

A Content Analysis of How Participatory Decision Making and Teamwork Affects
Employee Satisfaction and Employee Commitment

by

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ABSTRACT

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Nine organizations were investigated that were chosen in *Fortune's* (2005) "Top 100 Companies to Work For" to identify if participatory decision-making and teamwork were two characteristics that affect employee satisfaction and employee commitment. The organizations investigated were Wegmans Food Markets, Starbucks, Valero Energy, W.L. Gore, Genentech, J.M. Smucker, Republic Bancorp, Xilinx, and Griffin Hospital. A content analysis was done to research if the listed organizations support a culture that implements participatory decision-making and teamwork. Twenty-eight articles from all of the organizations were read. Words and/or phrases that are associated with participatory decision-making and teamwork were highlighted. Participatory decision-

making was identified seventy-two times in the articles and teamwork was identified fifty times. Results suggested that both participatory decision-making and teamwork are characteristics that the investigated organizations supported in their culture. Therefore this research suggested they do have an affect on employee satisfaction and employee commitment.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Employee satisfaction and commitment have become more recognized as important in recent years for organizational success. Retaining key employees has become a problem in organizations today (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2001). A solution to the problem will lead to an organization that is effective and profitable and employees that are happier and more productive. It is to the benefit of the organization that their employees feel satisfied and committed to their company. Committed employees are likely to stay employed at that organization, which has an impact on the bottom line of the company (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2001). There are high costs that an organization is faced with each time that an employee leaves their company including the money that it takes to replace the employee as well as the loss of input and experience that the employee brought to the organization. The cost of replacing lost talent is 70 to 200 percent of each lost employee's annual salary (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2001).

Research shows that employees want to be a part of a team and they want to be more involved with decision-making (Faiello, 2000). When employees have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, it provides them the opportunity to influence decisions and their outcomes for that organization. This method shows people that they are respected and trusted. Teamwork is one strategy of decision-making that organizations can implement. Employees that work in teams are expected to take on a larger amount of responsibility and make informed decisions. Organizational efficiency and employee satisfaction are complemented by the use of teams (Scott & Harrison, 1997).

Statement of the Problem

“Once an organization has captured talented people, its best return on investment requires closing the back door to prevent them from walking out” (Kaye & Jordan - Evans, 2001, p. 6). For that reason, it is important to identify what makes employees satisfied and committed. Participatory decision-making and teamwork are two characteristics that are found to affect employee satisfaction and employee commitment (Black & Gregersen, 1997; Scott & Harrison, 1997). This research investigates these two characteristics within organizations that are known as the best organizations to work for as stated by *Fortune Magazine* (2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to help organizations identify methods that they can use that will have a positive impact on the feelings that their employees have about their organizations. Businesses that do not have healthy organizational cultures can recognize ways to improve the day-to-day culture of their company. Encouraging the input of employees through participatory decision-making and teamwork are two methods that the organizations can implement to start improving the culture of their business (Black & Gregersen, 1997; Scott & Harrison, 1997).

Assumptions of the Study

Based on the literature review, it is assumed that cultures that encourage participatory decision-making and teamwork affect employee satisfaction and commitment. The organizations are recognized as one of the best organizations to work for, as determined by *Fortune Magazine* (2005), because of the financial success that they have had, and because their employees are satisfied. The employees willingly

shared information about the culture of their organizations, which resulted in that organization being chosen as a top business to work for.

Definition of Terms

Employee Satisfaction. When an employee believes that the “organization will be satisfying in the long run, care about the quality of their work, and are more committed to the organization” (Bavendam, 2000, p. 1).

Employee Commitment. The psychological identification an individual feels toward his or her employing organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

Participatory Decision-Making. When organizations directly delegate to non-management a significant amount of decision-making authority (Hickey & Casner-Lotto, 1998).

Teamwork. “A workgroup with a common purpose through which members develop mutual relationship for the achievement of goals and/or tasks” (Harris & Harris, 1996, p. 23)

Methodology

Nine successful organizations from *Fortune's* (2005) “Top 100 Companies to Work For” were investigated to identify if participatory decision-making and teamwork were two characteristics identified to affect employee satisfaction and commitment. A content analysis was conducted to identify the characteristics that are evident among the culture of the organizations. Articles that contained information about each of the

organizations and the culture that they possess were read and analyzed through the process of a content analysis.

Key terms were identified by the researcher that was interpreted to be characteristics of participatory decision-making and teamwork. Literature of the nine organizations was reviewed and an investigation for the key terms was conducted to identify if participatory decision-making and teamwork were two methods that were evident in the organizations that are known as the best organizations to work for.

A coding method was used that identified the key terms relating to participatory decision-making and teamwork within the articles of the organizations. Words, phrases, and sentences that were in relation to participatory decision-making and teamwork were highlighted with two specified colors. The researcher tallied up the number of times that there was a marking (highlighting) with the two identified colors in each of the articles. The total amount of times that participatory decision-making and teamwork were identified within the articles indicated the significance of the two characteristics within the specific organizations.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Employee Satisfaction and Employee Commitment

Importance and Characteristics

Retaining key employees is a major problem in organizations. The issues of employee satisfaction and commitment have become important in recent years. A solution to this problem will lead to an organization that is “effective and profitable, and employees that are happier and more productive” (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2001, p. 6).

