Form C

Report on Oral Defense of Project

TITLE: CREDIT CARD COLLECTIONS AND COMMITMENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

AUTHOR: SARAH M. DIEHN

Having heard the oral defense of the above project, the Advisory Committee:

_X_ A) Finds the defense of the project to be satisfactory and accepts the thesis as submitted.

_____ B) Finds the defense of the project to be unsatisfactory and recommends that defense be rescheduled contingent upon:

Advisory Committee:

Richard J. Ulph Chair of Committee Date: 5-7-98

C. Y. Allen

Eli Jaffe

CREDIT CARD COLLECTIONS AND COMMITMENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Dr. Richard Illka

Dr. Chris Sadler

C.Y. Allen

Sarah M. Diehn

May 17, 1998

A Project

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements

for the

Master of Arts in Communication

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Running Head: Collections and Commitment

Table of Contents

Dedication

Dear Dr. Richard Illka, Dr. Chris Sadler and C.Y. Allen,

Thank you all for all of the time you have spent with me constructing the project. It truly was an idea and a sub group that became a worthwhile project and dare I say...potential career? The utilization of a part-time job as a source for the project signifies the broad spectrum of communication! I appreciate all of the support, encouragement (especially the Minnesota talks from Dr. Illka) and advice you have all given to me.

Dear Communication Personnel,

Thank you Cathy Ladd for all of the basic technical support (faxing, merging, scanning lost files, email, public folders and the list goes on) you have given to me! April, Jeff, Charm, and Dave thank you for all of the encouragement and the kicking in the pants (and blowing off of steam) needed to finish and feel good about this endeavor. I will miss you all and wish good luck in your future careers.

Dear Family,

Thank you Mom and Dad for instilling in me the values of hard work and education. My appreciation goes to you for listening to me explain myself and this venture. Thanks must also go to Paul, Michael and Andrea because if I didn't hear about your education accomplishments (you **all** had them), I would not have been inspired to achieve this degree and make it this far!

Dear Dave,

Thank you for encouraging me to apply, supporting me through tough times (too numerous to mention), reinforcing a "go get 'em" attitude and celebrating with me this accomplishment. Words can not express my gratitude. If the last two years were any indication of what might be, I am ecstatic you are in my corner to cheer me on!

Finally, I would like to thank all of the people who participated in this project, the collectors and the financial institution who truly do make the financial world go round. You all work much harder than anyone ever realizes. It is good to know there are people looking our for one's financial well-being. Good Luck!

Introduction

The common myth of the American Dream includes the idea of big house, nice yard, 2.3 children and a financially secure future. Most people do not live this dream because reality includes doctor's bills, emergencies and financial setbacks. In the quest for the American Dream, many people are using credit cards to acquire their wants and even supply their basic needs (food, clothing, and transportation). Many people are getting further and further into debt, which makes the dream an impossible one to achieve. The increased debt purchased through credit, leads to more debtors with larger balances as well as more delinquent and past due accounts. This larger pool of people demands more collectors to recover the debt owed to the lending firms. Collectors seem to be a necessary part of economics, however, few people actively seek this career route and those who are collectors seem less dedicated to the profession.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is two-fold (1) to improve employee commitment in the collections department of a bank by developing a communication based training program designed by the author and (2) to develop a training program as a prototype for other collection professionals in financial institutions. In the process, several question relevant to training in this area will be asked and answered. How committed are collectors to the collection position? Do individual collectors respond better to individual or team goals as incentive to complete the work task? Do part-time employees need different forms of training versus full-time employees? The underlying assumption is that short-term

employees (people who have been employed in collections less than 1 year) are not as committed to the profession as long-term employees and thus both groups require different incentives. The other assumptions are: (1) a committed worker is likely to remain with the position longer, and (2) a committed worker will more likely be productive. Collectors are unique subjects because they need to maintain individual and departmental goals and are evaluated in both areas of performance.

Management of a small Midwestern bank concluded that motivation and team building are among vital keys to maintain the employee's commitment to the collections position. According to Fink (1992), commitment is an attitude that develops from identification, which occurs when one experiences something, someone, or some idea as an extension of oneself and is multi-dimensional, exploring commitment to the position, profession and the organization. The training program emphasizes motivation and team building as a means of increasing commitment. A key area to explore is collections as an industry, as a profession and the process of collections as related to communication.

Collections as Industry, Profession, and Process

Collections as Industry

Collections is a growing industry and collectors are dealing with more and more people. The variety of collections departments includes student loans, credit cards, mortgages, and health care. According to the Tower Group, a credit research firm, banks invested 138 million in 1997 in commercial credit technology (Collections and Risk 1998). The volume of people, as well as the amount of debt these people need to collect, makes a

collector one of the most understated roles in our society. According to Leonard Sklar (1990), author of The Check is Not in the Mail, of U.S. debt, 20 percent is consumer debt and 80 percent is commercial. Commercial debt can be recovered from businesses easier because the business is either operating or not. Consumers are not placed in a category of "operating or not", most consumers balance debt with income. Some consumers do not budget unexpected expenses, however, and then debtors are either not paid on time or even not paid at all. The deliquency leads to a loss of revenue for the debtor and the reason for a collector.

Collections, as an industry, has made the newspaper headlines recently as well as the classified section. The Boston Globe states that General Electric Capital has not admitted it violated federal law but has identified more than 30,000 customers from whom it may have illegally collected credit card debts (Buller, 1998). Negative press and illegal collections practices by some companies have made the collector feared and despised by the general public.

Collectors are required to collect as much money as owed at a given time, and in an efficient manner. Green, Blank & Linden (1983) determine in their article, "Market and Organizational Influences on Bank Employee's Work Attitudes and Behaviors," because "bank employees must directly and continually interface with the consuming public...the role places heavy demand on employees who are vulnerable to environmental influences" (298).

According to Doug Machovic, manager of training and customer support for Western Union, "one problem collectors have to face every day is the

stigmas attached to the word 'collector'" (Reynolds, 1997, 12). Sklar also reinforces the negative stereotype that collectors have in society:

> "In the hierarchy of business functions, collections is not a major player. It tends to be part of the controller's job and doesn't hold a candle to sales, research, production, marketing, advertising, or other business departments as far a status is concerned. Collections people feel acutely the low status both the company and society confer on them" (Sklar 1990).

This negative view of collectors comes from other bank employees in different departments and the consumer as well. Green et al. (1983), state, "Service organizations actively interact with and are dependent on the consumer market they serve" (298). The banking industry and collectors, in particular, work with a variety of people at all times. Banks know the value of the collection department as a representative of the company, and other businesses are beginning to realize the value of their accounts receivables and collections departments as firm representatives as well.

Collections as a Profession. According to a survey conducted by Professional Collector, a trade magazine for collectors, 54 % of respondents were women. The ages of collectors vary, but the majority of collectors are in the 18-34 category and comprise up to 65% of the profession. A full quarter of all collectors have been with the collections position 1-2 years (Professional Collector, Fall 1997). The collections industry is a growing industry and with little formal training makes the position appealing to people who want a full or part time position with flexible hours.

> "The explosive growth of telemarketing is further tribute to the power of the phone in obtaining appointment and making sale. With telemarketing companies generating so many trained phone people, including student and housewives, your business is probably surrounded by a growing pool

> of people who are good on the phone, nearby, available for work on a part-time basis and inexpensive" (Sklar 1990).

Collections is more than getting the money from creditors. Collections includes customer service and sales. Collections exhibits customer service because customers may get the only impression of the company through the collections department. Consumers usually work with more than one financial institution for credit cards, loans and mortgages. Poor collectors who harass customers for a payment at all costs will probably lose business for the parent company. Michael Buller (1997), editor of Professional Collector states, "More than ever, collectors are in the customer service business. And more than ever, customers know which companies offer good service and which offer only lip service" (3).

