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Change Management Program Design and Facilitation:

A Case Study from Lincoln County, Wisconsin

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Abstract

In late 2003, University of Wisconsin Extension, Lincoln County educator Art Lersch was asked to design and facilitate a change management program for Church Mutual Insurance, Inc., one of the county's largest employers. The project was unique because, although some Extension educators have worked with private sector companies, few have assisted large numbers of apprehensive employees cope with work related change. Although it was vital to solicit feedback from employees about their concerns, it was more important that through the classes they learn how to better deal with change. This article describes the "people side of change" concept, how this change management program was designed, provides an overview of program outcomes, summarizes lessons learned by the educator, and looks at what participants learned.

Background Statement

Brief Overview: Company and Project

Church Mutual Insurance, Inc. is one of Lincoln County, Wisconsin's top employers. The company's corporate headquarters are also located in the county. It has offices throughout the country. It also possesses ample resources to hire a professional change management consultant. But, in late 2003 the company asked the University of Wisconsin Extension, Lincoln County Community and Economic Development educator to design and teach a change management program to employees whose underwriting and processing positions were being restructured. Although there are some examples of UW-Extension educators working with large corporations, an educator designing and teaching change management curriculums for private sector entities is rare. The fact that UW-Extension was asked to conduct such an important project was an indication that the company wanted the program to be largely educational in nature, something many private change management consultants are not equipped to provide. The educator's teaching experience, his familiarity with corporate organizational structures, his

own educational background, his experience generating feedback from various groups, and the fact that he was from a local trusted institution, made him uniquely qualified to work with the company.

What is Change Management?

Few people enjoy change, especially when it could affect their livelihood. A company announces that a major “restructuring” will take place. Panic ensues. Almost immediately people tend to assume the worst. They are afraid that downsizing or pay cuts will occur. At the very least, they are wondering if their job tasks will change. Rumors spread. Poor communication often contributes to misunderstandings.

Corporate change does not, however, have to be like this. If handled properly, it can turn out to be a positive experience for most employees who are asked to go through it. Yes, it is true that the word “restructuring” and the phrase “corporate change” these days are often euphemisms for downsizing. But, change can mean increased productivity, more people being hired, and certainly in the long run, depending on circumstances, stronger companies and local economies. Encouraging employees to freely discuss their concerns about corporate change is often the first, and in many cases the most important step toward helping them to find out why the change is taking place, how they can help to implement the change, and how the change will affect their jobs. Managing change should begin and end with communication that engages employees as active partners with management in change implementation.

Change management is a carefully planned approach to deal with change in any organization. It is the “art” of managing change processes (how work is done) and preparing people to accept and deal with how organizational change will affect their jobs. This definition alone suggests that corporate change management programs usually consist of several elements. Corporate change often includes modified job descriptions, the reallocation of personnel, new technologies and equipment, revised company values and goals, different work processes and plant layouts, increases in production levels, or anything else that affects how a company creates output and does business.

Complicated restructuring programs can and usually do bring about significant changes in an organization’s culture, that is the shared values, beliefs, guiding principles, and assumptions under which

an organization functions. Corporations can often quickly modify some of the symbols of their organizational cultures such as by rearranging the plant floor, providing new workstations, or even re-writing job descriptions. But significant changes to a corporation's organizational culture do not happen over night. Asking employees to modify how they have done their jobs for a very long time, to acquire new corporate values and assumptions, could and often does take many years after the plan to change is announced. One important benefit of an effective change management program is that it can help, largely through the promotion of meaningful dialog throughout all levels of the organization, to make the transition to a new corporate culture quicker and often less painful.

The "People Side" of Change¹

The possibility of effective employee resistance to change is why that change must be managed. Twenty years ago, most managers would not have thought of helping employees to successfully adjust to corporate change. Managers thought that employees would carry out orders no questions asked. In reality, this was exactly what usually happened, although no doubt this resulted in many frustrated employees. Now, management usually realizes the value of employee input. It knows that many employees can become more amenable to change if they are made part of the change process. Managing the people side of change means actually listening to and valuing employee opinions. This can become an effective means to help achieve employee buy-in.

Corporations that successfully manage the people side of change assume several things up front. Their managers understand that employees will have a difficult time abandoning old, outmoded ways of doing things. They understand that employees will take different amounts of time to react and adjust to change. They also know that others may never make the transition and because of stress could eventually quit their jobs.

¹ The term "people side of change" is derived from the book Hiatt, J. & Creasey, T. (2003). *Change management: The people side of change*. Loveland, CO: Prosci Research.

Managers should also not be surprised when employees overreact to the change, or more accurately to what they are losing. Employees lose something that will affect “their world,” as popular change author William Bridges asserts (Bridges, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, p. 27). Employees see corporate change really as personal change. They rarely think about how much corporate revenue and profit might increase as a result of the company doing things differently. They often think only in terms of how what the company is doing will affect their work and even their personal lives. It is a personal change; one they often think is being dictated to them by management. Some employees may believe it is a violation of their personal space. They are intimidated by new job functions, by the new way of doing things. Work can often be such an important part of peoples’ lives. It provides self worth. Right or wrong, people often still define their personal selves by the work they do. As Bridges puts it, a key to obtaining employee commitment to change is for managers to “learn who is experiencing a [personal] loss of some kind and what it is they are losing” (Bridges, p. 26). People react to the losses, not to the change itself. And they react to those losses in very different ways.

Managers have to expect that corporate change will be taken personally. They also must believe that employees will react differently to the losses they are experiencing. Some workers will accept the change with quiet reservation, although hurt and displeased. Others will become angry, perhaps fight or even sabotage change initiatives. Many will be confused, overwhelmed by all the new things they are asked to do. This disorientation can be very frustrating. Anxiety, sadness, and even depression could result. Managers must deal effectively with these emotions and “compensate for the losses” (Bridges, p. 30).

Compensating often means maintaining some of the old ways of doing things. Holding on to at least a few of the old rituals can help to comfort employees, making transitions a bit easier. Compensating can also mean not denouncing past practices but merely reiterating that the way corporations do business must change with the times. Change must occur to stay competitive and save

jobs. Most important, compensating means that managers must constantly communicate with employees. Providing constant, updated information about the change means that “what’s over and what isn’t” is being clearly defined (Bridges, p. 31). Insufficient or no communication may be the most important reason why change processes fail.

Program Development

The educator began program design in the spring of 2004. He worked with management to design a change management program that would:

- Solicit information from employees about how they felt about the change
- Teach employees methods they could use to better cope with change
- Demonstrate communication strategies that employees could use to help them continue to convey their concerns to management after change management sessions were completed
- Help employees to identify how their concerns could be addressed
- Foster learning about the company’s lack of capacity to address all employee concerns or many concerns at one time
- Let employees know that management considered employees partners in the effort to implement change

Before accepting the tasks of designing and implementing the change management program, the educator asked management certain important questions. The questions were meant primarily to determine the level of management’s involvement in employee change management classes, logistical and reporting issues, and the best ways to facilitate and teach classes. These questions, to use strategic planning language, constituted the heart of the “plan for the plan” process.

As someone who is charged with promoting and initiating economic and community development programs, the educator felt it vital that this corporate change not result in layoffs. Management assured him that not only would there be no layoffs but that in fact some additional people may be hired as a result of the restructuring.

It was important to ask what information management was hoping to obtain from employees, how many jobs were scheduled for restructuring, were all employees in the underwriting department informed of the changes, and would they be part of the change process.

Management stated that about 120 jobs were likely to be affected by the change. Employees had been informed about the change, but it was clear that at least in the beginning they had little knowledge of details including how their jobs would be affected. Few details about what was expected of employees were available early on primarily because management was still working them out. More details were released over the period that sessions occurred. Management made it clear that they saw the seminars as a way to get employees more involved in implementing change.

Other matters that were discussed during the meetings with management included the importance of finding a venue to conduct seminars that would allow employees to freely express their thoughts without management being present, the capacity of the organization to act based on employee feedback, the company's culture and decision making structure, and the project reporting format.

Although some useful information was obtained during plenary meetings about these matters, the educator made a mistake not to press for more information from management, especially regarding the company's organizational culture. As was later intimated by class participants, the company's recent culture in their view was characterized by the solicitation of employee feedback but then management failing to act on it. During the change seminars, many employees were wondering whether their feedback would be taken seriously by management. Their concerns about this made the educator question if he wasn't also wasting his time. As it turned out, considering evidence garnered through evaluations (please see "Evaluation" and "Implications" sections below) provided by management and employees, the educator became convinced that his time was put to good use.