Employees that have high job satisfaction tend to “believe that the organization will be satisfying in the long run, care about the quality of their work, and are more committed to the organization” (Bavendam, 2000, p. 1). According to Bavendam (2000) there are six factors that influence employee satisfaction: opportunity, stress, leadership, work standards, fair rewards, and adequate authority. When these six factors are greater, jobs satisfaction is high (Bavendam, 2000).

Employee commitment can be identified as the psychological identification that an individual feels toward his or her employing organization (Mowday et al., 1982). When individuals feel as though the organization or teams they work for care about their well-being, they are more inclined to reciprocate by putting forth great effort on its behalf (Bishop, Scott, Goldsby, & Cropanzano, 2005). Gregory (2001) indicated five characteristics which identified a loyal and committed employee. They are

one who is a team player, willing to make personal sacrifices for the good of the company, they believe in the company’s product or services, they will recommend the company as one of the best places to work, and they are

prepared to stay at the company for at least the next several years, even if offered a modest pay increase elsewhere (p. 17).

It is to the benefit of the organization that their employees feel satisfied and committed to their company. Increasing job satisfaction is important for the humanitarian value, and for the financial benefit (Bavendam, 2000). As previously noted, the cost of replacing lost talent is 70 to 200 percent of each lost employee's annual salary (Kaye & Jordan - Evans, 2001). That figure does not take into consideration the loss of intellectual capital and accumulated experience that results from each departure (Gregory, 2001).

“Once an organization has captured talented people, its best return on investment requires closing the back door to prevent them from walking out” (Kaye & Jordan - Evans, 2001, p. 6). For that reason, it is important to identify what makes employees satisfied and committed. Organizations that have not been identified as top organizations to work for can recognize ways to improve the organizational culture of their company through those that have. Managers that have higher employee retention are often noted as managers that tell the truth and provide feedback to their employees, they respect differences and value diversity on their teams, and they give employees freedom to work in their own creative way (Kaye & Jordan - Evans, 2001).

Research shows that employees want to be part of a team and they want to be more involved with decision-making (Faiello, 2000). It was identified that in law enforcement agencies, some of the most critical problems that contribute to low morale, stress, and high turnover stems from the lack of employee involvement in the decision-making process (Corsentino & Bue, 1993). The goal of this research is to investigate

participatory decision making and teamwork in the workplace to identify the effects that these two categories have on employee satisfaction and employee commitment.

Opportunity, work standards and adequate authority are three of the six factors mentioned above that increase employee satisfaction in relation to participatory decision making and teamwork. Opportunity includes the “chance for employees to participate in interesting projects, jobs with a satisfying degree of challenge and opportunities for increased responsibility” (Bavendam, 2000, p. 2). Participating in projects and challenging jobs allows the opportunity for employees to be involved in challenging decisions and work in teams. Work standards are explained as the “entire workgroup taking pride in the quality of its work” (Bavendam, 2000, p.2). Organizations need to encourage communication and develop meaningful measures of quality. Adequate authority is allowing employees to have freedom and authority to do their jobs. This can be done by “letting employees make decisions, allowing employees to have input on decisions that affect them, and allowing employees to determine how their goals will be achieved” (Bavendam, 2000, p. 2).

Successful Organizations

There are several organizations that are noted to have high employee satisfaction, as well as employee commitment. In one article, a survey to identify employee satisfaction in credit unions identified that the longevity of employees was noted to have a higher level of satisfaction. This was because they worked there a number of years and they have seen that the values and culture have stayed the same, and they are proud to have contributed to the growth and success of the credit union (Lieberman, 2004).

Sargento Foods Inc., a privately owned organization, has been successful for over 50 years, being in competition with much larger companies. Sargento has a well-documented track record of highly satisfied employees. The people and culture are a core element for this company. This attitude started with the founder of Sargento Foods Inc., who had a philosophy to “hire good people and treat them like family” (Gannon & Sterling, 2004, p. 31). Sargento actively involves large numbers of people in strategy development and day-to-day operational improvement initiatives. They involve 40 senior and middle managers directly in development process decisions, and have “process improvement” teams that are focused on driving operational excellence (Gannon & Sterling, 2004.) Sargento’s high level of satisfaction by their employees has translated into a much higher employee retention rate than comparable firms. Total turnover at Sargento is 6.7 percent; the benchmark of manufacturers is 28 percent – which is more than four times higher (Gannon & Sterling, 2004).

Finisar Corporation has been in business since 1988. In 2003, they reported their second-highest revenue on record. When the company was started, they instilled a principle similar to Sargento’s goal: “hire really good people” (“How Finisar”, 2003, p. 32). According to the CEO, Jerry Rawls, “any team you build is only as good as the individual players...if you recruit good people, you can expect terrific performance” (p. 32). Teamwork is not just a catchphrase at Finisar Corporation. Whenever there is a problem, a team of three to eight people are assigned to work on it. In regard to the teams, Rawls said, “If you have one person in that group whose ego demands satisfaction at the expense of the others, it will be a lousy experience for everybody else and not very productive” (“How Finisar,” 2003, p. 32). To continue to recruit successful people and

keep their values alive, they describe their beliefs over and over again to their employees and recruit people who share their commitment to the corporate values. Rawls “makes sure to walk the talk every day” (“How Finisar,” 2003, p. 32).