Collections is also sales. The collector needs to resell the customer to pay for the debt. Re-selling the idea of credit card as a loan to be repaid is also a collector's job. The collector needs to determine the reason for the communication breakdown between the customer and the collector. The collector also needs to resolve the best way for the customer to pay for debts, especially if the customer is very delinquent.

Collections employs aspects of conflict management and negotiation. The collector implements negotiation tactics when a customer refuses to pay the debt. The collectors must suggest a win-win situation, with the reward for the consumer being decreased phone calls, self-respect for being responsible, freedom from an attorney, or letters with the payment negotiation.

Collectors demonstrate assertion skills at work. Sklar (1990) declares "Debtors play a wondrous variety of games, sometimes consciously but often unconsciously, sort of like going on automatic pilot" (17). Collectors either have to ignore the game or play the conversation negotiation game with the customers. Collectors assert the position of being paid as well as assert aspects of tact and professionalism. Recent revisions concerning how collectors recover debt is under review in Congress at this time. Communication skills are vital for nearly every job, however, for collectors communication skills are necessary for their livelihood.

Collections as a Process. Communication is defined as the process by which persons transact through symbolic manipulation for the purpose of sharing feeling, perceptions, and experiences with another (Beatty 1996). Understanding how humans communicate explains how organizations function. As organizations are based on individuals, interpersonal communication is elemental to understanding organizations and collectors. One way to study how a company may increase its productivity is by studying the motivation of the individual workers to create a team. Collectors engage in interpersonal communication with the customers and co-workers, but at the same time have a collective group goal of achieving a fixed amount of dollars per month to add to the company portfolio. Most collection departments employ the use of electronic headsets and automatic dialing telephone systems to make the collector get through more calls in one hour, thus have more collected revenue in the work shift.

Hopper (1989b) states, "Telephone conversation may be the most straightforwardly message-laden activity in everyday life, hence its study occupies a unique place in a science of speech" (241). Collectors utilize their telephone communication skills to collect money; therefore, their communication skills must be accurate and efficient. Hopper (1989b) notes, "...telephone conversations are pure speech communication. Telephone calls function primarily as communication, whereas face-to-face interaction is braided into other action" (241).

The only way communication occurs between the collectors and the customers is when the customer picks up the telephone with a collector on the end of the line. As Littlejohn (1996) notes, "...conversation is a cooperative endeavor. People must play the game by the same rules or they would never know what was going on" (212). One problem collectors face is when the customer will not play the same conversation rules. For example, if a customer does not believe the collector is correct when the collector calls and tells the customer that the customer is past due on his/her account and hangs up the telephone. Another example occurs when a collector does not believe the customer has paid the bill and the disbelief leads to agitated voice of the collector and an ineffective call (in the collector's eyes). Green et al. (1983) concluded that the less favorable the environment that service employees serve, the less positively they will feel about their work experience.

Telephone collections is not the only way collectors contact their customer. Written communication is also used to collect money from debtors.

Capitol Commercial Collections Limited, a collections company from England, uses a variety of letters with a heightened degree of urgency with the more delinquent accounts. The color-coordinated stickers alert the customer about the importance of the account. Sklar refutes this method of collections by stating,

> "Some companies put stickers with stronger and stronger messages on their statements. These stickers are OK, but I'm biased against them, based on the overall experience of companies who use them. It seems that the customers ignore the yellow and green stickers, waiting for the red one, which show them that now you're really serious" (Sklar 1990).

With all of the issues facing collectors, how committed are collectors to the collection position? Do the collectors respond better to individual or team goals? Do part-time employees need different forms of training versus full-time employees? Commitment is explored and defined in the following literature review. Motivation and team building used in the training as a means to increase commitment are also researched.

Literature Review

Commitment. Increased commitment of the collectors is the goal of the training program. The following literature review offers insight into aspects of commitment to organizations and professions. Very little research has been done exploring collectors as an organizational group. Research has been done on sales persons, customer service representatives and tellers in banks, but scholars have largely ignored the role of collector in society. This vital role to the economy, recovering lost dollars, is necessary to explore. With a high turnover rate of collection employees as stated above, the commitment levels of the

collectors needed to be increased as stated by management. Commitment to the position and the organization is the goal of the training session.

Porter et al. (1974) identified three facets of organizational commitment (1) acceptance and belief in an organization's goals and values; (2) a willingness to expend effort on behalf of an organization; and (3) a strong intent to remain employed by the organization. Becker (1992) refutes this base of research (one-dimensional) because it did not present a multidimensional facet of commitment and is a bit too simplistic for current theorists and should not be used.

Commitment is currently comprehended in a multidimensional way. Meyer and Allen proposed a two-dimensional measurement of commitment in 1984. The first dimension, defined as affective commitment, contained "positive feelings of identification with, attachment to, and involvement in the work organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1984, 375). The second dimension, continuance commitment incorporated the idea of "the extent to which employees feel committed to their organization by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (e.g., investments of lack of attractive alternatives)" (375). In 1990, Meyer & Allen expanded on their theory of commitment by adding a third dimension, normative commitment, defined as employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organization. Hackett, Bycio and Hausdorf confirmed the three aspects of commitment in 1994 with their research.

There are three types of psychological components to organizational commitment, compliance, identification, and internalization (O'Reilly & Chatman 1986). Discovering support for identification and internalization, but not for

compliance was the finding of O' Reilly and Chatman. This finding implies the individuals committed to the organization, through identification and internalization are more committed to the organization than individuals committed by compliance. Individuals committed to the organization are willing to do something for the good of the organization while an individual who is committed by compliance is less likely to be willing to exert any extra effort toward the organization.

One attitude explored recently is the notion of organizational commitment coupled with professional commitment. While Porter developed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), Aranya, Pollock & Amernic also tested commitment with the Professional Commitment Questionnaire (PCQ). The literature review and meta-analysis by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found the affective (or attitudinal) form of organizational commitment (the OCQ) to be the better predictor of other variables such as turnover and absenteeism. Keller's study in 1997, using the OCQ with a comparison of scientists and engineers states, "consistent with the preponderance of prior research, organizational commitment and the control variable of job satisfaction were not in relation to any of the performance measures, nor was tenure" (544).

Research regarding satisfaction and commitment is contradictory. It has been shown that satisfaction precedes commitment, however other studies have demonstrated that commitment precedes satisfaction. Porter et al., (1974) proposes satisfaction is less stable, but formed more quickly than organizational commitment. Commitment links the individual and the organization and

satisfaction becomes an aspect or component of commitment. Rusbult & Ferrall (1983) state, "commitment refers to the likelihood that an individual will stick with a job, and feel psychologically attached to it, whether it is satisfying or not" (431). Bateman and Stasser (1984), however, theorized that commitment determines satisfaction. Individuals reason their current situation by developing attitudes consistent with their commitment. Street (1995) cites that individuals who are highly committed to organizations may become whistleblowers because of dedication to the good of the company.

According to Nation's Business (1996), one entrepreneur, Donald Dann, sees commitment as something to be rewarded. This company seeks individually motivated people and gives employees latitude on how the employee completes a task. This company also believes that performance evaluations should be done every 6 months so employees see a reward for their commitment. Commitment is rewarded and the company encourages motivation and training. Rusbult & Farrell (1983) concluded from their study on commitment that "greater job rewards and lower job costs induce greater employee satisfaction, and greater job commitment is encouraged by higher rewards, lower costs, greater investment of resources, and poorer quality alternatives" (436).

One aspect of commitment also explored in literature is participatory involvement as a correlation to job satisfaction and productivity. Gordon & Infante (1991) note, "Participatory communicative behaviors are manifestations of commitment which in turn reinforce commitment attitudes" (151). Without the freedom to communicate, one is committed to the organization with compliance

as the chief aspect of commitment. The employee will be less committed because they have little opportunity to construct their organizational policy rules.