Throughout the program, 107 rank and file employees and 13 supervisors participated in a total of 14 change management classes. Employees participated in teams newly established by company

management, encouraging open communication during classes. Facilitated by the educator, the teams identified concerns they had about and the positive aspects of the change. Participants were also asked to prioritize what concerns were most important for the company to address and which positives were most important to maximize. They also identified ways to address the concerns and to maximize positives.

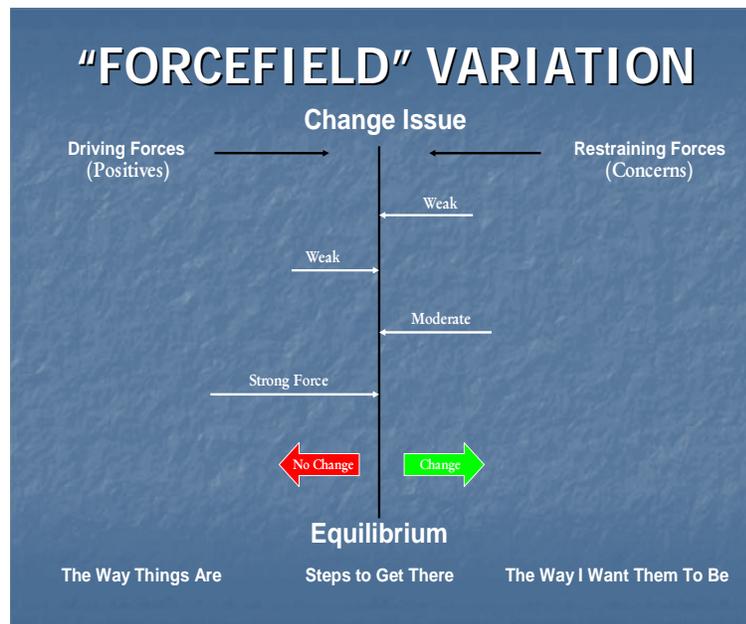
Methods

Although the educator learned the basics of organizational culture and change management issues while studying for his Masters in Public Administration and in previous positions, he felt it necessary to conduct more extensive research in change management program design models and curriculums. William Bridges' Managing Transitions; Making the Most of Change, Cynthia Scott/Dennis Jaffe's Managing Change at Work; Leading People through Organizational Transition, Spencer Johnson's Who Moved My Cheese, and Jeffrey Hiatt/Timothy Creasey's Change Management; the People Side of Change provided the educator with a solid foundation for program design. Using these sources and his experience, the educator designed a program that taught employees how to interpret and more effectively deal with corporate change.

Kurt Lewin's Force Field model served as a basis for creating discussions with employees about what change - related concerns they had (restraining forces), and what the company could do to mitigate those concerns. It also served as a model to help employees identify positive aspects (driving forces) of the change and how those aspects could be leveraged for the creation of a better work environment. In the model (pg. 8), change issues (i.e. revised job tasks, new technology, new work partners, etc.) are held in balance by the opposing forces, thus creating circumstances where change does or does not occur.

Restraining forces in this case are the various concerns expressed by employees about the change. Often, they can represent people or internal factors that attempt to maintain the status quo or equilibrium. Restraints include things like customs, habits, people that resist change, and company values/mores. Driving forces include those people championing the change, symbols like new workstations, and really anything that literally forces people to do things differently. When driving forces exceed restraining

forces, meaningful change can occur. Identifying and prioritizing concerns about and positives of the change was the first step in employees teaching themselves what must be done to move toward meaningful change both on personal and professional levels.



Portions of this graph are derived from Value Based Management.net (http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_lewin_force_field_analysis.html)

Classes were designed to promote team building. The educator experimented with various techniques including brainstorming, brain writing, affinity diagramming, and decision matrices in an attempt to find the methods that most effectively generated, organized and prioritized employee input². Employee teams were divided into smaller work groups to engage in employee-facilitated brainstorming and brain writing sessions to identify concerns and positives. Decision matrices were used early on in the process to help prioritize concerns and positives, but were quickly deemed by participants and the educator too cumbersome and scientific. Affinity diagramming worked much better during the

² Brain writing is a form of brainstorming where group members write ideas or in this case their concerns/positives on small post-it notes. The notes can then be organized by the entire group into categories consisting of like responses. Affinity diagramming was used for this purpose. Decision matrices are charts with ideas/concerns listed down a far left hand column and criteria listed along the top row. Group members were asked to rate the importance of each concern on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest rating. For more information on these and other facilitation tools see Tague, Nancy R. (1995). *The quality toolbox*. Milwaukee, WI. ASQ Quality Press.

prioritization phases of the program. A Lincoln County Extension colleague conducted two “Colors”³ personality assessment sessions for the employees. These helped employees better understand how differently they learn and react to similar information and how to better relate to one another, thus further enhancing team building.

Following the identification and prioritization of concerns and positives, the participants brainstormed strategies to address the concerns and to maximize the positives. Time permitting participants also assigned tasks to themselves, fellow employees, consultants, or other persons/organizations to implement identified strategies. The fact that employees wanted to implement tasks showed their willingness to take an active role in alleviating their own concerns about the change. In and of itself, this was a strategy they felt could be utilized to help them cope with change.

Program Outputs

Common Themes - Concerns

Most of the top prioritized concerns identified by employees were related to workload issues, inefficient workflow procedures largely stemming from inadequate job descriptions, and communication difficulties. Employees often complained during the classes that the change, especially when new job tasks were combined with what people were already doing, created backlogs in their work. Overtime, although welcomed by some, quickly became overly burdensome for many in the department. Some employees indicated that there was also a lack of uniformity in the enforcement of overtime policies which led to several people having to work much more than others.⁴

³ “Colors” is a highly interactive personality assessment based on Myers Briggs. It assesses a person’s dominant personality style through a series of questions about how she/he might react to various life situations. Those who are designated “gold” are said to be highly organized people. Those designated “green” are said to be quite analytical. “Blues” are highly sensitive to peoples’ needs while “oranges” are highly creative thinkers who often have little need for organizing tasks or thoughts. Most people exhibit traits from each color but also usually have a dominant color.

⁴ A year after the program ended, the department was still struggling to make overtime more equitable. It briefly established a mandatory overtime system that in theory would eliminate the inequities, but quickly returned to a volunteer system after complaints from employees who previously were not working much overtime.

Examples of specific tasks that employees suggested to alleviate workloads included hiring more temporary and permanent people, better planning to cover for people on vacation or leave, re-aligning work tasks (people with less work can fill in where needed, lightening workloads of those who had too much to do), creating well defined workflow procedures, eliminating “unnecessary” paperwork (i.e. task tally sheets/recording each task completed and when it was completed), and assigning more work to people who were making higher wages.

Ambiguous or non-existent job descriptions for those positions undergoing significant change added to the confusion of new job assignments. New job tasks resulting from the change altered the underwriting sequence leading to a disruption in the flow of policy issuance. Employees agreed that the first step in solving this problem was to write into new job descriptions not only revised tasks that needed to be completed, but also detailing how those tasks fit into a logical planned sequence that would lead to the timely and efficient output of insurance policies. Such job descriptions must, many employees asserted, be created with their input.

Class participants generally agreed that communication throughout all department levels could be improved by reducing employee isolation (situate employee desks closer to each other, etc.), management issuing more notices explaining when a specific change is due to take place and how employees will be affected by that change, developing team member lists with all work related contact information, surveying other departments to discern what change related issues they might face, and making better and more widespread use of company newsletters, listening sessions, and e-mails to keep employees better informed.

Common Themes - Positives

Frequently mentioned positive aspects of the change included technology and equipment upgrades, better ergonomics, the development of new work relationships as a result of new teams being established, increased learning opportunities through training and modified job assignments, the chance to work with different people in the department, and the change management seminars themselves.

Suggested tasks to maximize positives included management arranging more feedback seminars and acting on employee recommendations, management formally recognizing and rewarding employees' good work, an increase in meetings to promote better face to face communication, continued training opportunities, and listing resource people in the company who could help answer employee questions when problems arise.

Results and Findings

Evaluation

A questionnaire completed by employees (N = 137) before the program began in June 2004 focused on their attitudes about the change. Examples of questions were: "How do you feel about the restructuring of the company's underwriting division?"; "How effectively are customers currently being served by the underwriting division?"; and "To what extent do you feel that you as an employee have been actively involved in addressing concerns about the restructuring?" (see Appendix A for complete results).

Results demonstrated some ambivalence toward the change. Almost 42% of those employees completing the survey indicated they had little or no apprehension about the change. About 26% said they were experiencing apprehension or great apprehension about the change.

