the-job training; advancement at work and just by getting the opportunity to take training. I don't like to take training classes unless I need to for my job.
Company help: Changes occurred in upper level management that created opportunities for me. Company provided the opportunity for me to perform all jobs in the warehouse from order selector to Operating Company President. I don't look to the company to motivate me; I am willing and I seek opportunities to take on new projects. I have a drive to succeed and take responsibility for my own growth.	Company help: Training is encouraged as long as it does not interfere with my work. Relationship with peers and my ability to learn quickly have helped me. The timing of projects, the general state of the economy, understanding of SWMS and people skills has helped me to progress. Corporate sponsored training programs, learning to accept change, realization that

Table F1e
Survey Category – Employee Motivation – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
I network, mentor, set specific career goals and have access to champions who believe in me. I have the luxury of working with some spectacular people who are my teachers.	not all goals can be achieved in this environment, training classes, mangers and open discussions of my ideas have been beneficial; opportunity is all that I need. Managers should ensure that employees understand the overall company business and how their work contributes.
Hindered: High work-load, no encouragement from management or my environment. There is a deficiency in records that show my training skill and improvement. I am not able to relocate and there is a lot of company politics that stifle my growth. A mentoring program would have helped but we don't have a mentoring program. Nothing has hindered me.	Hindered: Relationship with peers and management, ability to learn quickly or not, timing of projects and the economy. Bad management forced me out of my previous job because I was not part of the "old boy" club. Not being confident in me as a supervisor and time to attend classes and the possibility of layoffs and cutback hindered my progress. I tend to stay in a rut doing the same thing for years.

APPENDIX G: SURVEY RESPONDENT SUMMARY DATA

Table G1a
Survey Category – Employee Summary – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
Incentives: Monetary incentives and recognition works well with employees. Ask employees who perform the tasks for suggestions on the best way to do the task. Small question and answer groups are great for obtaining ideas for change, advancement incentives and recognition.	Incentives: Reward skill advancement when employees complete courses; change culture to reflect that training is a way to advance with the company; reward submissions to the BBP system; encourage positive peer pressure to highlight training and utilization of the BBP system. Create opportunities for advancement for employees who take the initiative to increase knowledge and skills in warehousing. Leadership skills that are displayed on-the-job should be a determining factor for promotion and advancement as opposed to the current seniority system. Company should provide different types and levels of rewards
Training incentives: Suggest continuous training; allow time away from work to prepare to attend training; openly recognize people who have successfully completed training and education classes; provide opportunities to build skills for advancement; create formal career ladders that lead to advanced positions with company for those who require it; provide an environment that inspires and motivates employees to self-improve. Self-improvement is what helps the most; it is the key.	Training incentives: Implement paid training time for extracurricular courses that pertain to the business; provide monetary or paid time off for training that employees initiate. Technical and analytical training classes need to be customized to match different skill levels and employee interests. Reward employees with training opportunities that give them more confidence to grasp opportunities that arise; encourage long-term employees; keep employees informed of changes.

Table G1b
Survey Category – Employee Summary – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
Communication: Improve employee management communication to discover their perceived competencies. Worker inclusion is a best business practice; workers thrive in an environment that promotes inclusive behavior. Provide a communication channel to allow employees to express career goals and leadership training for interested employees. Recognize top performers and encourage employees to access and use the BBP system.	Communication: Continue to recognize employees who demonstrate efficiencies that achieve company success; warehouse employees are a major part of this goal and must be recognized; improve supervisory people management and leadership skills. Employees need more encouragement from management. The corporate office needs to initiate time spent in the warehouse for corporate trainers prior to them training warehouse employees. Exposure to the warehouse environment and employees will help them to understand their student's needs. Continue communication through CMP reviews and one-on-one meetings. Provide additional opportunities for sharing of ideas by encouraging employees to work as a team. Discuss with employees how they can obtain jobs outside of their current environment; many employees possess hidden skills and aspirations that remain hidden because they believe that they are trapped in their current environment.
Employee additional thoughts: More women needed in Supervisory positions; improved recruiting for women in management; professional development track needed; employee recognition in form of President visits to the nightshift staff to encourage workers to feel that they are all working towards the same goal.	Employee additional thoughts: Company should seek to hire employees that are able to handle the changes in the warehouse; training may not be sufficient. Company should do more to encourage employees that are capable of doing more to aspire to use their abilities towards goal achievement for self and company.

Table G1c
Survey Category – Employee Summary – Group A -B

Group A	Group B
	Employees need the company to be more proactive in finding out what each employee needs to improve their efficiencies and focus more on what employees are capable of doing instead of just the skills they currently use. Company should actively seek professional development programs offered by community colleges and other business partners to train and prepare employees for the future.