Commitment is an attitude that develops from identification, which occurs when one experiences something, someone, or some idea as an extension of oneself and is multidimensional, exploring commitment to the position, profession and the organization (Fink, 1992). Satisfaction is related to commitment, however, it stems as a positive emotional state, whereas, one can be committed to a profession or organization (Locke, 1976), but may not derive pleasure from the experience. Even though Keller's study (1997) states that the OCQ is not relative to tenure, it is being used in this study to measure commitment of collectors before and after motivation and team building training programs.

Two aspects of training for the collectors are motivation of the collectors and team building. These two factors were chosen by managers of the small Midwestern bank to be studied in order to create a more cohesive team with goals to motivate workers in the collection department. Management supports motivation training as a way to encourage collectors to meet goals. Because the goal of the training is to focus on the collectors as individuals and as team members, motivation was chosen to provide individual incentive while team building was utilized to emphasize team and department goals.

Motivation. One of the first authorities of motivation was Abraham Maslow. His theories stated that motivation is not merely economic or social, but also tied to one's sense of self-worth or self-actualization. Motivation occurs when the balance is upset and one needs to fulfill a particular need. Maslow's

hierarchy (implying one must achieve level one before one can move to level two) of needs is as follows (Maslow, 1954): physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Many other scholars have built upon Maslow's theories and expanded upon the basic premise of needs.

Clayton Alderfer revised Maslow's theories to relate it more closely to motivational research. Alderfer stated only 3 groups of needs, which include existence, relatedness and growth needs (Alderfer, 1969). Alderfer not only shortened Maslow's theories; he also stated that more than one need may occur simultaneously. Therefore, one can vary the steps, as well as change the intensity of needs. D.C. McClelland (1961) expanded the needs idea into his own three-dimensional theory on motivation in organization: the needs for achievement, power, and affiliation.

E.L. Deci (1975) had researched motivation and developed the cognitive evaluation theory. This theory states extrinsic rewards allocated for behavior that had been previously intrinsically rewarded tends to decrease the overall level of motivation. Therefore, money can be seen as a *de*-motivator.

Edwin Locke (1968) proposed that intentions to work toward are a major source of work motivation. When the organization has a main goal, the workers will try and meet the overall goal. Feedback is vital to this type of motivation because employees need to know goals are being achieved.

Victor Vroom designed expectancy theory. This theory of consists of the idea that how one will want to act a certain way is based on an expectation of a

given outcome. This theory contains a three-fold relationship based on attractiveness (importance the individual places on the reward for completing the task), performance and rewards are motivators and a lot of effort produces high performance.

These theories are all important to the development of the theories of motivation. However, for this project and the training manual, the author uses Stephen Robbins' definition of motivation as a base for the program because the definition incorporates all aspects of organizational goals, but relates to individuals to achieve personal goals.

Stephen Robbins, author of Organizational Behavior, indicated that motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organizational goals, conditioned by the efforts' ability to satisfy some individuals' need (Robbins 1989). While motivation is necessary to achieve any goal, the definition is modified to accommodate organization. Robbins states three key elements necessary to have motivation: effort, organizational needs and goals.

Effort is a measure of intensity. Effort needs to be directed forward and consistent with organizational goals. A need is an internal state to make certain outcomes appear attractive. A need will create individual desire. The third component is goals. Individual needs must be consistent and compatible with organizational goals. If one does not follow the organizational goals, then the energy is wasted.

Motivation is not an inherent personal trait. Motivation is contingent, based on a situation. Levels of motivation vary both between individuals and

within individuals at different times. Hanks (1991) notes that 90 % of our needs are met in some way by others. Reliance and dependence are key to achieving organizational goals and motivating members. As superiors and subordinate are reliant on each other to complete the organizational tasks, it is apparent that there is interdependence. Interdependence implies that personal goals may conflict with organizational goals. The confusion (or personal inner war) mixes up a personal desire to compete with other organizational members or cooperation with others (Folger et al., 1997).

Team Building. Members of the organization are constantly trying to define themselves in the organization as well as redefine relationship to others in the organization. The understanding of the relationship between the superior and the subordinate is based on communication. The understanding and socialization of the members have the power to build or destroy teams. Manning & Schmidt (1995) declare, "High performing work teams are characterized by very high levels of member involvement and commitment to their work and the team itself" (395). This statement justifies why team building is elemental to implement team building into a commitment study.

Most teams or small groups in organizations contain at least 3 members. All teams have a common goal and direction; however, each individual places varying degrees of emphasis on individual, group or organizational goals (Cathcart et al., 1996). Allen (1992) states that "perceived organizational support mediate the communication-organizational commitment relationship"

(357). Thus, team building is essential to increasing organizational commitment through a positive peer support network at work.

Organizations and management need to support the implementation of teams in order for the commitment level to increase. The Rochester Institute of Technology and USA Today found teams to be important when determining their 1996 quality award winners (Houston, Marks & Talbot, 1997). Honda was rated as an effective corporation by utilizing teams in its company. Many American companies do not have a formal implementation program, do an inadequate job of initial hiring and lack a true commitment to the team and empowerment process (Houston et al, 1997). This lack of commitment by the company influences how teams are perceived internally.

According to Robel Johnson (1996), contributor to the magazine HR Focus, some organizations form teams when they are not warranted by the organization. Teams can solve organizational problems, like staff apathy, little work cohesion and conflicts. Management needs to support teams because without support, teams generally fail leaving employees frustrated. Teams, built by the employees, define team building for themselves and set goals on what the team wants to accomplish. Teams can be self managed or self directed, can be temporary or function for years, but the team needs a goal and needs to know it fits into the organization (Holpp, 1997).

Bolman and Deal (1991) suggest four perspectives of conceptualizing teams: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. Structural theories deal with the patterning of activities and the formal organization of companies.

Human resource frame focuses on how people relate and how the organization benefits the employee's needs. Political theories examine the power structures of the organization and finally symbolic perspectives frame the organization as a mechanism in which members attempt to make sense from ambiguity of life and how the world uses symbols to make sense. The definition for human resources lends itself to more applicability for the training program.

Lawrence Holpp (1997), vice president of GE Capital, notes team development does take a long time, and companies need to have clear goals in order to assess performance in his article for American Society for Training and Development. How the teams are assessed also needs to be discussed not only by the team members, but also management. Management needs to view team building as a long-term investment rather than look for quick results as when the results are not evident, teams are placed in jeopardy (Holpp, 1997).

The goal of the training program is to produce immediate individual results and foster a team atmosphere to be more committed to the collections position. The following section is a description of the program. The first element pertaining to teamwork is personal motivation. One needs to take charge of personal thoughts, ideas and goals and communicate them to fellow employees, which may spurn more enthusiasm for the collection position. The enthusiasm can lead to a stronger commitment to the profession and the organization and eventually increase productivity.

Training Program Design.

Motivation. The first aspect of the training introduces the definition of motivation and collections as sales, customer service, assertion and revenue. After describing Maslow's hierarchy of needs and ERG theory by Alderfer, the participants will learn of Robbins' theory and how motivation can incorporate individual and organizational goals. The audience will know the communication base of the training. A common definition of the concept of motivation will create a universal understanding.

The first group activity is completing the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Appendix A). The second aspect is the completion a needs assessment based on Alderfer's 1972 model. This test will help the employees understand where their needs are and help them to focus on individual goals. By focusing on individual goals, the employees tailor the program to give a personal direction to motivate a self-directed goal. The concept of motivation is discussed and then transcends into studying the values of connections of collections and motivation.

The second part of the training will explore motivation more in depth, concerning Gellerman's (1993) 4 C's of motivation-competence, confidence, connections and credentials to explain how professional and organizational commitment may benefit their collections career. These concepts demonstrate to a worker to look beyond identification and socialization to motivation as a way to stimulate a career. This aspect of the program is not only applicable to the collections profession, but to any profession that a collector may encounter.