Organizations that focus on their employees just as much as they focus on their customers tend to increase employee satisfaction, commitment, and organizational success (Gannon & Sterling, 2004; “How Finisar,” 2003; Patterson, 2005). Cary Software is another successful company that takes pride in having good employees and treating them right. James Goodnight, one of the founders and the CEO stated, “If you treat employees as if they make a difference to the company, they will make a difference to the company” (Patterson, 2005, p. 2). A spokesperson for the company stated, “We believe if we take care of our employees they will take care of our customers and treat them very well...If you want to create a long-term relationship with your customers, you might want to start by creating a long-term relationship with your employees” (Patterson, 2005, p. 4).

“To have employees that are committed to the organization and to get teamwork, that organization must deserve it; like respect, commitment must be earned” (Denton, 1987, p. 18). The Wal-Mart chain of discount stores is a company that has employee commitment. The founder, Sam Walton, believes that “his employees make the difference in the company’s success” (Denton, 1987, p. 19). According to Denton, Wal-Mart gets employee commitment in several ways. It makes sure to maintain close ties between upper management and other personnel. Also, Wal-Mart puts an emphasis on openly communicating information about both business and personal aspects of the employees (Denton, 1987).

Open communication is also an important factor at Harte-Hanks Communication. Their Personnel Director believes “every organization needs committed employees who feel as though they are part of the organization” (Denton, 1987, p. 20). In one survey, 97 percent of the employees felt proud to be a part of the company. After every managers’ meeting, the minutes are posted for all of the employees to see. They also conduct regular meetings to get input and opinions from all of their employees, not just upper management (Denton, 1987).

Employee satisfaction and employee commitment can have long-term effects on the success of the organization. As noted, the cost of replacing lost talent is 70 to 200 percent of each lost employee’s annual salary (Kaye & Jordan - Evans, 2001). That figure does not take into consideration the loss of intellectual capital and accumulated experience that results from each departure (Gregory, 2001). For that reason, it is important to know what factors play a role in the satisfaction and commitment of employees. Companies can benefit by identifying the factors and working along with employees to create a culture that allows employees to participate in decisions that affect them, and work in teams to enhance their performance (Bavandem, 2000). The purpose of this research is to investigate the areas of participatory decision making and teamwork and see how they impact employee satisfaction and employee commitment.

Participatory Decision-Making

Importance and Characteristics

Several studies have suggested that there is a slight positive relationship between the degree of participation and employee satisfaction (Black & Gregersen, 1997; French, et al., 1960). It is argued that the reason for this is because of “value attainment” (Black

& Gregersen, 1997). Employees are satisfied when they obtain what they desire from their work environment. Employee participation in decision-making provides them with the opportunity to influence decisions and their outcomes. It is not enough to simply have the employees participate in the decisions. Employee satisfaction is a function of “how much involvement” (p. 863) the employee has in decisions. Organizations that genuinely allow for employee participation will directly delegate to non-management a significant amount of decision-making authority that is commonly reserved for managers (Hickey & Casner-Lotto, 1998).

There have been several recent reviews that have identified six specific dimensions of participatory decision-making (PDM) (Black & Gregersen, 1997; Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall, & Jennings, 1988; Dachler & Wilpert, 1978; Miller & Monge, 1986; Locke and Schwieger, 1979; Wagner & Gooding, 1987). A study done by Black and Gregersen (1997) indicated that the degree of involvement can have a significant impact on employee satisfaction. Individuals that were identified to have an above-average level of involvement on the dimensions of participatory decision making had significantly higher levels of employee satisfaction. These dimensions of PDM are: “rationale, structure, form, issues, decision process, and degree of involvement” (Black and Gregersen, 1997, p. 861).

Rationale. There are two basic rationales for participatory decision-making (Black & Gregersen, 1997; Dachler & Wilpert, 1978). The first is that people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives (Black & Gregersen, 1997). It is assumed in this rationale that the individuals have the potential to participate intelligently. The second rationale is that participatory decision-making is an instrumental way to achieve

higher productivity, efficiency, profits and other valued organizational results. The rationale of participatory decision-making can influence the other dimensions, such as the structure (Black & Gregersen, 1997).

Structure. According to Black and Gregersen (1997) participatory decision-making can range from formal to informal. A formally structured system has explicit rules and procedures concerning who participates, what decisions employees participate in, and how the participation occurs. An informal participatory decision-making system has informal rules as to what can be discussed and who is allowed to participate. Formal structures tend to be more common (Black & Gregerson, 1997).

Form. Black and Gregersen (1997) and other scholars have also identified that there are two types of forms that are identified in participatory decision-making (Cotton et al, 1988; Dachler & Wilpert, 1978). Direct forms allow the participants to be involved immediately in the decision-making process and they are allowed to present their information, preferences, and opinions to the other members involved in the decision. When there is a restricted set of individuals that are elected, rotated, or appointed as representatives, it is known as an indirect form of participatory decision-making (Black & Gregersen, 1997). Although individuals are allowed to present their information, preferences, and opinions, they present them to a representative who then interacts with the other representatives who then make the decisions (Black & Gregersen, 1997).

