

Employee satisfaction a must in modern day business world

By HOWARD RONTAL

Imagine the president of a multi-million dollar corporation. His multi-chair in his paneled office, guarded by his executive secretary. His multi-lined, push-button phone. His key to the corporate conference room, and his five or six figured salary, which rests in large part on the shoulders of employees who don't make a tenth of what he makes.

If the Indians are discontented, confused or ill-trained in their work, productivity and quality control may suffer, and so may the chief.

The corporate chief who finds this happening must call in David L. Coplan, an account executive and management consultant with the Bill Sandy Co. in Detroit and the new national secretary of the 12,000 member American Society for Training and Development.

We, The Sandy Co. offer our talents to organizations in an effort to assist an organization's people to get better at what they're doing," said Coplan, who lives on Horseshoe in Farmington Hills.

Coplan is a senior, corporate psychologist except that he doesn't shrink a company's personnel, but the corporate structure, creating a systems analysis approach, to identify problems in the way people in a company communicate, learn their jobs, and find the motivation to do the job right.

For many years people in profit-making organizations have been concerned with the bottom line. The primary focus was on recruiting, selecting, compensating and evaluating, training employees," said Coplan.

"Today, more and more companies, while still keeping the profit motive in mind, are realizing that people are the most important product. I want to make more sense to redirect some dollars spent on activities such as recruiting, over to the training and motivating of present employees."

Coplan has little faith in the company suggestion box. Suggestions don't get made, and when they do, they don't get used. The discontented employee may become so demoralized that he doesn't bother to air his complaints.

"We had guys say, we worked for this guy for seven years and never talked to him."

You get somebody whose known as a worker and a biter and he may have a good reason, but you have to get to him," said Coplan.

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DAVID COPLAN

General Motors of Canada is one of Coplan's accounts. The Sandy Co. was called in because cars coming off the assembly line weren't put together as well as GM thought they should be.

Workers in the Canadian plants are now attending after work meetings with supervisors and management to discuss plant problems, and they are getting paid for it. GM of Canada has also been publishing an in-house newsletter which tells of various plant successes and failures to upgrade the quality of their work. Because two of the plants are in French speaking Quebec, the newsletters are written in French.

PLANT QUALITY ratings have gone up in all Canadian GM factories. Coplan also incorporates parts of what has come to be known as the Human Potential Movement into his work. GM of Canada district service managers have been given an overview of Transactional Analysis so that they can better understand people and work more effectively.

Coplan has done so much work with GM of Canada that he sports a miniature Canadian flag on his desk. He said his wife

keeps a running count of the number of times he's taken off for Toronto—51 since last May.

The 39-year-old Coplan holds a BA in business administration from Michigan State University and an MA in educational psychology from Eastern Michigan University. Prior to joining the Sandy Co. he spent seven years as director of manpower development for City National Bank. He's taught management courses at Wayne State University.

Coplan recently returned from a national American Society for Training and Development meeting in Washington D.C. where the subject of Human Resources Development in the World of Work, was discussed by manpower trainers like Coplan, educators and government officials.

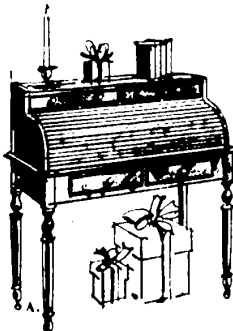
Business, said Coplan, has a hard time communicating its personnel needs to both educators and the government. Because of this, schools educate the population, government pays for it and the business community ends up paying for the retraining.

There's a Quality of Work Life Institute that's designed to study the effects of working on people in different kinds of environments," said Coplan.

He maintains that the corporate interest in their employees is not a cynical attempt to get more work out of the same group of people at the same cost. While he says he's sure that some companies are still holding their employees to long to the duties of the firm in order to encourage loyalty, the current motivation, he said, for interest in employee on the job welfare is sincere. In Canadian GM plants, for instance, the company has increased the speed of the assembly line in some time.

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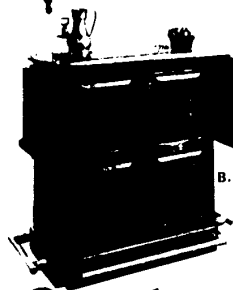
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