The third aspect of the program is to explain how collections can be a venue for other job possibilities both within the bank and financial industry. Other career options are also explored so if a part time worker is working collections temporarily, the program will benefit that individual as well. Using collections as a start in a corporation could be a stepping stone into the financial industry and a rewarding career. At the end of the session, collectors are asked to take time and post individual goals in a place so the goals are seen as a daily reminder of what the collector strives for at the position.

Team Building. The first aspect of the team building program is a definition of teams and how in American culture, people are placed in teams at a young age, which can continue through adulthood. Teams decide their own goals, (which incorporates goal setting as a part of motivation). There also needs to be short and long term goals in the agenda, so if a worker does not meet personal goals, the worker may still achieve an aspect of team goals. With the definition of teams in mind, the next part will talk about the team aspect in the financial institution.

The second aspect of the team building is taking a short assessment developed by Chris Argyris. This assessment will help the workers understand the degrees of how others may see the department as a team. The goal is to get members thinking about how they depend on others in the department to meet goals and to get members thinking about the collections position as a team effort.

The third aspect of the team building focuses on image building of collections both within and outside of the financial institution. Departmental, and

organizational promotion to enhance commitment (as well as pride) of the position can strengthen the team. Because collectors have a negative image, both within the company and in the general public, the image building will give the collectors more confidence in what collectors do and be proud of the work accomplished.

Role-playing is used to train the collectors on different scenarios that happen when on the telephone collecting money. The result will be a more cohesive team by empathizing with each other about the position and a sharing of stories as well as tips to improve the collection techniques. According to the Consumer Credit Collector (1998) and Leonard Sklar, role-playing is one of the most effective techniques used to train collectors. This forum allows for collectors to make mistakes, learn policy and communicate what works well for individuals to meet goals to project into team goals.

Finally, a list of roles is distributed to help collectors understand some of the games that debtors may play when trying to avoid paying on a debt. The handout is discussed and any suggestions by the collectors can be added to the handout. The tools other collectors use to get money from the debtors will be shared, enhancing the overall effectiveness as a team. Concluding the training is the post-test training feedback questionnaire which includes the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Appendix B).

Implementation and Projected Outcomes

The focus of this project is to discover what the incentives related to commitment are and how such incentives relate to either or both individual and group's motivation for both short and long term employees through development and implementation of a training program. Immediate results will be determined by a feedback questionnaire given to the participants 1-2 weeks after the training presentation. Questionnaires have well defined advantages, which include, investigating problems in reasonable settings, cost is reasonable and large amounts of data can be collected with relative ease (Wimmer & Dominic, 1997). One thing that must be considered is the demographics of the group that is sent the questionnaire. The use of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire to measure the results of the training sessions provides a measurable result of pre-training commitment and post-training commitment.

The approach to the training program is to increase individual commitment (and possibly tenure) by:

(1) providing individual incentives to increase tenure (motivation exercises) for members in both long-term and short-term groups

(2) providing team incentives to increase tenure (team building) for both long and short-term groups.

The outcomes projected are:

(1) to achieve increased commitment to the position to work in long and short term employees

(2) long range goals are to establish continued commitment from both groups determined by establishing:

(a) longer job tenure

(b) greater productivity

Some of the questions to be explored en route to developing the training program are: (1) How committed are the collectors to the collections position and profession? (2) Do individual collections respond better to individual or team goals as incentive to complete the work task? (3) Are there different incentives for short vs. long term employees and do training needs differ for both groups?

A unique part of this training is the attempt to increase individual commitment by targeting the individual as a single worker and as a team member. The employee will learn how to apply individual motivation to collections position as well as career advancement in other venues. A successful program will increase productivity and commitment by employees.

Results

The training sessions were held during two weekdays at times convenient for both part and full time workers. One stipulation of the training was that participants needed to attend both of the sessions. This factor contributed to a lower participant number than the author would have preferred. Eighty percent participation of the collections department would have been a better response rate of participants because the training would have effected the department more strongly than the lower rate of 50 percent. The training programs could not

be mandatory for the collectors to attend per the financial institutions policy, however, collectors were compensated for time at the session.

The collectors were given a pre-test questionnaire and a post test questionnaire which included the Porter (1974) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. Participants were given the pretest questionnaire immediately before the first training session and the post test questionnaire was given to the participants exactly 2 weeks after the second training session was completed. Nine collectors out of seventeen participated in the program. Four participants were males and five were females. Four participants were full-time students as well as part-time collectors. Five employees were short-term employees (less than 1-year experience) and four employees had been employed in collections for more than 1 year.

Seven participants cited spending time with their co-workers outside of the collections position. Some collectors were spending time once a week with co-workers and others seemed to socialize once or twice a month with co-workers. One collector plans to socialize with workers occasionally, that individual has been employed for 5 months with the company.

Most collectors seem to have a good rapport with the manager or supervisors, but the rapport ranged from good friend to good manager, but not a friendship. Favorite aspects about the position was asked and the variety of responses ranged from pay, co-workers, the hours worked, to little to take home at the end of the day. Some answers stated that collectors were helping people finance their future, helping consumers with their debts and helping them to

resolve credit problems. The changes or suggestions to the collections position was more flexible hours for students, higher pay, and adding more time for manual assignment accounts.

The range of average organizational commitment was 1.0 (from 2.73 to 3.73). The individual's who were "most committed" were not the person's employed the longest at the institution, in fact, participants who were employed shorter than 4 months and longer than 2 years had, on average, the lower commitment scores.

The commitment levels actually decreased over 2 weeks by .09 percent. This is a very small margin, which leads the author to believe that a number of factors could contribute to the decrease in commitment explained in the discussion section of this paper.

The order of questions in the posttest Organizational Commitment Questionnaire remained the same as the pretest questionnaire, but the order of the Likert scale was reversed. For example, in the pretest questionnaire strongly agree equaled five while in the post test questionnaire strongly agree equated the value of one. The questions remained the same to gauge a comparison of the commitment levels before the training and after the training.

In general, the responses to the training were positive. Learning about motivation, individual needs and goals, as well as role-playing were well received. The participants felt the training was good and some stated they were starting to motivate their co-workers by initiating contests within the department on a daily basis to keep the motivation level of the department high. The

department also achieved an all time high number of priority payments at the end of the month. Therefore, individual as well as department goals exceeded set goals after the training.

Discussion

One question explored involved the hunch that collectors will be more committed to the collections position after attending motivation and team building sessions. The improved commitment will increase productivity and perhaps tenure of the collections position. Collectors were targeted as individuals (in the motivation session) and as team members (in the team building session).

The sessions on the motivation training went well according to the collectors involved, but it was observed that the participants were somewhat uninterested in learning about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The participants may have seen that aspect of the training as inapplicable to their jobs. The first session also included the attendance of a supervisor, which could have influenced some of the participation by the group.

The second motivation session was done in a shorter time span than the first because of practice by the trainer. Participation and group discussion was more evident in the second group. The collectors had more energy and enthusiasm. This group was mostly people who had finished collecting for the day and were on their way home. The first group came in early to attend the training, and their attitudes about the upcoming shift may also have influenced how they approached training.

The second sessions on team building were more memorable for both the collectors and for the trainer. All of the participants were involved with the role playing exercise, which not only started laughter, but also some serious discussion about what collectors do and how negotiation with customers makes the participants feel. Collectors also discussed the games that consumers play and experienced collectors gave tips on how to get the customer to pay on the account. The conversation did not lag and the participants viewed the training as successful.

The second team building session did not focus on the task at hand as the trainer planned. One part time collector stated early in the session that he "didn't care about what he did, it was just a job" and a full time collector was extremely upset about that remark. That comment was debated for a full 20 minutes between part time and full time collectors. This debate verifies the difference between part time collectors who see the collections as "just a job" while full time collectors may identify more with the organization and see the position as a career or a stepping stone into the financial realm. The role-playing then started and everyone did participate, but there was an underlying tension in the group that begs to be explored.

