

We also give people team control. This was really pioneered in Ann Arbor by Mike Bolton. We got the idea from there. We say to somebody, these ten buses are yours. You take care of them, you schedule them, you do everything with them. All this is coming about as a result of the question, "Who's the customer for the maintenance department management?" The answer is, "The mechanics." Management needs to respond to the mechanics and understand what their needs are.

### Conclusions

We have one basic philosophy, which is: How we treat our employees is how they are going to treat the public. In other words, what goes around, comes around.

Paradigm shifts really take a long time to implement, and the results come very slowly. It is not the quick fix for this week and then next week we have got another one. But as we put these paradigm shifts into practice, we will not only improve in terms of our cost performance, but we will improve dramatically what we are trying to sell to the public, which is quality service.

### LABOR/MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

*William Spraul  
METRO  
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METRO has been in existence since 1973 as a public transit authority. For the first 15 or 16 years we developed into one of the best bureaucracies you have ever seen. We were very much a top-down organization, with command structures that were very traditional for transit authorities. We had one basic operational motto, which went something like, "If it wasn't for customers, this would be a great job."

In 1990, we decided that we needed to make some changes. Our general manager wanted us to develop a corporate mission statement.

#### Development of the Vision Statement

Over a two-year period of time, more than 900 employees in our organization participated in one-day sessions to develop that vision statement. We had over 93 percent of our employees participate voluntarily. During those one-day sessions we put together cross-

functional teams. They were not only across the organizational functions but they were also across the organizational levels. The general manager, the janitors, the bus operators, professional staff, union leadership — including the union president — everybody was the same.

Each team did three things during their meeting day:

1. they listed current reality at METRO, not only the strengths but also the weaknesses of our existing organization.
2. they defined what a perfect METRO would be. If we were the best organization we could be, what would we look like?
3. they wrote down their own vision statement.

At the end of that process, we had 45 different team statements, so we had 45 different versions of a METRO vision statement. Team representatives continued to meet, consolidating these proposals into one that read:

*1) We make Cincinnati a great place to live; 2) Customers are why we're here; 3) Outstanding service is our commitment; and 4) Employees are METRO; we are a team.*

Nine-hundred employees have ownership in this statement. By doing so, they have reengineered our organization in a way that I do not think any of us ever envisioned five years ago.

#### Alignment and Cultural Change

We challenge every employee to challenge every other employee, to challenge every manager, to challenge the general manager, and even challenge the board to make sure every decision we make in our organization is aligned with what we said we wanted to be in that vision statement. We now have 900 employees who have all bought into the same corporate values, bought into the same goals for our entire organization.

We now have operating divisions, rather than a director of transportation and a director of maintenance in two separate departments. We have got one management team and one employee team in each operating division that is completely responsible for all the service that comes out of that division. Facility

maintenance, fleet maintenance, and operations staff are all together on one team focused on the same set of goals.

One of the realities about cultural change is there will be people who cannot make the change. As an organization we realize that this is not only in the management ranks, but also in the rank and file, the front lines. We have had some people who have had to walk away from the process. We said, "Take the opportunity, move aside or move out if this isn't something you can do," because we decided this was going to be a fundamental change in our organization. We have had some turnover, particularly in the management ranks, people who were unable to shift from our previous entrenched bureaucracy.

We involved union leadership in our deliberations right up front. Explaining to them exactly how we wanted this process to work and exactly what it was going to entail. Once this process got going and employees started participating, the pressure was on management as well as union leadership to change. Confrontation was not good enough anymore. We now are in a much more cooperative effort, trying to align everybody and every piece of the organization in the same direction.

#### **True Teamwork**

The final element is teamwork. We have made incredible strides there. Employee work teams permeate everything that we do. We deploy employee work teams for major purchases of equipment, for policy decisions, for everything that we do. For example, if you want to be hired into our organization, if you want to be promoted in our organization, an employee team is going to make that decision. We use operators, managers, and union officials to hire employees into mechanic ranks as well as operations. If you want to be promoted in our organization, you are going to have to go in front of not only who you think you are going to be working for but who your peer is going to be. We also allow employees to hire their own supervisors by involving subordinates in the interview process.

#### **The Differences Made**

We have had a lot of changes, and it has made a difference. We have seen some significant performance and quality improvements. My division, the Bond Hill operating division, has gone the furthest with this concept. We have made the most radical

changes to the way we do business. We were able to reduce preventable accidents by 38 percent in one year. Miles between road calls increased by 28 percent. Customer service complaints were reduced by 10 percent and, at the same time, commendations for operators were up 10 percent. We reduced early service operation by 24 percent, and customer-satisfaction on-board surveys conducted by employees have seen significant improvements in every area that we ask about. Finally, our ridership increased by seven percent in one year. I believe that, because of the significant improvements that our operators and mechanics are making, our riders not only are staying with us, they are telling their friends, and they are riding more.

#### **TQM AND TEAMWORK IN SPOKANE**

*George Kettenton  
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We had our first touch with TQM when Mac MacDorman came on to the Spokane Transit Authority (STA) and asked for a total commitment from senior staff and labor in order for us to participate in a pilot program.

When the initial leadership team began to form, I had an opportunity to ask some pretty tough questions of senior staff. We had two previous programs fail because of a lack of commitment of time and finances from senior staff. These experiments left a lot of people with a bad taste in their mouth and a lot of people with hurt feelings. I frankly put their feet to the fire and asked them just what they wanted out of this program and why they wanted it. Our morale was at an all-time low. I realized we were at the point that we had to do something or we were going to be in all out warfare.

Total quality management is something that I saw as an opportunity to improve working conditions for my members outside the collective bargaining process. I believe in the collective bargaining process, but there are other ways to improve working conditions, and that is what I saw in TQM.

One of the first things we saw as a success was a new, revised, more effective customer service complaint and compliment policy and program. This new program is much more streamlined than our old, burdensome one.