When asked how well they understood change related challenges, 53% said that they understood them well or completely comprehended them. Less than 1% said they had little or no understanding of change related challenges.

There was also a fairly high degree of optimism that customer service was not being adversely affected during the early stages of the change. Nearly 38% of those responding to the question said customer service was either effective or extremely effective. Fifty-five percent (55%) were neutral on the subject. Once the change process was in full swing, this optimism became severely tempered (see below). Only about 30% of respondents felt that they were actively involved in addressing concerns they had about the restructuring in its early phases. Thirty-four percent (34%) felt that they were involved little or not at all.

Several respondents took the opportunity to make comments about the impending change. One person wrote “I think the change will be a challenge, but it will be okay. I have already seen many changes over the years.” Another wrote “I’m looking forward to working in a team format. It makes perfect sense.” Yet another commented “I think it’s an excellent chance for greater opportunities.”

The same survey was also administered at the end of change management classes (N = 119). On this questionnaire, employees on the whole indicated that they were slightly less apprehensive about the change than they were before the classes. Forty-three percent (43%) responded that they had little or no apprehension. But only 18% (8% less than before the classes began) now said that they were experiencing apprehension or great apprehension, indicating that the classes might on some levels have taught them things to better cope with the change (see Appendix B for complete results).

Respondents also indicated a better understanding of the challenges related to the restructuring than they did before change management classes began. Fifty-eight percent (58%) responded that they understood those challenges well or completely.

Many more employees felt customer service was being adversely affected by the change during the middle stages of its implementation. Only 15% of respondents thought customer service in October 2004 at the end of the classes was either effective or extremely effective. Almost 42% thought it was somewhat ineffective or completely ineffective. Before the classes started, the percentage that thought customer service was somewhat ineffective or completely ineffective was a mere 6%. The attitude that service was suffering as a result of the change can be directly attributed to the chaotic nature of events as the change process went into full swing. About the same percentage of employees (30%) felt that they were actively involved in addressing change related concerns at the end of classes as was the case just before classes started

Another evaluation (N = 105) was administered at the end of the program focusing on the effectiveness of the classes. Examples of questions were: “How effective in your view were the meetings

facilitated?"; "To what extent do you feel the method used for identifying concerns was effective?"; and "How satisfied were you with the productivity of [classes]?" (see Appendix C for complete results).

The vast majority (80%) of those participants completing the questionnaire thought the classes were facilitated either effectively or extremely effectively. About 63% stated that they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the productivity of sessions. Seventy – nine percent (79%) thought that the methods used to identify concerns were either effective or extremely effective. Many participants were at least somewhat skeptical that what they learned from class discussions would help them to better deal with change. Forty – one percent (41%) thought that the classes were helpful or extremely helpful while another 42% expressed a neutral view on the matter. Participants were even more skeptical that employees and management would work to adequately address concerns. Only 14% believed that this was likely or extremely likely. Nearly 52% thought that that was either unlikely or not likely at all.

Evaluation comments made by employees on this questionnaire indicated that several of them thought that the change management classes taught them how to better understand and cope with corporate change. One person mentioned that "I feel the seminar was good to learn about my [new] team members." Another wrote "this was very open and positive. We were able to be open about our concerns and ideas for improvement." Yet another stated "after listening to others, I think about 90-95% of the group [is] open to change and want to succeed in improving." Several employees also told the educator that they appreciated the opportunity to voice their concerns without management being present.

In their written comments, many also chose to send a well pointed message to management that employee concerns be addressed in meaningful ways. One employee wrote "depending upon management reactions/responses, this could be very beneficial." Another expressed "I hope management will take our views seriously and talk and work with the teams to fix problems." Overall, this kind of skepticism was more prevalent in written comments than was optimism that much would be done to address concerns. However, several comments made by employees suggest that they appreciated having

the opportunity to discuss the change, perhaps increasing the level of trust between them and management.

Outcomes

An important outcome that came to fruition as the result of change management classes was the implementation of suggested tasks to address employee concerns. For example, evidence from management suggests that it used the feedback data collected from employees as an impetus to hire more people and to schedule follow-up meetings with employee teams. The company's vice president of underwriting wrote the educator in late 2004 "we have initiated several changes as a result of your seminars and the comments you received but things move too slowly sometimes." He went on to say that "we are also trying to focus system design to improve efficiency in a number of key areas" and "are also continuing with additional formal training within the teams." Five people were initially hired in an effort to address concerns employees had about excessive overtime and increasing workloads. At a later date, the vice president also indicated that all follow-up meetings with the various teams had been completed where management reviewed concerns mentioned by team members during change classes, summarized progress made addressing those concerns, and explained why some items could not be addressed.

In a September 2005 e-mail to the educator, the vice president also wrote that of an additional 13 positions he requested for the department in its 2005 budget, six were filled early in that year. As of the September date overtime continued which, he wrote, would require a request for additional positions in the 2006 budget.

In an interview conducted by the educator on September 28, 2005, the vice president indicated that the department was making progress with automation enhancements that would help improve overall efficiency in work procedures. One such enhancement was the automation of what used to be the manual recording of data such as numbering policies. By implementing this automated procedure, two handoffs of manually processed work were eliminated, helping to address concerns often mentioned by employees during the change management classes about poor workflow efficiency.

Another step that was taken to better define work procedures was the re-writing of all department job descriptions. Many employees complained during the classes that they could not effectively perform their jobs or work with others until job descriptions reflected the changes going on in the department. Revised descriptions now detail the new job tasks that people are performing as a result of department change and how those tasks are integrated. Employees can read various job descriptions within the department in order to get a better sense of workflow procedures.

During this same interview, the educator learned of several other specific initiatives that were implemented in the underwriting department to address concerns mentioned by employees during change management classes. For example, in order to better facilitate communication within and among teams, management set aside conference rooms specifically for team meetings in the company's newly constructed wing. Teams use the rooms to discuss how to improve work relations among members and how to work better with other teams. Team members' cubicles in the new wing have been placed close to each other to facilitate communication, a measure suggested by many employees during change management classes. As a result of the new wing's design, background noises are much less evident, making the entire floor area more conducive to having conversations within cubicles without disturbing others in surrounding areas.

Management has also instituted celebrations to commemorate the one year anniversary of each team's creation. This is meant to address employee concerns mentioned during change management classes about lack of recognition for the good work employees do.

An area cited by the vice president that he feels needs improvement is supervisory cooperation. During the interview, he exhibited some frustration that technology and underwriting supervisors in the department have for the most part failed to find ways to work together as part of the change process. Overall, however, he was pleased with the active role management took to address employee concerns related to changes going on in the department.

Clearly some positive steps have been taken to address employee concerns. However, in a questionnaire completed by 50 employees one year after change management classes ended, many expressed mixed feelings about whether management is doing enough to address their concerns (see Appendix D). When asked “To what degree do you believe the company has made an effort to address the most important concerns (mentioned during classes) you had about changes occurring in the underwriting department ?,” almost 59% responded either “not at all” or “little.” When asked “To what degree do you believe management has become more accessible since the change management classes (i.e. employees can freely express concerns)?,” nearly 51% responded either “not at all” or “little.” Several employees chose to vent about what they perceive to be management’s unwillingness to address their most important concerns (Appendix D, “Other Comments” section). A good portion of these often vitriolic statements was offset by evidence that many employees learned much from the seminars and are using what they learned to help them deal with change (see “Implications” section below and Appendix D, question #3). But they do indicate evidence of continued difficulties related to the company’s ongoing effort to implement change in the underwriting department.

Lessons Learned – Educator

Besides learning about the human side of change management, this rather long, difficult project allowed the educator to practice various teaching and facilitation techniques, and taught him how to deal with groups of people who often did not express positive attitudes about the change they were experiencing. Most employees saw the classes as a way to make constructive suggestions to management about how change could be implemented. A few, however, saw the classes as an opportunity to vent, to attempt to send negative messages to management about their dissatisfaction with things at the company unrelated or at best only indirectly related to the changes being made.

Although time consuming and difficult to manage, the project also gave the educator numerous opportunities to learn new and to hone already acquired skills. What he learned may very well help other

educators and consultants implement comprehensive “people side” change management programs.