The range of average organizational commitment was 1.0 (from 2.73 to 3.73). The individuals who were "most committed" were not the persons employed the longest at the institution, in fact, participants who were employed shorter than 4 months and longer than 2 years seemed to have the lower commitment scores. This range seems to imply that there may be a "peak" time

length to be in collections. Collectors work individual accounts as well as "cold calling", but this individual file work (manual accounts) starts only after the collector is thoroughly comfortable on the telephone and has demonstrated an effective promise/per hour rate with which supervisors approve (usually 4-6 months after starting the position).

One reason for a lower commitment level percentage could be that the day the post test was handed out, the collections department was in the process of trying to meet goals at the end of the month. There may have been some preoccupation of the collectors with the goal achieving aspect of work and the questionnaire may have been rushed through with less consideration to the questions. Another contributing factor to the lower scores could be that all collectors took the pre-test questionnaire together while the post-test questionnaire was taken individually. The group atmosphere may have influenced the answers to the questionnaires. The very nature of training on motivation with the intent to increase commitment may also have been resented by the participants and in turn, *de*motivate the collections personnel. Decreased commitment and disillusionment by collectors may have occurred because training is not a regular aspect of the department. Increased awareness (and increased personal perception) of the current lack of motivation or team building in the department may have further alienated some of the collectors and decreased personal achievement.

The training aspects that would remain the same for the motivation program would include the needs exercise. A shorter version of the theories of

motivation could have alleviated some of the boredom or perhaps lecture aspects of the training. The individual goal setting used by the collectors did not significantly increase individual performance, however the goals in sight did keep the collectors focused on personal outcomes to achieve.

The growth of the field of collections requires the need for motivated individuals who can work together to achieve common goals. This training focuses on the individual need to be motivated, encompassing Robbins' definition that motivation is condition by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need. The training focuses on collectors as team members and individuals. A similar training venue would be recommended to any trainer of a collections department (non-commission based).

The team building training would also remain the same for future training of collections departments. The role-playing exercise made the participants enthused about training and by sparking some communication about their roles in the organization and in society. The tips of collections were applicable to the position and seen as a valuable to know for experienced and new collectors.

One suggestion made by one of the collectors after the sessions was to give certificates to verify the training and to showcase personal participation in the training. The completion of training certificates could be seen as a team builder to the participants, however, if participation is not mandatory by the organization, the certificates could be viewed as dividing the department and decreasing the team atmosphere.

A second question asked of this training effort was, do individual collectors respond better to individual or team goals as incentive to complete the work task? The training targeted the collector as an individual and as a team member and while some individual goals were met, the department, set a record of priority payments, which means that collectors should focus on team goals in training. Individuals act to "cheer on the team". Individual goals could be given more attention by the team if individual collectors posted their goals and what goals were met each month. Recognition, evenly distributed, of individuals would be better for the department. The awards could be used to inspire rather than segregate

A third question asked as part of this project was, do part-time employees need a different form of training for collections versus full-time employees? According to the OCQ, no, however, the 20 minute debate that ensued in the second team building session does emphasize that there could be different approaches taken by management to address the concerns of full and part time employees. Long term employees who had lower commitment levels reported on the questionnaire that organizational attendance policies were more important. Continuous training for long term employees may need to be done with less emphasis on the position, but the organization.

Conclusion

How committed are collectors to the position? The very preliminary data collected within this training project suggest that collectors are committed to the position, especially at the 1-2 year mark, where collectors have most of the

training of the position completed. The increased confidence may contribute to the commitment. Long-term employees may have different needs and want more knowledge of the organization, while short-term employees may only see collections as a temporary job. Future training might wish to address and perhaps try to accommodate these possible variances among their trainees. Future training on motivation and team building may have a more significant impact on the department. Limited time to train, by the trainer, may have contributed to the decrease in commitment. The lack of consistent training on organizational issues may have caused the participants to question why training was not done prior to this training on motivation and team building. Productivity, as a team, increased in the collections department, so the financial institution may call the training successful.

Collectors do care about what they are doing and not only how it affects them, as collectors, but also how customers are treated. Interest lies in helping the consumer manage debt effectively. Commitment of the employees to the position seems high; however, commitment levels were hypothesized as different for long-term employees versus the short-term employees. Commitment levels seem to be about the same for both long and short-term employees, however a "peak time" of commitment was suggested in the pre-training questionnaire. After a person is fully trained, a more confident collector can feel committed to the position and may aid in training other collectors. Indeed, future training might consider way to which fully trained collectors could actually assist more in the training sessions.

The position of collectors, as a valuable role in the economy to recover lost dollars, is important to society. Collectors need to be committed to the position. Commitment can be achieved through motivation and team building training in a collections department. This project represents one phase in the evolution of more sophisticated and effective training for collections personnel. If not a prototype for such training it at least provides a base as well as direction for such efforts. After all, well trained collectors are more likely to care about customers and can help the consumer get out of debt and achieve a portion of the American Dream: a financially secure future.

Appendix A

Collections Pre-Training Questionnaire

1. How long have you worked in collections?
2. Is this job full or part-time?
3. Are you male or female?
4. Are you a student...full or part-time?
5. Do you socialized with your co-workers outside of work? If so, what do you do with co-workers? How often does this activity occur?
6. Describe your relationship with your manager/supervisor.
7. What are your favorite aspects of the collections position?
8. What would you change about the collections position and why?

Answer the following question by circling one numeral 1-5. 5= Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree

1. I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this company be successful. 5 4 3 2 1
2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization. 5 4 3 2 1
3. I feel very little loyalty to this company. 5 4 3 2 1
4. I would accept any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this company. 5 4 3 2 1
5. I find that my values and the company's values are very similar. 5 4 3 2 1
6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this company. 5 4 3 2 1
7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. 5 4 3 2 1
8. This company really inspires me the very best in me in the way of job performance. 5 4 3 2 1
9. It would take little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this company. 5 4 3 2 1
10. I am extremely glad that I chose this company to work for over the other one I was considering at the time I joined. 5 4 3 2 1
11. There is not too much to be gained by sticking with this company indefinitely. 5 4 3 2 1
12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this company's policies in important matters relating to its employees. 5 4 3 2 1
13. I really care about the fate of this company. 5 4 3 2 1
14. For me, this is the best of all possible organization for which to work. 5 4 3 2 1
15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake. 5 4 3 2 1

Appendix B

Collections Post-test Questionnaire

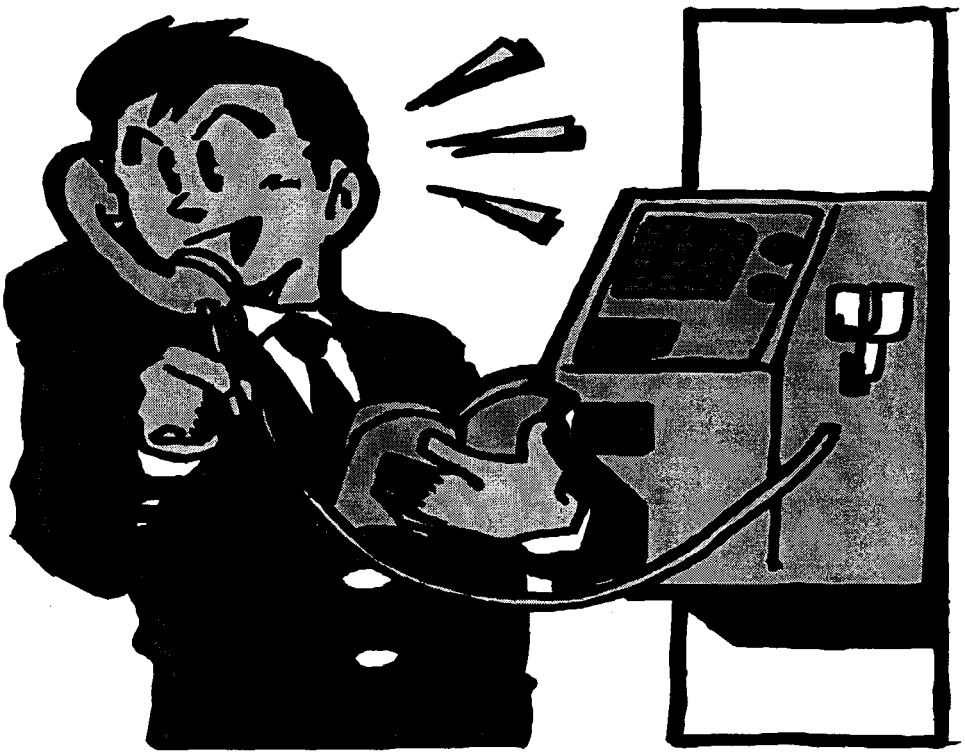
1. What did you learn most from the training program?
2. What aspect of the program was especially helpful?
3. Are you currently using any techniques learned in the training session and if so, which ones?
4. Have you discovered alternate avenues within the bank to motivate yourself?
5. How has your attitude changed about the collections postion?
6. How are you encouraging your co-workers to be motivated?
7. I feel worse about my job, the same about my job, better about my job, after attending the motivation and team building sessions...why?