Issues. The issues that are being decided on are another component of participatory decision-making. These issues include (a) work and task design, (b) working conditions, (c) strategy issues, and (d) capital distribution and investment issues. It is suggested that both “participant satisfaction and decision quality is a function of the knowledge

individuals involved in the decision bring to a particular issue (Black & Gregersen, 1997, p. 862).

Degree of Involvement. Involvement is identified on a continuum indicated by Black and Gregersen (1997):

(a) no advance information concerning a decision is given to employees, (b) employees are given advance information, (c) employees are allowed to provide their opinion about the decision, (d) employees' opinions are taken into consideration in making the decision, (e) employees can veto a decision, and (f) the decision is completely in the hands of the employees (p. 862).

Decision Process. The final dimension of the participatory decision making is the decision process. Black and Gregersen (1997) identified five distinct processes: "(a) identifying problems or issues, (b) generating alternative solutions to the problem, (c) selecting a specific solution, (d) planning the implementation of the selected solution, and (e) evaluating the results of the implementation" (p. 863).

As noted above, the involvement of employees on decision-making has a positive affect on employee satisfaction. In an article in the *Fortune Magazine* (March, 2005) Herb Kelleher, the founder and chairman of Southwest Airlines stated:

People should be respected and trusted as people, not because of their position or title...I'm very interested in their ideas. You don't have to have a doctorate to have an idea. You ought to be open to listening to people. Show that you care about them as individuals, not just as workers. (p. 116)

One way to show that people are respected and trusted is to let them be involved and allow them to share their input and ideas when the decisions that are being made will

affect them. Organizations that truly encourage participatory decision-making are ones that have a structure that makes employee involvement ongoing. Although it is not essential for participatory decision-making, teamwork has become the favored strategy to use (Hickey & Casner-Lotto, 1998). “Whether it is work planning, scheduling, or operational decision-making, teams need access to information, skills in decision-making, rewards to encourage decision-making, and the authority to make decisions” (Irwin & Rocine, 1994, p. 14).

Teamwork

Importance and Characteristics

“The importance of teamwork, of an employee’s commitment to a task and the organization...is the key to productivity and is essential for improving quality” (Denton, 1987, p. 17). Organizational efficiency and employee satisfaction are complemented by the use of teams (Scott & Harrison, 1997). Effective teamwork is identified as an element of high-performing businesses. Businesses that continue to perform successfully rely on teams as a part of their everyday operations (Tarricone & Luca, 2002).

According to Hickey and Casner-Lotto (1998) teams are identified as a way to organize and distribute responsibility, authority, and information otherwise given only to supervisors and managers. Teams can respond quickly to the changes in business demands when they have the decision-making authority and are allowed to share information directly. Another definition of teams is a “workgroup with a common purpose through which members develop mutual relationship for the achievement of goals and/or tasks” (Harris & Harris, 1996, p. 23).

According to Tarricone and Luca (2002), teams are the management style of choice when organizations want to implement a culture that is flexible. Employees of this type of structure are expected to take on a larger degree of responsibility, make informed decisions, and make use of their intellectual and creative skills (Wageman, 1997; Johnson, Heimann, & O'Neill, 2000). Teams work under the premise that the people that know how to best carry out and improve their own work are the teams themselves (Scott & Harrison, 1997).

Tarricone and Luca (2002) identified that well designed business teams will help organizations:

- Minimize and reduce costs and number of employees
- Increase profits and reduce the hierarchical structure of the business
- Improve customer relationships and maintain a client focus
- Increase employee motivation and commitment
- Improve processes for the recognition of team and individual contribution

(p. 55)

There are five attributes to successful business teams (Tarricone & Luca, 2002). They are: *attitude* (when a team and the team members have the right attitude and perspective), *uniqueness* (team members each being responsible for the success of their team by expressing, respecting and encouraging their own uniqueness and that of others), *communication* (teams are dependent on cooperation and effective communication), *creativity* (the environment should perpetuate and promote creativity; team members should demonstrate leadership and creativity at all times), and finally, *play* (positive peer relationship). It is noted that greater productivity and higher achievement, more caring

and committed relationships, and greater psychological health and self-esteem are results of cooperation and having fun at work. “The most important lesson of teamwork is that organizations that show employees respect, trust, and a desire for affiliation can create resilient, powerful communities of commitment, which can survive and flourish in difficult environments” (Irwin & Rocine, 1994, p. 15).

Chapter III: Methodology

According to the review of literature, employee satisfaction and employee commitment are important. They motivate employees and tend to create longevity in the workplace. Participatory decision-making and teamwork are two characteristics that are found to have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and employee commitment. To investigate these characteristics, a content analysis was done to identify if participatory decision-making and teamwork are evident in the organizations that are known to be great places to work. This chapter explains the organizations that were researched and the method used to investigate those organizations.