Lessons learned by the educator during the project were:

- ◆ Don't be afraid to experiment with facilitation tools and techniques: About a third of the way through the program, it was determined by the educator that the decision matrix method to prioritize concerns and positives was too cumbersome, too “scientific” for seminar participants. At that point, he began to use affinity diagramming to better organize brainstormed responses and straight voting to prioritize those responses. This improved the flow of meetings.
- ◆ Find out from management before the program begins how often feedback from employees was solicited in the past and the method of that solicitation: Employees may have a negative view of present and future programs designed to obtain their input if no one in the company listened to or took action to address the concerns identified in past programs. In evaluations, several employees mentioned the company's previous “Bubble Up” program as an example of management soliciting employee feedback but failing, in their opinion, to act on that input.
- ◆ Although soliciting employee feedback is vital to the success of any change management program, it should be only one element of that program: If other things besides effective communication between employees and management are not taking place, then the entire change management program may fail. For example, during change management classes many employees expressed concern that management may listen to employees but not act on that input.
- ◆ Middle management is the key to implementing successful change management programs: Without middle management's - in this case the Church Mutual supervisors - willingness to implement change policies, the company will fail to change. They are the “foot soldiers” of change policy.
- ◆ Try to encourage that negative statements be made in a positive way: No matter how difficult a change experience might be, employees need to not only express their concerns but also state what can be done about them. Throughout the program, the educator constantly reminded participants that it does little good to voice concerns that cannot be addressed in any meaningful way.
- ◆ Remind participants before every meeting why they are there. Although some employees had trouble believing that management would do anything to address concerns, it was vital to keep reminding them that it was certain nothing would be done if concerns were not communicated.

Implications for University of Wisconsin-Extension/Cooperative Extension and Beyond

Evidence of Transformational Education

In the survey completed by change management class participants a year after the program ended, 78% of respondents gave specific examples of how their thinking about the change was transformed and how they are using some tenets they learned in class to better cope with change. Both of these elements are the essence of what can be considered transformational education within the context of change management.

The following is just a sampling of statements in response to “Please name something you learned during the change management seminars that is helping you to cope with the changes occurring in the underwriting department and/or in your personal lives” (question #3, Appendix D).

- “One thing that I learned during the change management sessions is how to prioritize both in my personal and professional life. I can see more clearly what is important and what can wait until tomorrow to handle. Your job is never finished. I’ve also learned how to improve on multi-tasking in both areas of my life. I definitely found these seminars to be very beneficial and was able to use some of what I learned in all aspects of my life.”
- “I learned that I’m going to have to accept this change and that there will be adjustments that will need to be made on my part, as well as others. I liked the whole idea of teams and I still support the concept. I knew it wouldn’t be easy, in fact the first six months I didn’t know if I was going to survive. But I did. It remains a challenge and always will be. But I thrive on this.”
- “The seminars helped me realize that the company understands that the transition to team environments and new workflows will take time and effort. I’ve learned that patience and communication are key in making the change successful.”
- “Different people have different personalities and we learned how to understand or at least recognize that people work in their own ways. I think too many people are forgetting the activity [where] we had to find out what ‘Color’ we were.”

Transformational education like this is often being done by Extension educators throughout Wisconsin. The more examples of transformational education are communicated to funders and other interested stakeholders, the more people will be persuaded that Extension is helping to transform lives. It can be argued that based on this survey and earlier evaluations (see “Evaluation” section above) a significant number of those who went through the change classes experienced their own personal

paradigm shifts about change, perhaps not yet learning how to fully embrace it but discovering ways to better cope with it.

Learning from Unexpected Obstacles

After talking with several Extension colleagues about the project, it became apparent to the educator that few programs like this, and especially at this scale with a private corporation, had been designed and conducted by UW - Extension professionals. This alone made the program quite innovative. The program was also innovative in the sense that it blended change management education for employees and economic development through company activities like job creation.

The mere concept of an educator doing this kind of a program also led to several appropriate questions by Lincoln County Extension Committee members, the educator's oversight body. Committee members were curious as to why a large, very successful company did not want to hire a professional change management consultant to design and implement the program. They asked: is this merely a way to save money? They also wondered whether it was appropriate for an Extension educator whose position is funded by county and state tax dollars to devote a great deal of time to a private sector project. Two committee members were very concerned about an offer by the company to pay the educator for his services (\$500 to be contributed to the educator professional development fund). Would acceptance of such a payment, they asked, be deemed by some County Board members as a reason to think that private funding could be used to support the educator's position rather than taxpayer dollars?

In a meeting with the Extension Committee, the company's vice president for underwriting explained that upper management wished to have the "people side" of change management done by a local person with a background in organizational development and education. He asserted that UW-Extension, as a well respected community organization that consistently deals with Lincoln County residents and the employees of many private and public sector entities, was the right organization to solicit employee feedback and to provide change management education. He also reminded the committee that the change would likely increase the number of jobs in the underwriting department rather

than result in layoffs, making it more politically acceptable for Extension as a tax payer supported institution to be involved.

The Extension Committee's concerns about having an educator do the project were also addressed through arguments made by the educator's assistant program leader. In the same committee meeting that was attended by the company vice president, the assistant program leader discussed via teleconference why such a program was appropriate for a qualified Extension educator to design and implement. In general, he asserted that as long as the educator refrained from playing either a decision making or advocating role the project could be deemed purely educational in nature. This would be an opportunity to teach employees how they might cope with change. The assistant program leader went on to say that Extension educators, although better known for their work with nonprofits, small businesses, and civic groups, have on occasion assisted large companies with things like developing business plans and strategic/long-term planning. Educators on occasion did receive payment for such work in the form of contributions to their development funds. Precedents did, in other words, exist. The educator's mentor, who attended the meeting in person, echoed these sentiments. After hearing these arguments, committee members were convinced that the educator should do the work.

But, there was one final element to be discussed: the \$500. Despite assertions made by the assistant program director, the mentor, the Extension county department head, and the educator that Extension needs to diversify its revenue stream, two committee members were concerned that the Extension office would be setting a dangerous precedent by accepting the contribution. Taking the money, they felt, might jeopardize the county's annual funding provided to the Extension office. They also argued that by accepting the money the Extension office would be placed in the unenviable position of having to decide how much to charge various businesses for similar work in the future. What criteria, they asked, would be used to set the prices? Eventually, all committee members agreed that it was not wise to establish such a precedent and refused Church Mutual's offer of compensation.

It is conservatively estimated that had the company hired a consultant to do the work, it would have likely cost approximately \$20,000. The company vice president admitted in a conversation with the educator that as good a job was done by Extension on the project as he thought would have been done by a professional change management consultant. Estimating the “fair market” price of such work can in many circumstances illustrate the real value of Extension’s contributions to similar (and even dissimilar) projects.

Conclusion

This case serves as a reference for Extension educators that are asked to conduct change management seminars with both public and private sector organizations. The case also illustrates how educators can deal with questions from their oversight committees and others who ask whether Extension should be doing work with large private corporations. The methods used to solicit information from employees can be a foundation for numerous educational programs that call for the generation, organization, and prioritization of large amounts of information. And the lessons learned from this project will become increasingly relevant as educators are asked to do organizational development work for both public and private sector organizations.

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Appendix A

Church Mutual Change Management Program Questionnaire

Results from survey distributed at the April 28, 2004 Change Management Orientations
(137 of 140 in attendance at the orientations completed a survey)

[The larger the SD, the more spread out the responses, the flatter the bell curve (i.e. the less dense is the cluster around the mean).]

1. How do you feel about the restructuring of the company's underwriting division?

Great Apprehension		Neutral		No Apprehension
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 7				Mean = 3.25
Frequency (2) = 28				Median = 3
Frequency (3) = 45				Mode = 3
Frequency (4) = 38				SD = 1.07
Frequency (5) = 19				
Total = 137				

2. How well do you believe you understand restructuring goals?

Understand Nothing		Neutral		Understand Completely
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 3				Mean = 3.66
Frequency (2) = 13				Median = 4
Frequency (3) = 37				Mode = 4
Frequency (4) = 58				SD = .96
Frequency (5) = 26				
Total = 137				

3. In your opinion, how effectively are customers currently being served by the underwriting division?

Completely Ineffective		Neutral		Extremely Effective
1	2	3	4	5

Frequency (1) = 0	Mean = 3.37
Frequency (2) = 8	Median = 3
Frequency (3) = 75	Mode = 3
Frequency (4) = 47	SD = .65
Frequency (5) = 5	

Two surveys were marked 3.5
Total = 137

4. To what extent do you feel you understand the challenges related to the restructuring?

Understand Nothing		Neutral		Understand Completely
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 1			Mean = 3.57	
Frequency (2) = 11			Median = 4	
Frequency (3) = 52			Mode = 4	
Frequency (4) = 55			SD = .84	
Frequency (5) = 18				
Total = 137				

5. To what extent do you believe the restructuring will result in Church Mutual more effectively serving its customers?

Don't Believe At All		Neutral		Strongly Believe
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 3			Mean = 3.98	
Frequency (2) = 7			Median = 4	
Frequency (3) = 22			Mode = 4	
Frequency (4) = 63			SD = .93	
Frequency (5) = 42				
Total = 137				

(These somewhat surprising results indicate that the company has done a good job “selling” the change and the positive results that may come from it. Once people begin thinking about and discussing the change in a comprehensive way, however, the results to this question may begin to skew more toward the lower end of the scale. Further discussion of the change may, on the other hand, help people feel more comfortable with what is happening, thus skewing results more heavily to the upper end of the scale.)