Please complete following by circling a number 1-5. 1= Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Nuetral, 4=Disagree, and 5=Strongly Disagree

1. I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this company be successful. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I feel very little loyalty to this company. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I would accept any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this company. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I find that my values and the company's values are very similar. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this company. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. 1 2 3 4 5
8. This company really inspires me the very best in me in the way of job performance. 1 2 3 4 5
9. It would take little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this company. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I am extremely glad that I chose this company to work for over the other one I was considering at the time I joined. 1 2 3 4 5
11. There is not too much to be gained by sticking with this company indefinitely. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this company's policies in important matters relating to its employees. 1 2 3 4 5
13. I really care about the fate of this company. 1 2 3 4 5
14. For me, this is the best of all possible organization for which to work. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C

Collections is more than Collecting



Sarah Diehn

March 1998

Sarah Diehn is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point receiving a master's degree in Communication with an emphasis in Organizational Communication in May 1998. A graduate of the Minnesota Center for Arts Education and Beloit College, her diverse experiences in leadership, liberal arts, and a variety of organizations have strengthened her expertise in addressing, adapting and motivating communication styles. Previous outstanding companies worked for include: ADC Telecommunications, NordicTrack, HEI Inc., and Medallion Kitchens. A former Minnesota State 4-H Ambassador and current Communication Instructor, Ms. Diehn displays a dynamic public speaking skill that has produced several awards.

After attending these sessions presented by Sarah Diehn , the collector will know key strategies for motivating self and others in the department. The employee will also know key aspects of team building. The employee will learn how to apply motivation to collections positions as well as career advancement in other venues. The employee will also work better with other employees improving team atmosphere and group goals. This thesis project devised by Sarah Diehn is subject to academic approval by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and is not mandatory for employees to attend.

Motivation and Collections

Outline of Training Session I

I. Introduction

II. What is Collections?

III. What is Motivation?

IV. What Motivates A Worker?

V. Needs Test

VI. The 4 C's of Motivation

VII. Career choices for the collector

VIII. Conclusion

Collections is more than collecting

Collections is sales: Collectors need to "sell" the customer on paying for their mortgage, car, and credit cards. The "sell" is especially important when a customer is having financial problems and is considering bankruptcy.

Collections is customer service: Some customers may get their only impression of the bank from collectors. Collectors need to reinforce community helpfulness and friendliness so customers continue to use the bank for all of their financial needs.

Collections is assertion: Collectors have opportunities to engage in conflict management which may be beneficial in their careers. Collectors assert their communication skills, (listening, speaking and persuasion) and strengthen them at work daily.

Collections is revenue: Collectors are vital to maintaining the banks' net worth. Collections is increasingly important as more consumers rely on banks for credit to increase their purchasing power.

What is Motivation?

Motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organizational goals, conditioned by the efforts ability to satisfy some individual need.

Motivation is not a personal trait. Motivation is contingent, based on the situation. Levels of motivation vary both between individuals and within individuals at different times.

The keys to motivation are effort, organizational goals and needs.

Effort-a measure of intensity. Effort needs to be directed toward and consistent with the organizational goals.

Need- internal state to make certain outcomes appear attractive. A need will create individual drive.

Goals- individual needs must be consistent and compatible with organizational goals. If one does not follow the organizational goals, then the energy is wasted.

What Motivates A Worker?

It is not money, contrary to popular belief. According to Maslow, an early theorist of motivation, motivation stems from a hierarchy of needs.

The first need to realize is **physiological**: You need a place to live, food to eat clothes to wear-the basics to survive.

The second need is the **safety** need: You need to feel safe and secure in a home and a job.

The third need is the **love** need: You need to feel loved and need to give love.

The fourth need is the **esteem** need: This need includes self-respect, achievement, status, recognition and attention.

The final need is **self-actualization**: You need to be able to realize and meet your own personal goals and potential. This need is self-fulfillment.

These needs make you realize that if you are beyond receiving the basics, you can make your job more exciting by comprehending where you are on the needs basis.

Needs Test

Indicate how important each of the following is in the job your job (or an aspiring job). Write the numbers 1,2,3,4 or 5 after each item.

1 = Not important

2 = Slightly important

3 = Moderately important

4 = Very important

5 = Extremely important

1. Cooperative relations with my co-workers.
2. Developing new skills and knowledge at work.
3. Good pay for my work.
4. Being accepted by others.
5. Opportunity for independent thought and action.
6. Frequent raises in pay.
7. Opportunity to develop close friendships at work.
8. A sense of self-esteem.
9. A complete fringe benefit program.
10. Openness and honesty with my co-workers.
11. Opportunities for personal growth and development.
12. A sense of security from bodily harm.

The 4 C's of Motivation

Competence- A company will teach you how to do the job you applied for if you do not already know. The company will also give you the opportunity to practice what you already know. The beginning of a career is a time to build competence.

Confidence- You build confidence by proving to yourself that you can make the correct judgment without help from other's. You teach yourself confidence by doing the same job over and over again.

Connections- There are more people in a large company that may have interests related to you. Your collection of connections becomes your private employment agency. Don't be afraid to call your connections and ask for help, but don't do this too often. Favors do have a limit like a bank account.

Credentials- It is better to have a reputable company on your resume than an unknown company as your main place of employment. Working for a large corporation can give you credibility and prestige to advance to a career that is really you!