Subject Selection and Description

Table 1

9 Organizations chosen from <i>Fortune Magazine</i> , January, 2005		
Large Companies (10,000 + Employees)	Midsized Companies (2,500 to 10,000 employees)	Small Companies (1,000 to 2,500 employees)
Wegmans Food Markets, Rochester, NY	W.L. Gore, Newark, DE	Republic Bancorp, Owosso, MI
Starbucks, Seattle, WA	Genentech, San Francisco, CA	Xilinx, San Jose, CA
Valero Energy, San Antonio, CA	J.M. Smucker, Orrville, OH	Griffin Hospital, Derby, CT

Nine successful organizations from *Fortune's* (2005) "100 Best Companies to Work For" were selected to be investigated to identify if participatory decision-making and teamwork are two of the characteristics identified to impact employee satisfaction and employee commitment. Three sizes of organizations were identified: Large Companies that have 10,000 + employees; Midsized Companies that have 2,500 to 10,000 employees; and Small Companies that have 1,000 to 2,500 employees (Fortune,

2005, p. 72). In order to obtain a perspective of all organizational sizes in this study, three organizations from each area (large, midsized, and small companies) were chosen to investigate if employee satisfaction and commitment is consistent among all sizes of an organization (see Table 1) (Fortune, 2005, p. 86).

The researcher chose organizations from the *Fortune (2005) Magazine* because of the way the organizations are evaluated in order to be selected as “top companies to work for” to be in the magazine. Two-thirds of the total score that gives the organizations ranking in the magazine comes from an evaluation that is distributed randomly to employees of the companies. They are asked questions on topics such as “attitudes toward management, job satisfaction, and camaraderie” (Fortune, 2005, p. 97). The opinion that the employees have about their organizations plays a significant role in getting the organization on the list of the “100 Best Companies to Work For.”

For most of the organizations, this is not the first time that they have been chosen by *Fortune (2005)* as one of the top organizations to work for. Wegmans Food Markets has been chosen to the magazine’s Hall of Fame for being on the list since the beginning (“Wegmans ranks,” 2005). Wegmans is a privately held retail supermarket located on the east coast that has been in business since 1922. The company recognizes the good in its employees. It has a unique motto: “Employees first, customers second” (Levering and Milton, 2005, p. 73). The current chairman, Robert Wegman, stated “No matter how much we invest in our people we get much more in return” (“Wegmans ranks,” 2005, ¶3).

The Starbucks Company refers to their workers as partners instead of employees. They are always focused on the people that make up their work team. Opportunities to

develop skills, further careers, and achieve goals are provided by Starbucks to their partners (“Career Center,” 2005). Starbucks opened in 1971 in Seattle, Washington and has grown to be the “worlds leading retailer, roaster, and brand of specialty coffee...in North America, Europe, Middle East, Latin America and the Pacific Rim” (“Company Profile,” 2005).

This is the eighth consecutive year that W.L. Gore has been on the list in *Fortune Magazine* (2005). It is one of four companies to be included in the three hardbound rankings as well as the eight magazine articles that have been published by the authors (“Gore earns,” 2005). It is a privately held manufacturing company that has been in business since 1958. It has created leading technology products for electronics, industrial, fabrics, and medical markets (“Gore earns,” 2005). Management at W.L. Gore is different. One example of this is that workers evaluate their fellow team members to determine compensation; instead of being told what their compensation is (Levering and Milton, 2005). Since the beginning, Gore has avoided a traditional hierarchy (“Fast Facts,” 2005).

The year 2005 is the seventh year in a row that Genentech has been on the list. This company is part of the Biotechnology Industry that has been based out of San Francisco, California. Genentech works hard to create an environment where their employees enjoy coming to work every day (“Culture”, 2005). They also know how to thank their employees. To celebrate the launching of new drugs, the company once threw their employees and their guests a party that had Elton John as the entertainment (Levering and Milton, 2005).

Smuckers has been recognized consistently as one of the top 25 companies to work for (“About Us,” 2005). The company has been in business for over 100 years and is currently the market leader in fruit spread, ice cream toppings, and more. The company is based out of Orville, Ohio and continues to be successful because of their five basic beliefs: quality, people, ethics, growth, and independence (“Our Basic,” 2005).

Republic Bancorp is the third company on the list of top companies to work for. This is the fifth year that *Fortune* (2005) has put them on the list (“Welcome to,” 2005). Republic Bancorp is based out of Owosso, Michigan, and does its core business under Commercial Banking, Retail Banking, and Mortgage Banking. This company offers a unique management approach because they allow the opportunity for each area to develop their own culture (“Career Center,” 2005).

Xilinx has been one of the top ten on the list for four years in a row. Xilinx is a technology company that is known as being the leading supplier of programmable chips. The company is based out of San Jose, California. The noted reason for making the list this year is their “culture of innovation” (Xilinx jumps,” 2005, ¶2). It was stated that one out of five of their employees holds a patent (“Xilinx jumps,” 2005).

Griffin Hospital has been on the list for six years in a row. This hospital has created a very unique and caring environment for the patients that they help. The patients and employees alike, “have access to family-style kitchens with a meal service, strolling musicians, chair massages, and no fluorescent lighting” (Levering and Milton, 2005, p. 86). Griffin’s President, Patrick Charmel attributed the recognition in *Fortune* (2005) to

“the family of employees, volunteers, and medical staff who make the experience exceptional for every user of Griffin Hospital” (“Griffin Makes,” 2005, ¶5).

Valero Energy has made the list every year since 1999 (“Valero Ranked,” 2005). Valero is based in San Antonio, California. It is an Oil Refining company that focuses in marketing and retail, and has never laid off an employee (Levering and Milton, 2005, p. 73). It is one of the nation’s largest retail operators. The company has a commitment to community service “which employees are proud to be associated with” (“Valero Ranked,” 2005, ¶1).