“Good opportunities.”

“I think it’s an excellent chance for greater opportunities.”

“I look forward to the program & since I am already part of a team, I hopefully can help others with [the] change.”

“I feel each team needs to be in the program together as each team is developed.”

“I feel I’m in the committed stage. [I’m] really looking forward to the restructuring. I need a change.”

“[Do] not have the [program] after lunch – could fall asleep!”

“I think there is great apprehension [about] what is happening.”

“Why?”

“Storage not addressed even after numerous requests to management.”

“I feel positive about the change.”

“Unfortunately, management started out on the wrong foot with the restructuring of the department. That was modified, but trust was damaged.”

“I believe the restructuring should have been put off until the [building] addition was complete.”

“Need to maintain involvement of employees in the process. Communication of steps is important.”

“Not much information given out at this time [regarding department restructuring].”

Appendix B

Church Mutual Change Management Program Questionnaire

Results from survey distributed at the October 19, 2004 Change Management Orientations
(119 respondents)

[The larger the SD, the more spread out the responses, the flatter the bell curve (i.e. the less dense is the cluster around the mean).]

1. How do you feel about the restructuring of the company's underwriting division?

Great Apprehension		Neutral		No Apprehension	
1	2	3	4	5	
Frequency (1) = 5					Mean = 3.28
Frequency (2) = 16					Median = 3
Frequency (3) = 47					Mode = 3
Frequency (4) = 43					SD = .93
Frequency (5) = 8					
Total = 119					

2. How well do you believe you understand restructuring goals?

Understand Nothing		Neutral		Understand Completely	
1	2	3	4	5	
Frequency (1) = 4					Mean = 3.66
Frequency (2) = 8					Median = 4
Frequency (3) = 29					Mode = 4
Frequency (4) = 61					SD = .92
Frequency (5) = 17					
Total = 119					

3. In your opinion, how effectively are customers currently being served by the underwriting division?

Completely Ineffective		Neutral		Extremely Effective	
1	2	3	4	5	
Frequency (1) = 13					Mean = 2.64

Frequency (1) = 13
Frequency (2) = 26
Frequency (3) = 45
Frequency (4) = 27
Frequency (5) = 8

Mean = 2.92
Median = 3
Mode = 3
SD = 1.07

Total = 119

The University of Wisconsin requests that county Extension offices keep accurate records of the number of males and females that participate in Extension projects/programs. Please indicate below whether you are male or female by circling the appropriate response.

M

F

Female = 91

76% Female

Male = 26

24% Male

(Two did not designate gender).

Please feel free to use the space below to comment on or make suggestions about the underwriting department restructuring or the change management program conducted by the UW-Extension.

“I liked knowing our problems are the same as those encountered by other companies. Sometimes we feel a little too “small town” and gossipy.”

“Will our concern ever be addressed? Will management hear us?”

“I enjoyed the change management program. I learned a lot.”

“I think it will be beneficial in the long run when each team has enough employees to adequately handle the workload.”

“Hire from inside – promote not all new inexperienced people.”

“I just started Monday so this is my first session and the first time I heard about any restructuring. I really don’t have an opinion.”

“I feel that the “playing field” is not level for the underwriting staff. Decisions are influenced by politics rather than sound judgment of employees.”

“Too much overtime.”

“Good job! Helpful info.”

“Well done – excellent presentation – clearly communicated.”

“I don’t think this was effective. I don’t think it addressed the problems, once again a band aid.”

“I liked the Colors seminar.”

Appendix C

Church Mutual Change Management Seminar Results (Facilitation)

Compiled October 8, 2004

Sessions facilitated by
Art Lersch
Community & Economic Development Educator
University of Wisconsin Extension, Lincoln County

Questionnaire designed by Art Lersch with assistance from Mohammad Douglah, UW-Madison
(105 completed surveys)

The larger the SD (Standard Deviation), the more spread out the responses, the flatter the bell curve (i.e. the less dense is the cluster of answers around the mean).

1. How satisfied were you with the overall productivity of the first change management seminar you attended (concerns)?

Not Satisfied At All		Neutral		Extremely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 0		Mean = 3.72		
Frequency (2) = 7		Median = 4		
Frequency (3) = 30		Mode = 4		
Frequency (4) = 51		SD = .79		
Frequency (5) = 15				
NR = 2				

2. How satisfied were you with the overall productivity of the second change management seminar you attended (positives)?

Not Satisfied At All		Neutral		Extremely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 1		Mean = 3.78		
Frequency (2) = 2		Median = 4		
Frequency (3) = 34		Mode = 4		
Frequency (4) = 49		SD = .78		
Frequency (5) = 18				
NR = 1				

3. How effective in your view were the meetings facilitated?

Not Effective At All		Neutral		Extremely Effective
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 2		Mean = 4.10		
Frequency (2) = 1		Median = 5		
Frequency (3) = 18		Mode = 4		
Frequency (4) = 48		SD = .84		
Frequency (5) = 36				
NR = 0				

4. To what extent do you feel the method used for identifying concerns was effective?

Completely Ineffective		Neutral		Extremely Effective
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 0		Mean = 4.01		
Frequency (2) = 5		Median = 4		
Frequency (3) = 16		Mode = 4		
Frequency (4) = 55		SD = .78		
Frequency (5) = 28				
NR = 1				

5. To what extent do you feel the method used for identifying positives was effective?

Completely Ineffective		Neutral		Extremely Effective
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 0		Mean = 3.95		
Frequency (2) = 4		Median = 4		
Frequency (3) = 20		Mode = 4		
Frequency (4) = 57		SD = .75		
Frequency (5) = 23				
NR = 1				

6. To what extent do you feel the method used for prioritizing concerns was effective?

Completely Ineffective		Neutral		Extremely Effective
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1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 0				
Frequency (2) = 7				
Frequency (3) = 24				
Frequency (4) = 50				
Frequency (5) = 23				
NR = 1				
		Mean = 3.86		
		Median = 4		
		Mode = 4		
		SD = .84		

7. To what extent do you feel the method used for prioritizing positives was effective?

Completely Ineffective		Neutral		Extremely Effective
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 0				
Frequency (2) = 5				
Frequency (3) = 19				
Frequency (4) = 39				
Frequency (5) = 15				
NR = 3				
		Mean = 3.82		
		Median = 4		
		Mode = 4		
		SD = .81		

There was not enough time for Teams 10 and 11 to prioritize positives. Even though Team # 15 did not go through a formal prioritization process, team members felt that they conveyed to management the most important positives to maximize. Thus, they chose to answer this question. Seventy-eight of 105 people who completed evaluations answered this question.

8. To what extent do you believe that the seminar discussions will help you better deal with the change that is happening in the underwriting department?

Not Helpful At All		Neutral		Extremely Helpful
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 6				
Frequency (2) = 11				
Frequency (3) = 44				
Frequency (4) = 32				
Frequency (5) = 11				
NR = 1				
		Mean = 3.30		
		Median = 4		
		Mode = 3		
		SD = .99		

9. In your view, how likely is it that fellow employees and management will work to adequately address the concerns prioritized in your group sessions?

Not Likely At All		Neutral		Extremely Likely
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1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 29		Mean = 2.36		
Frequency (2) = 25		Median = 3		
Frequency (3) = 35		Mode = 3		
Frequency (4) = 14		SD = 1.06		
Frequency (5) = 1				
NR = 1				

10. In your view, how likely is it that fellow employees and management will work to maximize the positives prioritized in your group sessions?

Not Likely At All		Neutral		Extremely Likely
1	2	3	4	5
Frequency (1) = 19		Mean = 2.76		
Frequency (2) = 19		Median = 3		
Frequency (3) = 38		Mode = 3		
Frequency (4) = 24		SD = 1.11		
Frequency (5) = 4				
NR = 1				

Please use the space below and if necessary on the back of this sheet to make any other comments or suggestions about seminar facilitation or content.

(38 respondents, or 36%, included written comments)

“We just hope management listens and does something about our concerns.”

