

SECTION V HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Human resource management in today's environment is somewhat of a misnomer. Human resources, or more correctly "people," remain the most important resource that the organization has. In earlier times it was thought that for people to be productive, they had to be controlled. This was not true then and is not true now. Unfortunately, it is only recently that this has been widely recognized in this country. People are most productive when they are given the tools they need to do their job and then are left to do what they know best, with as little interference as possible. Supervisors in this atmosphere actually become coaches as well as planners of what is to be done and when it is to be done as opposed to how it is to be done. The following is an outline of some activities in which the people in the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) have been engaged.

MECHANIC RECRUITMENT

- Qualifications: NYSDOT, as does all of New York State, works within a competitive Civil Service system. The qualifications for the two levels of mechanics we currently have are four years experience for Motor Equipment Mechanic and five years experience for Construction Equipment Mechanic. The normal recruitment methods are Civil Service announcement, word of mouth and newspaper advertising, with the small weekly advertiser type being the most effective.
- Performance Examination: Each candidate is given a three part performance examination monitored by Equipment Management personnel.
- Apprentice Program: We have used in the past an apprenticeship program instead of recruiting experienced mechanics. The features of this program are:
 - An aptitude test to determine mechanical aptitude.
 - Written work processes starting at the first level of maintenance to diesel engine overhaul. This was a three year process with periodic sign off by the supervisor.

- Classroom study at local community colleges.
- Finally, passing the performance examination for MEM.

MECHANIC TRAINING

- Vendor Supplied With New Equipment: Each equipment contract that we award has a two part training clause:
 - Training in the operation of the equipment for the operators to include hands-on experience.
 - Minor maintenance and adjustments for mechanics.
- Factory Training: Periodically, we either send mechanics to equipment manufacturers for training on trouble-shooting and/or overhaul of major components or we have the manufacturer come to our facility to put on special training. The method used depends on the number of people to be trained. Training at the factory is usually free, with the state paying travel costs. If we have a large number to be trained, it is sometimes less expensive to pay to have factory trainers come to our facility instead of paying travel costs.
- Supervisor With Videos and Workbooks: Some years back we purchased several "Sight on Sound" slide training programs, with a slide projector in each region. Then we also gave instructor training to a shop supervisor in each region. This has since evolved to the use of videos, some of which are created in-house, but the majority of which are either purchased or are provided by vendors with new equipment.
- On Site by Consultant Contractor: With the labor union, via Joint Labor Management Committee, NYSDOT has contracted with a consultant trainer that travels around from region to region putting on intensive one-day training sessions on hydraulics, diesel engine diagnosis, automotive electrical systems and computerized emission control systems. This method of providing training to keep the skilled technicians up-to-date is cost effective and has been well received by the employees.

MECHANIC JOB ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

In 1990, a "Mechanic Job Enrichment" program was started in one region as a pilot. The goal of the project was to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a work procedure for mechanics that would have the mechanics who work in the main repair facility in a region become more involved in the total process, including direct communication with the mechanics in the counties and the operators of the equipment. Where previously there was one person responsible for quality control in the repair facility, this was changed to having each mechanic be responsible for his own quality control. This reduced "come backs" to zero after a "shake down period" of approximately six months. There was a cross orientation of employees to have the people work closer and understand the needs and functions performed by fellow employees. Demands for better scheduling and pre-scheduling of repair parts resulted in faster turnaround of repairs. An unforeseen benefit was a desire by the mechanics to compete with outside commercial repair shops.

QUALITY CIRCLES

The NYSDOT has added the implementation of Quality Circles (QC) to its list of tools to enhance overall productivity. Through the efforts of the Department's Human Resource Development Bureau, a series of Train-the-Trainer sessions and training of QC facilitators was started. As with the majority of employee involvement programs, it is most successful if it is a voluntary program. The program has flourished more in some areas than others.

INNOVATION PROJECTS

In May of 1990, a pilot Innovation Workshop was held with Equipment Management employees from Region I. Approximately 50 employees participated. From this first workshop, ten innovation projects were started. From this small beginning and a grant from the Joint Labor Management Committee of the Civil Service Employees Association, workshops were held in each Region, training 400 employees. Projects were limited to what could be accomplished within three months and accomplished by the employees doing the job. The program verifies the belief that the people closest to the job are the ones who know how to improve it.

WELLNESS INCENTIVE PROGRAM (SICK LEAVE REDUCTION)

With an increasing fleet size and a shrinking work force, a pilot "Sick Leave Reduction" program was started by the Equipment Management Division in 1989. The goal of this project was to increase the amount of time employees were at work. There was a simple incentive for those employees who used less sick or injury leave than the statewide average. An employee who used five days or less was given a \$100 award; for six days \$50; and seven days \$20. The incentive was aimed at the marginal sick leave user. In fiscal year 1988/89, the Division had a sick leave rate of 10.3 days per employee. In fiscal year 89/90, the rate fell to 8.4 days for the first year of the program. The rate for the second year was 8.8 and 8.7 for the third and final year. The program cost approximately \$24,000 per year and produced savings in commercial repair of approximately \$125,000, for a net savings of \$101,000 per year.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

NYSDOT has a multi-facet approach to promoting safety in the work place. There is an intensive safety awareness effort, a system of safety awards, tailgate safety meetings and a network of "safety committees." These committees are comprised of rank and file employees with a charge of duty to identify any potential safety problems or situations, propose solutions if possible, and work with management to implement the solutions.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT "QUALITY"

In New York State, the Governor's Office of Employee Relations is coordinating the Total Quality Management movement for all agencies in the state. There has been and is continuing to be a series of productivity seminars for management personnel focusing on quality management. QtP ("Quality through Participation") is New York's label for Total Quality Management. NYSDOT has been designated to be a pilot agency to work with Xerox Corporation to implement a QtP system. The Department is currently in the formulation process.