Instrumentation

A content analysis was conducted to identify the key characteristics among the organizations. This method was chosen because it is a “technique that studies human behavior in an indirect way: The analysis of written contents of a communication” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000, p. 469). Articles within the organizations and some outside perspectives that contained content about the culture of each organization and the characteristics that it possesses were read. Once read, the articles were analyzed through the process of a content analysis in terms of frequency counts. In this type of analysis, concepts for coding are identified and coding categories are defined; a count is made of the number of times the concepts that fit the categories are found within written communications (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). A coding method was used that identified the key concepts of employee satisfaction and commitment in relation to participatory decision-making and teamwork.

Key terms were identified that were associated with either/or both participatory decision-making and teamwork. Literature on the nine organizations was reviewed and

an investigation for the key terms was conducted to identify if participatory decision-making and teamwork are methods implemented in the top organizations to work for. The terms were chosen by the researcher on the basis of latent content. Latent Content refers to the meaning that underlies what is said or shown (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Based on the review of literature, the researcher identified terms that would identify participatory decision-making and teamwork in the articles. The articles that were read and concepts that were identified were chosen based on the assumptions that the researcher had made from the literature review to be a description of participatory decision-making and teamwork.

Table 2

EXAMPLES OF TERMS IDENTIFIED IN THE ARTICLES	
Participatory Decision Making (Blue Highlighter)	Teamwork (Pink Highlighter)
Trust; Encourage employee input; Open Communication; Decision Processes; Responsibility; Management Structure; Freedom; Empower; Equal player	Team atmosphere; Family approach; Communication; Responsibility; Creativity; Attitude; Self-Motivation; Flexible Management

The researcher created a color coding system that was used during the review of literature for the nine organizations. A highlighter of two identified colors was used while reading through each of the articles. Phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or words that related to the key terms identified under the two subjects (see Table 2) were highlighted within the articles. After all of the articles were read, the researcher tallied the blue and pink highlighted markings within the texts to come to a final count of the number of times participatory decision-making and teamwork were identified in the texts.

Data Analysis

After reading the articles on each of the organizations, the characteristics of participatory decision-making and teamwork characteristics that were identified through the coding process were counted. The researcher predetermined a number of highlighted sentences, phrases, paragraphs, or words that were to be within the text. That predetermined number was identified as 20. There had to be 20 highlighting marks within for both participatory decision-making and teamwork individually. If there were 20 or more highlighted sentences, phrases, paragraphs, or words in relation to participatory decision-making and/or teamwork, then it is assumed that one or both are indeed characteristics of the cultures that were being researched. Since these organizations are already known as great places to work for, then it will be assumed that one of the reasons they are a great place to work is because they encourage a culture that practices participatory decision-making by their employees and implements a team-based culture.

Limitations

One limitation of the study is the bias that the researcher could have on the interpretation of the meaning of participatory decision-making and teamwork. To avoid this limitation, the researcher chose the terms to look for in the articles based on the literature provided. Another researcher may have chosen different terms to look for in relation to participatory decision-making and teamwork. Also, the sentences, phrases, paragraphs, and words that were highlighted in the articles were highlighted when the text appeared to fit under the realm of the terms identified. Others may have interpreted the text in a different context than that of the researcher.

A bias of the articles that were read is also a limitation of the study. The majority of the articles came from within the organizations that were investigated. These articles talk about the type of culture that they practice in their organizations. The articles could have been written on the basis of what they try to practice in their culture, and not on the basis of the type of culture that the employees may perceive the organization to have. The researcher attempted to find articles that were written from a non-bias author. There were not many articles available that were written from outside of the organizations.

The possibility of human error could also be identified as a limitation. Some important text that was in relation to the subjects that were being investigated could be missed. Also, there is a potential math error when the researcher added up the items that were highlighted to see how many times there was a relation to participatory decision-making and teamwork. This is an important part of the research because it determined if employees of the chosen organizations were satisfied and committed due to the two cultural characteristics being investigated. To avoid this limitation, the researcher read the articles twice to be certain that important text was not overlooked. Also, the researcher added up the items that were highlighted twice to avoid an error in the math.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects that participatory decision-making and teamwork have on employee satisfaction and employee commitment.

Employee turnover costs the company 70 to 200 percent of the employee's annual salary (Kaye & Evans, 2001). For that reason, it is important to identify what type of characteristics that organizations could implement into their culture that could increase the level of satisfaction that their employees have, which in turn could increase the commitment that the employees have to that organization.

A content analysis was done to investigate the cultures of nine organizations which were ranked as one of the best organizations to work for in *Fortune Magazine* (2005). Terms that are associated with participatory decision-making and teamwork were identified within the articles of the text by a coding method that was determined by the researcher.