“I think some very good concerns were expressed. I hope that management uses this information and lets us know their thoughts and if any[thing] will be done.”

“I wish it was not all negative [one day] and positive [the next]. After the first one, I went back to work, very unhappy with the team. Possibly start negative and end positive each day!”

“I think it was very good and I hope that management follows thru and shows that they are going to do some of these things to improve what is not working in the teams right now.”

It was very good to be able to express our views and ideas in this setting. It was good to see how those ideas came together. We needed more time!”

“I hope management is really serious this time. They have had meetings before about ways to change/improve and not much happens. If they aren’t really serious, don’t waste our time. A lot of

work could have been out the door during these hours. Art is very good at what he is trying to help us with!"

"I was disappointed with the amount of negativity in the first session [concerns]. The company is making an effort to change and there will be obstacles to overcome. We all need to be a little more patient while the bugs are worked out."

"Hopefully, time and money spent on this will not get wasted as the Bubble-Up money did."

"As long as management addresses these issues and tells why or why not [i.e. it implements or does not implement something]."

"Bubble-Up"

"Feel our time could have been better spent; feel that management won't do anything once again. Customer service will suffer because I have spent more than six hours away from my desk. Sorry."

"See results of Bubble-Up program."

"Still not sure if what was said will be done. Never hear the answers."

"To be sure what was said will be [summarized] by team."

"Bubble-Up"

"I feel the seminar was good to learn about my team members. But that is as far as it will go. Management will not do anything about any of it."

"Having representatives from each team, one from underwriting and one from techs. to meet with Randy, to discuss all concerns and positives that were [stated] in each meeting. [Do this] after all [employees] have met with Art."

"Seminar was great. It remains to be seen what the end results are."

"I think the employees will do their best to improve and make the team work. Management will do what they can!"

"I learned a lot these two days. Thanks."

"This was very open and positive. We were able to be open about our concerns and ideas for improvement."

"My concern is that these ideas will go no place like the Bubble-Up sessions."

"I hope management will take our view[s] seriously and talk and work with the teams to fix problems."

"It was a great discussion among our team."

“Depending upon management reactions/responses, this ‘could’ be very beneficial.”

“Management needs to at least address issues. They cannot ignore them and keep asking us to make suggestions. Hopefully the results are actually looked at.”

“Upper management needs to listen more to the employees and work with us. Seems like their way is the only way.”

“Just hope someone actually tries to address the extreme concerns to some extent.”

“Give teams more time to develop before having these meetings. Meetings seem to be longer than necessary. Some redundancy on topics/dwelled on too long. Otherwise good.”

“This was scheduled too soon. Team just developed one week ago.”

“Need to follow-up and implement suggestions and changes that were discussed.”

“Management listens but fails to take action.”

“Was surprised how many negatives there were.”

“Questions 9 & 10- I don’t feel that employees and management should be grouped in the same question.”

“After listening to others, I think about 90-95% of the group [is] open to change and want to succeed in improving. Unfortunately, the negative opinions are prominent when we get back to work. [Supervisors exhibit negative behavior]. It would be good to address [this] at the upper level so it would filter down.”

“Will only work with a dedicated commitment from upper management. Feedback from other team wrap ups does not indicate concerns will be addressed.”

“Thank you for the change management seminars. A very good step and a positive one.”

“Appreciate management’s willingness to hold change meetings.”

Appendix D

Church Mutual Change Management E-Mail Survey Results

October 21, 2005

Question #1 asked whether the employee took part in the change management classes. If he/she did not, they were asked not to complete the survey. Fifty – one (51) employees completed surveys (43% return rate based on the 120 total change management class participants).

Question #2

To what degree do you believe the company has made an effort to address the most important concerns you had about changes occurring in the underwriting department that you mentioned during last year's seminars? (Please place a capital X in front of your response).

Not at All Little Some Much Very Much

Responses:

Not at all = 13 (25.5%)

Little = 17 (33.33%)

Some = 12 (23.53%)

Much = 8 (15.7%)

Very Much = 1 (1.95%)

Question #3

Please name something you learned during the change management seminars that is helping you to cope with the changes occurring in the underwriting department and/or in your personal lives. (Please write your answer(s) below).

- **“One thing that I learned during the change management sessions is how to prioritize both in my personal and professional life. I can see more clearly what is important and what can wait until tomorrow to handle. Your job is never finished. I've also learned how to improve on multi-tasking in both areas of my life. I definitely found these seminars to be very beneficial and was able to use some of what I learned in all aspects of my life.”**
- **“I have to remember, not everyone deals with change the same way. When dealing with others, keep an open mind.”**
- **“Better understanding of co-workers personal space.”**
- **“Patience and understanding.”**
- **“Nothing more than before these meetings. Training has been very minimal and then only certain people can attend.”**
- **“There are many people that share the same goals and have the same concerns. There are people who want to work together toward improvement.”**

- **“That many people share the same concerns.”**
- **“Change is inevitable in any organization and an individual's attitude toward it will go a long way in determining how one adapts to the change and ultimately accepts it.”**
- **“I learned that there is more than one position that should be taken into consideration when a change occurs. For example, instead of being close minded about changes consider that management makes changes for reasons that may not be obvious when the changes are first communicated.”**
- **“Absolutely nothing.”**
- **“I learned that I'm going to have to accept this change and that there will be adjustments that will need to be made on my part, as well as others. I liked the whole idea of teams and I still support the concept. I knew it wouldn't be easy, in fact the first six months I didn't know if I was going to survive. But I did. It remains a challenge and always will be. But I thrive on this.”**
- **“Patience.”**
- **“NOTHING REALLY STANDS OUT, EXCEPT MAYBE THE COLORS SESSION, BUT DON'T THINK OUR SUPERVISOR REALLY GETS IT ABOUT OUR COLORS.”**
- **“I really did not have a problem with the Team concept. The only thing we need is more staff.”**
- **“The different personality types that each fellow employee is. Insight into what makes each person tick. To recognize the different stages during a change. To realize that the feelings are a part of the normal change process.”**
- **“Be aware of other people's needs and differences in personalities.”**
- **“Change is good! Changes in work environment [have] increased efficiency and productivity as predicted.”**
- **“It was a good seminar but I was familiar with the coping strategies.”**
- **“I learned it is important to make certain people are given details about the change before the change is made. Even if they do not want or like the proposed changes, knowing some things about it ahead of time help them to deal with it.”**
- **“NOTHING.”**
- **“Actually, I cope well with change in virtually all cases and this one was not an exception. I personally spoke with U/W management shortly after the announcement of their original plans and LONG before the seminars were planned or scheduled and told them what I thought, how I felt and what I expected to be the problems that we would have and why we would have them. Sadly, I happened to be quite accurate. It unfortunately, took the problems to start before management was willing to see that they had NOT properly planned the changes and had NOT**

properly anticipated the level of dissatisfaction that their original plans would engender. After the fact, they DID work hard to make things better and to make all of us more comfortable, the seminars were an important part of that process. For the rank and file U/W employee however, the level of trust in management to "do the right thing" for the employees who looked to them for leadership, security and understanding, was badly eroded and has been slow to return. This has been exacerbated by the fact that, in virtually all areas and teams, we are still short staffed, running behind on everything and working too much overtime. If you add to this the fact that we are experiencing a large influx of claims due to natural disasters and the extreme increase in gas prices, virtually all of us are anticipating little in the way of Profit Sharing for this year and a yearly salary increase that will very likely not keep up with inflation. These things are all combining to keep the employees from being overly enthusiastic about all of the changes that have occurred at CMIC."

- "I learned that for the most part, people do not like change. How has this helped me? I have given up trying to point out the positives to the negative people but no longer let the negative people get to me."
- "I have always been one to take change one day at a time. So I do not get over stressed about these things. One thing I did notice during the seminar is that middle management is "kept in the dark" sometimes as much as we are. People have a tendency to think their supervisors aren't telling them what they know. By what I gathered they are not told much until it is all said and done either."
- "[Realization] that work environment will continue to become more isolated and dissociate (sic)."
- "Communication and brutal honesty is important."
- "Finding the colors of each individual helped me understand people better, at work and outside of work. The differences are more understandable. I see people in a different light now."
- "I have learned to pick my own attitude and not to let others pick it for me."
- "It was helpful just to be able to articulate the needs we had. We did get a response to our questions but our biggest need was for teams 10 and 11 to be separate teams and that didn't happen. We still feel as though this is a big issue and could be address to give us a team feeling. It seems as though we are still very separate between underwriting and tech people. Nothing has been done to really make us a team in this area. This is very, very important if Church Mutual really was teams in reality, not just in name."
- "MANAGEMENT IS LISTENING AND HAS AN INTEREST IN WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY. MANAGEMENT WANTS US TO BE HAPPY WITH OUR JOBS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT, BUT IT MAY TAKE TIME TO IMPLEMENT SOME CHANGES."
- "Change is constant."
- "NOTHING."