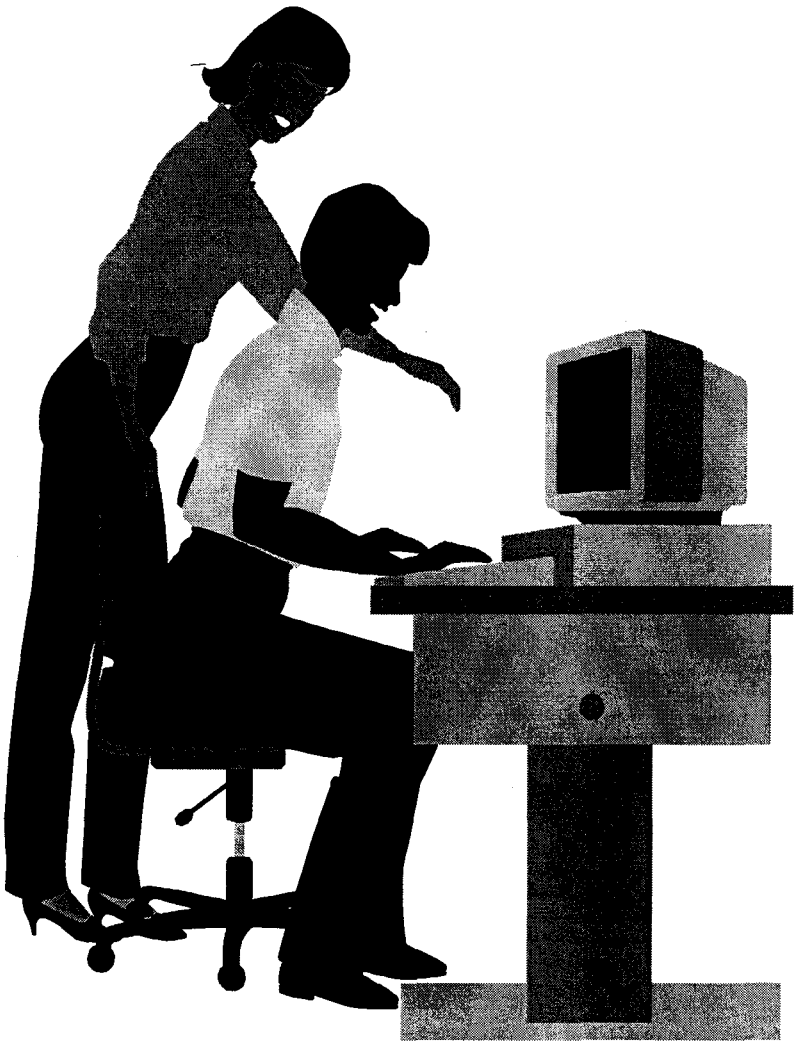
What are your options in Collections?

1. Your choices can be limitless.
   A. Within the Bank
   B. Outside the corporation

2. Your skills
   A. Sales
   B. Customer Service
   C. Assertion
   D. Collections

3. Job Security

Team Building



Group Desire is different than individual desire. With individual desire, it's up to you to feed the fire. With group desire, you get all kinds of people rolling logs on from every different direction.

-Vince Pfaff

Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.

"A person too busy to take care of his co-workers is like a mechanic too busy to take care of his tools."

'I'VE LEARNED ONE IMPORTANT THING ABOUT LIVING. I CAN DO ANYTHING I THINK I CAN-BUT I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ALONE. NO ONE CAN GO IT ALONE. CREATE YOUR TEAM!"

-ROBERT SCHULLER

Working together, ordinary people can form extraordinary feats. They can push things that come into their hands a little higher up, a little further on towards the heights of excellence.
A team without goals is just another ineffective committee.

Innovation creates opportunity, quality creates demand, but it takes teamwork to make it happen.

Outline for Training Session II

I. Introduction

II. Definition of Team Building

III. Are We Functioning As A Team?

IV. Collections-respect or disrespect?

V. Role-Playing

VI. Games Debtors Play

VII. Relation to motivation

VIII. Conclusion

Team Building

The team concept structures the way we think about ourselves in relation to others. The influence of team sports on our culture cannot be underestimated. Team sports encourage loyalty, discipline, concern for doing something well, and cooperation. There are some dangers to being involved in a team. Hazards include physical and psychological damage, harassment of other team members, people loving the team when it is winning and denouncing it when it is losing. **Winning at all costs is not the objective of teams and should be discouraged.**

Work groups are assigned tasks while **teams** determine their own goals and **focus on team accountability**. Teams are usually 2-10 members while a group may be as many as 100 individuals. **Teams need to know the goals of a task** and decide if the goals are attainable—there should be long and short-term goals in the agenda so there is always something to look forward to while still achieving something.

Are We Functioning As A Team?

Co-workers know if they are functioning as a team as stated by Yale management professor Chris Argyris. The ten signs of teamness include the following work indicators:

Can't Say	Never					Always
Contributions are additive	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of team spirit	0	1	2	3	4	5
Decisions are made by consensus	0	1	2	3	4	5
Commitment to decision is strong	0	1	2	3	4	5
Team continually evaluates itself	0	1	2	3	4	5
Team is clear about its goals	0	1	2	3	4	5
Conflict is dealt with openly	0	1	2	3	4	5
Alternative solutions are generated	0	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership goes to best qualified	0	1	2	3	4	5
Feelings are dealt with openly	0	1	2	3	4	5

Collections---Respect or Not?

Just as Rodney Dangerfield states, "I get no respect," many collectors feel the same way. It may to be wise to consider how management views the collections department and the separation of credit cards and retail accounts. While there are companies out there that are specialized in the collections game, First Financial is not as fortunate.

How collectors are seen by others in the company—"the people who get to wear jeans to work" "They bring in money, but they don't work that hard" "they just sit on the phones all day."

How collectors are seen by customers---"pushy, they only want the money, they don't care about me" "they are people that get paid to sit on the phone all night and harass me"

How can the image of collectors be changed? What aspects of team building will change our reputation as collectors and as representatives of First Financial? Get to the point, state your purpose and get off the call as quickly as possible in order to get the money and go. Play the game of odds, the more calls you make, the more payments you will get .

Role Playing

Scenario 1- "You should feel sorry for me." Person who just lost a job, is behind on mortgage and home equity payments. This person was divorced within the last year and is behind on child support payments. What do we do?

Scenario 2 – "I can't pay now/can't pay all/can't pay till next month." Person who has a limited budget, but has enough money to go on vacation. The debtor owes ½ of last months payment and plans to only pay half of payment this month because of an impending vacation. The debtor has a habit of paying every two months.

Scenario 3- "My attorney says not to pay; go ahead and sue me." The collector is thinking about filing bankruptcy, but is very upset about the number of calls received on the 105 day delinquent account. The debtor thinks she is only 2 ½ months past due as has a sporadic payment history.

How did you feel watching the scenarios? What techniques were used, what could have been used, what seemed to work, what didn't and why. Was the collector communicating with the debtor or just mouthing desperate replies? Place debtor on spectrum of debtors. Will the debtor pay? What should happen next?

Games Debtors Play

Gentle Games

Accusations- "You're harassing me, you're a money grubber" Deny the accusation and tell them you are a debtor that owes my company 250.00, you need to tell me how you plan to take care of the debt. Another idea is to respond, "you know, Mr. Jones, if you'd paid this bill as agreed, I wouldn't have had to send letters, make phone calls, run up unnecessary expenses and aggravate myself. Actually, it is you who is harassing me!"

Offensive Tackle- "Why are your prices so high?" This approach is tricky, the debtor is trying to steer the call away from how the bill is going to be paid. You can substitute examples of how everything else increases in price. So you are not arguing with the debtor but reminding the debtor that the bill has to be paid regardless. You should be proud of your fees and prices because if you aren't that feeling will communicate itself to your customers.

Child Answers Phone-parents never home. Two approaches seem to work. A stern voice of "Go get your mom right now" Some kids respond to authority. Or "please ask your mom when she is coming back."

No commitment- "I'll try to send you a payment this week". **Never accept the word try**. One does something or doesn't.

Serious Games-

Cursing- Tell the debtor that you are not willing to talk if you use that kind of language. Then follow through with your threat if the talk continues and hang up the phone.

Physical Threats- If the threat is ever physical, end the conversation immediately.

Screaming- The louder they get, the softer you get. You may want to say, "I can understand this is upsetting you", get the debtor calmed down and then try getting the payment.

Crying- It is appropriate to back off now, but let the debtor know that the problem isn't going to disappear. Ask for another time to discuss the situation. Never tell the person that they shouldn't feel that way; acknowledge the feeling and move on.

Remember – You can't control the conversation, but **you can control your reactions** to the conversation. **You make the rules** and you can refuse to accept the debtors proposals. The bottom line is the **debt must be taken care of.**

Motivation and Team-Building

Motivation and enthusiastic are words that are loved or hated by members of the organization. People who love the words are in general more upbeat, excited people who may embrace goals and organization. People who cringe at these enthusiasts may think that motivated people are full of fluff and are pushy to enforce their attitudes on them.

It has been proven that **enthusiasm is contagious.** If more people are happy and excited about their position and the goals to achieve, then the spirit may catch on to the rest of the team. It is enthusiasm that a cheerleader emits, rather than the words, that leads a team to victory.