Item Analysis

Table 3

BREAKDOWN OF COMPANIES AND THE NUMBER OF TERMS IDENTIFIED			
Company	Number of Articles Read	Number of terms identified for Participatory Decision-Making	Number of terms identified for Teamwork
Wegmans Food Markets	5	11	4
Starbucks	3	6	1
Valero Energy	4	11	11
W.L. Gore	4	17	18
Genentech	2	9	3
J.M. Smucker	2	0	1
Republic Bancorp	3	3	0
Xilinx	3	8	6
Griffin Hospital	2	7	5
TOTALS	28	72	50

Twenty-eight articles about the organizations were read by the researcher. In those articles, terms that were associated with participatory decision-making were noted 72 times and terms that were associated with teamwork were noted 50 times. Before the content analysis began, the researcher set the minimum number of times that the two terms were to be identified within the readings to be 20. Therefore, in general, all of the organizations that were investigated practice a culture that supports both participatory decision-making and teamwork which positively affects how the employees feel about these organizations, as well as their commitment to the organization.

Participatory Decision-Making

Terms relating to participatory decision-making were more evident within the contents of the articles (identified 72 times) than terms relating to teamwork (identified 50 times). In relation to participatory decision making, Wegmans stated, “We empower our people to make decisions that improve their work and benefit our customers and companies” (“Who We Are,” 2005, ¶1). An article about Starbucks mentioned, “We strive to create a diverse workplace in which every partner’s voice is heard” (“The Starbucks,” 2005, ¶2). Valero has created a working environment of “mutual and equal respect and appreciation for diversity” (“Shared commitment,” 2005, ¶1). They also see their employees as their “number-one asset” (“Mission Statement, 2005, ¶1).

Evidence of participatory decision-making was evident in the midsized companies as well. At W.L. Gore, there “are no chains of command nor pre-determined channels of communication...they communicate directly with each other” (“Corporate Culture,” 2005, ¶2). Also, W.L. Gore (2005) works under four guiding principles, one of which is the “Freedom to encourage, help, and allow other associates to grow in knowledge, skill,

and scope of responsibility” (§5). Genentech gives their employees a “great deal of freedom within company goals to apply their skills, knowledge and initiative to getting things done” (“Culture,” 2005, ¶5).

Republic Bancorp hires employees who “want to make a real contribution” to their success (“Career Center,” 2005, ¶ 3). Also, they have a management approach that “allows the opportunity for each to develop its own culture” (§4). Xilinx is another smaller size company that has evidence of participatory decision-making in their articles. “Our employees are the keys to our innovation. Such innovation relies on the personnel policies that allow employees to make their own decisions and take risks...keeping employees informed leads directly to innovation...and ultimately increase profits” (“Company Overview,” 2005, ¶8). Griffin has several practices that allow their employees to give input to their organization. One example is the monthly motivational programs that are held by employees. At those programs, employees are “encouraged to voice their concerns and opinions” (“Employment Opportunities,” 2005, ¶19). Also, “every employee is an equal player in creating a wonderful health experience for our patients” (Employment Opportunities,” 2005, ¶2).

Teamwork

Although not as many terms were identified for teamwork in the content analysis, there were enough to conclude that it is a practice used by organizations that are chosen to be the best to work for. The researcher had predetermined the number of times for the terms to be identified within the articles to be a minimum of 20. Fifty terms were identified in relation to teamwork. “Wegmans believes in teamwork...every employee is a member of the Wegmans family” (“Why we’re,” 2005, ¶2). At Starbucks, they hire

“people who are adaptable, self-motivated, passionate, and creative team players” (“Career Center,” 2005, ¶3). Valero believes that “all employees have a right to offer input and be involved in helping their team grow...we expect that employees follow Valero’s vision for company, team and individual growth” (“Shared commitment,” 2005, ¶1).

Teamwork is also evident in the midsized companies. “At Gore you’ll find direct communication, a team orientation, and one title – associate – that’s shared by everyone...it’s a culture that contributed directly to our success by encouraging creativity and opportunity” (“Working at,” 2005, ¶1). Also, W.L. Gore “depends on small groups of people working together to achieve common goals” (“Great Place,” 2003, ¶1). If one was working at Genentech, they are “working at a company that fosters a sense of teamwork, and working with people who do their job with integrity and professionalism” (“Awards and,” 2005, ¶4). Smuckers have “very special people on their team” (“The J.M Smucker,” 2003, ¶2).

Xilinx’s corporate culture “promotes teamwork and very open communication” (“Company Overview,” 2005, ¶8). Griffin Hospital attributes their recognition from *Fortune* (2005) to “the talent, dedication, and enthusiasm of the entire Griffin family of employees” (“Griffin makes,” 2005, ¶5).

This study investigated the effects that participatory decision-making and teamwork have on employee satisfaction and commitment. It costs companies 70 to 200 percent of the lost employee’s annual salary (Kaye & Evans, 2001). It is important to identify what type of characteristics can increase the level of employee satisfaction and employee commitment. The results indicate that companies noted as top organizations to

work for implement teamwork and participatory decision-making into their everyday environment. The implementation of these characteristics increase the organizations level of employee satisfaction and commitment.

Chapter V: Discussion

The literature states that when an employee leaves an organization, the amount of money that it takes to replace that employee is quite high. The cost of replacing that employee is 70 to 200 percent of each lost employee's annual salary (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2001, p. 17) There is also a loss of intellectual capital and experience that the employee contributed to the organization. To have employees working for a company they are committed to can positively impact the bottom line. If employees are committed to your organization, they are also satisfied with your organization.