- **“I think this survey should have come out before a year’s time has gone by. Trying to keep an open mind on other peoples’ ideas and suggestions.”**
- **“The seminars helped me realize that the company understands that the transition to team environments and new workflows will take time and effort. I've learned that patience and communication are key in making the change successful.”**
- **“I did not learn anything that has helped me "cope" with change. I am an optimistic person and adopt well to change.”**
- **“I try to listen to other peoples’ points of view.”**
- **“I try not to get caught up in complaints/negative conversations. I try to look at management’s reasons for actions. I saw us through someone else's eyes - and discovered some of the "issues" seem petty & not really as important to someone outside of the company.”**
- **“That nothing is written in stone until it's in the past, and that if you bring your concerns forward in an appropriate manner, things can change for the better, given a little time.”**
- **“I learned that is does not pay to voice your concerns because they only listen to a few and not the rest. I learned that is does not pay to voice your opinion. Come in do your job and go home.”**
- **“I wasn't at Church Mutual very long before we moved into teams so I really didn't have to put much effort into coping with the changes. I do believe that concentrating on only certain states within your own team helps instead of trying to learn every state (from a processing perspective). On the other hand when people are helping other teams with work it might take a little longer because they are not used to that state.”**
- **“I believe the "Colors" seminar helped me to understand why I operate in the manner I do. It helped me understand me a little better.”**
- **“Different people have different personalities and we learned how to understand or at least recognize that people work in there own ways. I think too many people are forgetting the activity we had to find out what “Color” we were.”**
- **“Nothing has changed. Around here, talk is cheap. We have had these before, using different titles, and it is still the same. NOTHING HAPPENS.”**
- **“Nothing.”**
- **“Importance of clear communication and empathy for others.”**
- **“I did learn about myself somewhat with the Color game.”**
- **“Look for the good things about the change instead of picking the change apart. Be patient.”**

- **“That change takes time. Each individual adjusts to change differently and in their own time.”**
- **“Try not to let things bother you as much. It does not pay to stress your self out.”**
- **“Realizing that we are all in this together and the only way a team is going to work is if we work together.”**
- **“Probably only the Colors program.”**

Question #4

To what degree do you believe underwriting management has become more accessible (i.e. employees can freely express concerns to underwriting management) since the change management seminars? (Please place an X in front of your response).

Not at All Little Some Much Very Much

Responses:

Not at all = 1 (23.53%)

Little = 14 (27.45%)

Some = 17 (33.33%)

Much = 4 (7.84%)

Very Much = 4 (7.84%)

Question #5

Other comments?

- **“I believe we still have staffing and automation issues. These issues have had a negative impact on our work environment. Until these issues are addressed, goals that have been set are not reachable and development of personnel is difficult.”**
- **“The changes at Church Mutual during the last one and one half years were huge. The Team concept was the biggest change that was made. That subject was the most talked about during our change management sessions. None of the items that were brought up as concerns were ever addressed or discussed. In fact, a follow up team meeting between our team and underwriting management, where we were supposed to discuss the items we brought up in our sessions, was cut off in the middle of our discussions. We were told that an additional meeting would be held to discuss the rest of the issues, but it was never held.**
- **“There is no way that the team concept change in the way we process business and the subsequent change in work environment can take place without any periodic re evaluation and feedback to determine if things can be done differently. There are also problem areas that can be identified with subsequent recommendations given to address those problems. Additional feedback should be solicited by management to see if procedures can be changed to make processing more efficient. We were basically thrown into the new team concept and have used**

the same procedures as we were given from day one. Change doesn't take place at one time without looking for other ways to make things better. However, that is exactly what has happened here. Underwriting management does not want to hear that things are not working properly or that things could be done differently. There is less communication now than there ever was before, and the whole department is suffering because of it. Morale is at an all time low. What makes it even worse, is that it ultimately affects our policyholders, because they are getting an inferior product and untimely service. In a service organization such as ours, that is the most disturbing consequence of all of this.”

- **“Our team is very large in terms of team members. We have all been working together and listening to each other for process improvement ideas. Over the past year I feel that team players have become more positive and we are all working together as a team helping each other out. It's Working and I am Happy!”**
- **“I think they still need to take a look at things on the technical side and really try and get the techs off of [overtime]. Most of us have children and we need to spend time with our families. This is also very important. Some [overtime] is not bad, but every week is just way too much. They need to take a big look at this and add people where it is needed on the technical side.”**
- **“Capping the incentive program when the underwriting techs were added was a pretty cheap solution/compromise to getting them added. Could actually hurt an underwriter’s incentive compensation. The underwriters essentially face a potential coinsurance penalty for the incentive plan not being adequately funded to value. I don't think we'll ever know if our teams are processing more efficiently because of our inability to get caught up and then see if we can keep up. -The cross training of the underwriting assistants to some tech tasks is not being well received by the veteran assistants. The inability to produce an underwriting associate position demonstrated poor communication to the underwriting assistants in order to sidetrack them from the issue of becoming techs instead of staying assistants. -Too much outside influence on the underwriting department from Sales mgt and IS. Sales on anything that affects premium and IS with any processing projects. I think all these change items have team implications. I believe I've hit on Communication, Compensation, and Staffing which were the priorities.”**
- **“Supervisors/Management are always off in meetings, not available when needed. There is too much ‘playing favorites’. Our workloads have not decreased, only increased. Still working overtime every week. Morale is getting worse because of that. We are supposed to be individual teams but we still get classified as a department when it comes to the overtime and incentive programs.”**
- **“It seems that very little of our suggestions have been done.”**
- **“There really [are] no changes other than seating arrangements. I believe they just are having us complete this questionnaire as another opportunity to air our issues, but then "shut up and get back to work". There is still no end in sight to the overtime. The processing of work is taking longer, and more and more mistakes are made. They are more concerned with "quantity" rather than "quality". So work is now being done twice in order to correct how it was done the first time. We have more and more hand-offs now than ever before.”**

- **“I have never had a problem freely expressing concerns to management. Our managers have always been accessible.”**
- **“We need to focus more on the Underwriters and what can be done to address their increased workload. To this point, nothing has been done on that front, and the Underwriting position is where the decision making is done, which is the most crucial part of the team.”**
- **“For our team we have had a team meeting almost every month. I think this has been very beneficial to our team becoming closer and everyone being on the same page. We recently had our one year celebration and it was a good time. (Although I can't believe a year went by already).**

The communication has increased but could still be improved. (There is always room for improvement).

I like it that the technical people have become eligible for Underwriting Incentives, although I feel the decision was made and communicated too late to allow us to meet our full potential of incentive for this year. (I feel there is not enough time left in the year to have everything processed within 30 days of its set up date). I understand they needed to put some processing requirements in there for our incentive, but in order to get lets say the 1/2 of point for renewals processed within 30 days that means the Underwriter has to get it off his or her desk right away. Sometimes before it even gets to the tech to process the piece of work is late because it has been sitting on the Underwriter's desk. How can we control that? It is my understanding that some of the Underwriters are upset that the technicians get the incentive now. Are they going to make an extra effort to get policies off there desk so we can process them on time? I don't think they will.

I believe that once some policies are automated (example: auto expirations and renewals) that this should help the backlog. However; this automation has not happened yet and I think that the incentive has been set too high for our current processing procedures. This is just my opinion, I may be wrong.

Realignment of divisions - I think it is unfair that Underwriters are just told they are moving here or there and they don't have a choice in the matter. I don't know maybe that is the chance that they take when they become an Underwriter.

I still think that training is an issue. There is not enough time allowed to update manuals or other training tools needed because the concentration is on production. (Trainers are still expected to process daily). If the people processing the data don't have the accurate information then how are we as a department supposed to give our best customer service to our customers.

I am the type of person that will question everything that doesn't look right. Management comments have been that we can't spend time questioning everything. My thought is ‘wouldn't you want to get it right the first time instead of having to do an endorsement’ (endorsements are our biggest backlog right now). What does the insured think of Church Mutual when we don't get their policy right the first time? One unhappy customer can have a huge impact on current

customers or potential customers. Unhappy customers tell twice as many people about their experience as happy customers.”