The first element pertaining to teamwork is personal motivation. If you are enthusiastic, then the attitude will spread. You need to **take charge of your thoughts** instead allowing thoughts to control you! Co-workers need to give the job 100%. When you are more enthusiastic, it is demonstrated by your work habits, which can be contagious in a positive way. The dynamic attitude will promote a stronger team.

Appendix

This training session about motivation and team building is **essential** for collectors. Collections can become repetitive and awards for team goals can be limited. Collectors need to feel as part of a group and need to use team-building skills to increase their own productivity and performance. When the individual achieves a goal (motivation) then the individual can inspire team building.

Using case studies, role playing and lectures, the two training sessions will invoke collectors to understand their role at First Financial as well as make collectors aware of their own communication skills.

References

Alderfer, C.P. (1969). "An Empirical Test of a New Theory of Human Needs" Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 142-75.

Allen, N.J., & Meyer, J.P. (1990). The measurement of antecedent of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63, (1), 1-18.

Allen, M.W. (1992). Communication and Organizational Commitment: Perceived Organizational Support as a Mediating Factor. Communication Quarterly, 40, (4), 357-367.

Alnajjar, A.A. (1996). Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment Among Employees in the United Arab Emirates. Psychological Reports, 79, (1), 315-321.

Aranya, N., Pollock., J., & Amernic, J. An examination of professional commitment in public accounting. Accounting, Organizations and Society, 6, 271-280.

Beatty, M. (1986). Romantic Dialogue: Communication in Dating and Marriage. Englewood: Morton.

Becker, T.E. (1992). Foci and bases of Commitment: Are they distinctions worth making? Academy of Management Journal, 35, 232-244.

Bolman, L.G., & Deal, T.E. (1991). Reframing Organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bowen, D. (1998). Team Frames: The Multiple Realities of the Team. Journal of Management Education, 22, (1), 95-104.

Brierley, J. (1996). The Measurement of Organizational Commitment and Professional Commitment. Journal of Social Psychology. 136, (2), 265-268.

Buller, M. (1998, Winter). Editorial. Professional Collector p.1.

Buller, M. (1997, Fall). Editorial. Professional Collector p.1.

Cathcart, R., Samovar, L., & Henman, L. (1996). Small Group Communication. Dubuque: Brown and Benchmark.

Cheney, G. & Tompkins, P. (1987). Coming to terms with Organizational Identification and Commitment. Central States Speech Journal, 38, (1), 1-15.

Cohen, A. (1996). On the Discriminate Validity of the Meyer and Allen Measure of Organizational Commitment: How Does it fit with the Work Commitment Construct? Educational & Psychological Measurement. 56, (3), 494-504.

Cohen, A. (1993). Organizational Commitment and Turnover: A Meta-Analysis. Academy of Management Journal, 36, (5), 1140-1157.

Collections and Credit Risk (http:// ccr.faulknergray.com) January 17, 1998.

Consumer Credit Collector. (1998). The Benefits of Role-Playing. Consumer Credit Collector, 6, (4), 3.

Cook, D.C. (1997). Discriminate Validity of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. Psychological Reports, 80, (2), 431-441.

Dann, D. (1996, August). Nurturing Workers so they'll stay on Board. Nation's Business, 6.

Deci, E.L. (1975). Intrinsic Motivation. New York: Plenum.

Fink, S.L. (1992). High Commitment Workplaces. New York: Quorum Books.

Folger, J., Poole, M., & Stutman, R. (1997). Working Through Conflict. New York: Addison –Wesley.

Gorden, W.I., & Infante, D.A. (1991). Test of a Communication Model of Organizational Commitment. Communication Quarterly, 39, (2), 144-155.

Gorden W.I., Nagel, E.I., Myers S.A. & Barbato, C.A. (1996). The Team Trainer. Chicago: Irwin.

Green, S.G., Blank, W., & Liden, R.C. (1983). Market and Organizational Influences on Bank Employees' Work Attitudes and Behaviors. Journal of Applied Psychology, 68, (2), 298-306.

Hackett, D.R., Bycio, P., & Haudorf, P. (1994). Further assessment of Meyer and Allen's (1991) three component model of Organizational Commitment. Journal of Applied Psychology, 79, 15-23.

Holpp, L. (1997). Teams: It's All in the Planning. Training & Development, 51, (4), 44-48.

Hopper, R. (1989). Sequential Ambiguity in Telephone Openings. Communication Monographs, 56, 240-251.

Hopper, R. (1989). Speech in Telephone Openings: Emergent Interaction v. Routines. Western Journal of Speech Communication, 53, (2), 178-194.

Houston, M., Parks, K., & Talbot, J. (1997). Why Teams Work. CPA Journal, 67, (3), 55-58.

Johnson, R. (1996). Effective Team Building. HR Focus, 73, (4), 18.

Keller, R.T. (1997). Job Involvement and Organizational Commitment as Longitudinal Predictors of Job Performance: A Study of Scientists and Engineers. Journal of Applied Psychology, 82, (4), 539-545.

Larkey, L. & Morrill, C. (1995). Organizational Commitment as Symbolic Process. Western Journal of Communication, 59, (3), 193-214.

Lee, K.S. & Lucas, G.H. (1991). Commitment and Involvement: Assessing a Salesforce Typology. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 19, (3), 198-197.

Littlejohn, S.W. (1996). Theories of Human Communication. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Locke, E.A. (1968). Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentives. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, May 1968, 157-89.

Locke, E.A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction, In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Manning, M.R. & Schmidt, P.J. (1995). Building Effective Work Teams: A Quick Exercise Based on a Scavenger Hunt. Journal of Management Education, 19, (3), 392-399.

Maslow, A.H. (1954). Motivation and Personality. New York: Harper & Row.

Mathieu, J.E. & Farr, J.L. (1991). Further Evidence for the Discriminant Validity of Measures of Organizational Commitment, Job Involvement, and Job Satisfaction. Journal of Applied Psychology, 76 (1), 127-133.

McClelland, D.C. (1961). The Achieving Society. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Meyer, J.P., Allen, N.J. & Smith, C.A. (1993). Commitment to Organizations and Occupations: Extension and test of a three-component Conceptualization. Journal of Applied Psychology, 78, (4), 538-551.

Meyer, J.P., & Allen N.J. (1984). Testing the side bet theory of organizational commitment: Some methodological considerations. Journal of Applied Psychology, 69, (3), 372-378.

Morrison, K.A. (1997). How Franchise Job Satisfaction and Personality affect Performance, Organizational Commitment, Franchisor Relations, and Intentions to Remain. Journal of Small Business Management

O'Reilly, C.A., & Chatman, J. (1986). Organizational Commitment and psychological attachment: the effects of compliance, identification, and internalization on prosocial behavior. Journal of Applied Psychology. 71, 492-499.

Porter, L.W., Steers, R.M., & Mowday, R.T. (1974). Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Among Psychiatric Technicians. Journal of Applied Psychology, 59, (5), 603-609.

Reynolds, J. (1997, Fall). Professional Collecting is Customer Service. Professional Collector, pp.16-17.

Rusbult, C.E., & Farrell, D. (1983). A Longitudinal Test of the Investment Model: The Impact on Job Satisfaction, Job Commitment, and Turnover of Variation in Rewards, Costs, Alternatives, and Investments. Journal of Applied Psychology, 68, (3), 429-438.

Sklar, L. (1990). The Check is Not in the Mail. San Francisco: Baroque.

Street, M.D. (1995). Cognitive Development and Organizational Commitment: Two Potential Predictors of Whistleblowing. Journal of Applied Business Research, 11, (4), 104-111.

Thayer, L. (1987). On Communication: Essays in Understanding. Norwood: Ablex.

Wimmer, R.D. & Dominic, J.R. (1997). Mass Media Research. Belmont: Wadsworth.