Two characteristics of an organization's culture that could have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and employee commitment are participatory decision-making and teamwork. Employees that work in these types of environments are more satisfied. There is a positive relationship between the degree of participation and employee satisfaction (Black & Gregersen, 1997; French et al, 1960; Patchen, 1970; Ross & Zander, 1957). Participatory decision-making allows employees the opportunity to influence decisions that affect them and their outcomes. The use of teams affects organizational efficiency and employee satisfaction (Scott & Harrison, 1997).

The purpose of this research was to identify if participatory decision-making and teamwork are two characteristics that, in fact, do affect employee satisfaction and commitment. A content analysis was conducted to identify if organizations known for being one of the best organizations to work for implement a culture that practice the above characteristics. After reading twenty-eight articles about nine organizations, terms relating to participatory decision-making were found seventy-two times and terms relating to teamwork were found fifty times. Indeed, the organizations that were

investigated encourage a culture that practices participatory decision-making and teamwork. These cultures are one reason why those organizations are the best organizations to work for.

Limitations

Three limitations were identified in this study. One limitation is that the researcher may present a bias by the way the definitions of participatory decision-making and teamwork are interpreted. To avoid this limitation, the terms that were looked for in the articles that relate to the two culture characteristics were chosen by the researcher based on the literature provided. Different terms may have been identified in relation to participatory decision-making and teamwork if there had been input by another researcher or a person outside of the study. Also, others may have interpreted the text in a different context than that of the researcher while reading the articles about the organizations. The sentences, phrases, paragraphs, and words that were highlighted could have been quite different with another researcher.

The second limitation identified was that the majority of the articles used in the content analysis were from the organizations that were being investigated, and not from outside sources. This could create a false interpretation of what the culture of the organization is actually like. Since the articles are written from within the organization, they may promote a type of culture that the organization hopes to practice, and not necessarily the type of culture the employees would say that the organization practices. The researcher attempted to find articles that were written from a non-bias author. There were not many articles available that were written from outside of the organizations.

The third limitation identified is that there is a possibility of human error. Text that was important characteristics of either participatory decision-making or teamwork could have been missed while the researcher was reading the articles. Another factor in regards to human error is the potential for math error when the researcher added up the amount of items that were highlighted within the text. This is an important part of the research because it determined if employees of the chosen organizations were satisfied and committed due to the two cultural characteristics being investigated. To avoid this limitation, the researcher read the articles twice to be certain that important text was not overlooked. Also, the researcher added up the items that were highlighted twice to avoid an error in the math.

Conclusions

In Chapter II, the literature review revealed that research has shown that both participatory decision-making and teamwork have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and employee commitment. Employees want to be heard and involved. This research, like research of others did show that participatory decision-making and teamwork do impact employee satisfaction and commitment.

Participatory decision-making was identified in the articles that were read about the chosen organizations. The amount of involvement that employees are allowed to have in regard to decision-making has an affect on employee satisfaction. The organizations that were chosen to be investigated in this research showed that they implemented a culture where they encouraged their employees to be involved in the decisions that impact them and contribute positively to the well-being of the organization.

This researcher suggests the conclusion that employee involvement is one reason that the organizations are chosen as one of the best organizations to work for.

Another reason for those organizations to be recognized as one of the best organizations to work for is because of teamwork. It was mentioned in the literature review that one benefit that a team-based structure can bring to the organization is an increase in employee motivation and commitment. Also, businesses that continually perform successfully tend to implement teams into their culture as a part of their everyday operations. Based on the content analysis, this researcher identified that a team-based structure is also a characteristic of the organizations chosen from the *Fortune Magazine* (2005). Another reason that those organizations are chosen as one of the best organizations to work for is because of the teamwork that they encourage within their organizations and their culture.

Recommendations

In the future, research that focuses on the effects that participatory decision-making and teamwork have on employee satisfaction and commitment should possibly focus on either one or the other. Future research could focus on participatory decision-making to come to more specific conclusions on how it impacts employee satisfaction and commitment. As well, the same is for teamwork.

One possible way that more specific conclusions could occur is to conduct a case study or assessment through surveys or focused interviews on one or a few organizations to receive input from employees. The employees could explain exactly why these characteristics make them more satisfied to be working where they are working. The obvious reason is that they get the opportunity to make important decisions and be

recognized for their work and contribution that they give to the organization. Are there other reasons that these characteristics increase the satisfaction and commitment level of employees? Future research could investigate this.

There are two suggestions for a change in the methodology. One change in practice suggested for the methodology of this research would be to have more than one researcher involved in the content analysis. If there were two researchers, the list of terms that were chosen to be items that describe participatory decision-making and teamwork would be developed by both of the researchers. That way, there is more than one person's input on the interpretation of the literature. This may result in the list of terms used in the content analysis (see Table 2) to differ from the current list. Also, both of the researchers would read copies of the articles included in the content analysis. A discussion of the highlighted words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that each researcher highlights would occur. This would help to decrease the limitation mentioned in the article about the possible bias of interpretation that the researcher presents.

If future researchers choose to conduct a content analysis on this topic, another suggestion is to focus on only one organization. As shown in Table 3, some organizations had more evidence of participatory decision-making and teamwork than others. Some organizations that were researched may indeed not necessarily practice a culture of either participatory decision-making or teamwork. The terms of this methodology has been set in a way that if the terms were identified in general 20 times or more, then all organizations investigated were generalized to practice a culture of participatory decision-making and teamwork.

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