- “I think that the time spent with you was a waist of time and money. There has not been any people hired and the overtime is still there and getting worse. The work flow is getting harder to keep up.”
- “The people in team 10 & 11 are trying very hard to do a quality job. The u/w processing techs are tired of the constant overtime they have been putting in for the past four years. The problem is that there is no end in sight to the OT in the future. I do not feel that the needed respect and trust are in place to make this dept. highly successful.”
- “We have gone through meetings like this in the past with the same results. Many feel that Management does this as lip service and things will never change, so far they are correct.”
- “I am concerned that we spent so much time in the change management meetings and how little has been done since. We still bring up issues to Management and do not receive a response back. Example: We have asked to have new lighting in the remodeled section and no response has been received from upper management after several attempts. Quality of work has deteriorated and quantity has again increased with no increase in staff. “
- “Our biggest concern was the staffing issues, which seems to still be an issue. Actually, I haven't noticed any of our concerns addressed yet.”
- “I tried to remain open and positive during the planning stages of our move into the new building and workstations and was looking forward to it. I like change. However, I don't see where our main concerns or suggestions were met. We are "enclosed" in our workstations and cannot communicate with others as we used to. The underwriters should be sitting together so we can discuss our everyday problems and concerns. We learn so much from each other and I miss that. Our work is so far behind which shows we are understaffed. The temperature in this new wing is uncomfortable and cannot be controlled, so I am told. I do like the idea of having just a few tech. people to go to instead of a department when things need to be done on a rush basis. Our techs. know our territories and how we work and we know their work habits. I do like the people on our Team - we all seem to get along well.”
- “A lot of the hardware issues have been completed-that was the easy part the management issues... poor/ incomplete planning inappropriate promotions based on lack of understanding of level of secretary level rating supervisors and steam rolling tactics led to these diversionary so called seminars. These seminars are viewed as providing management sufficient time for to quell any employee unrest. It represents a very good tactical placebo. It was done, before, with [sic] "bubble up" program which failed so they promoted him to vice president. Seminars were done before in the 80s. With long term employees---- persisting in doing these identical repetitive things----- how dumb do you think we are!”
- “Overall, virtually everyone has adjusted to the Team concept and, for the majority of us, to being in the new building (it is actually VERY nice). However, what virtually all of the Underwriting staff dislikes is the feeling of isolation that we have in our new workstations.

While the way they are designed is fine, they are too tall and do not allow us to interact with each other and THAT is one of the main items that help all of us be better underwriters, develop a sense of unity and camaraderie and, in general, do a better job for CMIC. The way our workstations are now, you don't have any idea if one of your colleagues is at work or if they are at their desk. We are not able to easily "brainstorm" (an integral part of deciding how to handle difficult risks) without getting up and going to someone else's cubical and when you get there, they may not be there at all. Due to the amount of money the company has invested in new workstations, none of us expect them to be replaced in either the near or mid-future."

- "I don't feel we have begun to fully see the benefits of this change yet. In the meantime, we are still struggling with the same issues we had when we had the seminar---heavy workloads, not enough employees, and, I know, some employees feel information isn't being shared with us."
- "I think [underwriting] management has always been available (even before the seminar) and listened to concerns. However, [underwriting] mgmt probably has budgets, restrictions, etc.....that hampers their ability to do some of the things that need to be done (ex: add additional staff)."
- "For the most part, working in the Team concept is okay - it has its good and bad points. It's good to be able to work directly with issuance people, but it's probably distracting to them when we can ask them questions at any time and vice-versa. I think we lose the "expertise" of having everyone in a particular job working side-by-side. I enjoy the people I work with, but our overall productivity doesn't seem as good. I like the workstations and computers better.
- "Most problems have been taken care of. No complaints!"
- "Last year, people in my particular job - Underwriting Assistant, asked management to have our position reviewed. We were lost in the shuffle of reorganization; people were promoted to the same job level who didn't have the same level of responsibilities, contact with the reps or insured, or training we had. We met with the Underwriting VP, Manager & Supervisors to voice our concerns. We were told our job was being reviewed and a new position, Associate Underwriter, was being developed. People in our position could be promoted to this position or remain an assistant. No "additional" assistants would be hired. As we are promoted or retire/leave, the position will not be replaced and become obsolete. New people at this level are being hired as "Underwriting Technicians with Underwriting emphasis." We were told this would be done by the end of the year. LAST year. We're still waiting. I feel this lack of action on the part of company officials hurt managements' credibility, promotes uncertainty, negative attitudes, and hurts productivity. We're told "it's on so-and-so's desk", then hear it's on someone else's desk, etc. Someone should make a decision, even if the answer is "no"."
- "Supervisors favorites continue to be treated better verses EVERYONE being treated equal."
- "With regard to #4, if it is not what they want to hear, forget it. Talking to a pole would get you a better response. The attitude of these people is my way or hit the highway. There ideals are given to you and that is it. If it is something they don't want to hear, the open door is closed. We don't even know where we are in the production efficiency of this team. We , in the team

know we are behind, but haven't heard how far or what areas from management. They are/were so strong headed on cross training that they lost focus of the real issue. CUSTOMER SERVICE. The morale is very low in all of underwriting and I don't see any improvements. We have had no follow-up what-so-ever."

- **"Employees can access mgmnt....but.....none of the concerns/suggestions voiced by employees are considered---mgmnt continues its own secret agenda w/o being honest with anyone. Work process efficiency is worse than last year, overtime is still a great amount; again apparent lack of planning -- team 10 & 11 were deemed to be too large (even though that was our #1 concern from the chg mgmnt meetings) to move into the new bldg with the rest of the UW dept--we are now totally cut off from the rest of the dept (guess what that does to the already extremely poor communication? Divide & Conquer!!!!!!!); quality of work has gone down so far that it is creating a greater work load (endorsements to correct errors); task tally sheets continue--using the time standard's that were created 10 years ago & have nothing at all to do with the way work is done now; training is not being done & when some does get done it is not adequate for the person to produce quality work; inequitable workload distribution--some teams have people sitting with nothing to do while others are drowning; not one team works as a "team" with ALL members of the team working towards the same team goal."**
- **"I feel employees have always been able to freely express concerns to underwriting management. However, I don't think underwriting management is always on the same page between themselves. I've expressed concerns of our team size which was too large from the beginning and remains that way. I have 14 people that report to me and the underwriting supervisor has 13 people. It wouldn't be so difficult to manage, but our team is unique in that we also handle all the personal lines business. This should be separated and made its own team. Another issue remains the amount of overtime that is being asked of our staff. Our staff has been on overtime all year, anywhere from 3-6 hours weekly. We need additional staffing, which has been requested many times, but we continue to get turned down."**
- **"I think there are still staffing concerns. Either staffing needs to be addressed or automation must be done sooner rather than later."**
- **"I THINK [CK] HAS MADE PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS AND I THINK SHE DESERVES A HIGH MARK FOR THAT EFFORT. IN GENERAL, THOUGH, FROM OUR SUPERVISOR ON UP, SEE VERY LITTLE PROGRESS OF THEM EMPOWERING US. THE WORK BACKLOG IS A TERRIBLE, NEVER ENDING BURDEN, AND THEY WON'T LISTEN TO US, NOR TRY OUR IDEAS, EVEN THOUGH THEY KEEP SAYING THEY WANT OUR IDEAS. THEY KNOW EVERYTHING, WE KNOW NOTHING IS HOW WE ARE STILL TREATED. OUR TEAM HAS THE BEST PERFORMANCE OF THE TEAMS, BUT WE ARE STILL TREATED LIKE FURNITURE. THOSE TEAMS THAT DO NOT HAVE OUR LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT SHOULD FIGURE OUT WHY THEY ARE IN THAT CONDITION AND FIX THEIR ROOT CAUSES INSTEAD OF EXPECTING TEAM 15 TO KEEP HELPING THEM OUT, ENABLING THEM TO CONTINUE DOING WHAT CAUSES THEM TO HAVE THESE ONGOING PROBLEMS. OUR TEAM IS DOING SOMETHING WELL, DOESN'T ANYONE IN MANAGEMENT HAVE THE TIME OR SENSE TO TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHY? LET TEAM 15 GROW INTO NEW AREAS INSTEAD OF HAVING TO CONTINUOUSLY DRAIN OUR ENERGIES HELPING OTHER**

TEAMS WHO CAN'T OR WON'T HELP THEMSELVES. HELPING OTHERS IS A GOOD THING, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS, AND IT'S NOT WORKING.”

- **“It seems like it was just something they set up so we could vent and then let it slowly drift away.”**
- **“Employees were very receptive to the seminars and anxious to see results. The results have been disappointing.”**