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WORK LIFE BENEFIT NEEDS FOR THE
CITY OF LAFAYETTE, COLORADO

by

Lisa E. Chrisman

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Specialization: Organizational Behavior

REGIS UNIVERSITY
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CITY OF LAFAYETTE, COLORADO

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has been approved

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APPROVED:

_____, Faculty Facilitator

_____, Faculty Advisor

ABSTRACT

Successful organizations create great people places. They focus on both human and financial assets by placing a heavy emphasis on meeting the needs of employees. Work and personal life are often viewed as competing priorities, yet some organizations are realizing the complimentary nature of the two. Results are a more collaborative approach to achieving work and personal objectives, with benefits to both the organization and the employee. Utilizing an action research methodology of diagnosing, action planning, implementing, and evaluating, this paper will evaluate work life benefit issues at the City of Lafayette. Action research is a cyclical inquiry process that involves diagnosing a problem situation, planning action steps, implementing, and evaluating the intervention.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

History of the problem. The City of Lafayette is a vital, full service city. It is centrally located between Denver, Boulder, and Longmont, situated on the northwest fringe of the Denver Metropolitan area and in the southeastern part of Boulder County. The city is considered a small to medium sized municipality by local government standards. The City of Lafayette's location, accessibility, and small town feel combine to make the city a very desirable location for residential and commercial use (Annual Budget, 2006).

Municipalities in the Denver Metro area have experienced significant change and challenges over the past decade. Human Resource (HR) professionals in the public sector are challenged to sustain competitive compensation and benefits packages. Cities in the Denver metro area typically offer a competitive, although fairly traditional benefits package to employees. A typical local government benefits package addresses health, pension, vacation, time off, and retirement benefits, however it usually does not address the challenges of today's changing workforce to reflect rising quality of life, or "work life" needs (Roberts, Gianakis, McCue, & Wang, 2004). Additionally, the limited financial nature of local government places it in a difficult situation, as inadequate and often restricted resources hinder their ability to develop and administer a comprehensive and complete benefits program. The absence of a more comprehensive benefits program

that includes work life benefits, can pose strategic human resource management challenges.

Benefits are considered to be an important part of an entire compensation package. In order to remain competitive, the City of Lafayette must offer a complete and desirable compensation and benefits package. In an effort to determine the most effective and efficient utilization of money budgeted for benefits, Human Resource staff at the City of Lafayette surveyed employees about the city's benefits package in the summer of 2006. The primary objective of the survey was to determine what benefits employees valued and utilized most. Along with an overall benefits utilization survey, HR staff wanted to evaluate work life benefits, with the possibility of expanding on their work-life benefits program to employees.

Generally speaking, benefits can be classified into two broad areas: traditional benefits and work life benefits. Traditional benefits address basic employee needs such as health, safety, security, and paid time off. Traditional benefits come in the form of medical insurance (health, dental, and vision), pension, life insurance, death and disability insurance, and paid time off (vacation, holiday, and personal time). State and federal laws regulate many of the traditional benefits.

A second major classification of benefits is work-life benefits. These benefits are designed to meet the needs of employees from a quality of life perspective. The goal of work life benefits is to help employees balance work, family, and personal needs. These benefits typically include flexibility, child and eldercare services, and wellness initiatives (Roberts et al., 2004). Many work life programs may also include other components such as continuing education and development, adoption assistance, minority and women's

issues, legal services, on-site dry cleaning or banking, and/or financial security programs. For purposes of this research project, work life benefits were focused on the more general areas of flexible work arrangements, childcare and eldercare services, and wellness initiatives.

According to the Work and Family Connection, work-life is defined as:

The practice of providing initiatives designed to create a more flexible, supportive work environment, enabling employees to focus on work tasks while at work. It includes making the culture more supportive, adding programs to meet life event needs, ensuring that policies give employees as much control as possible over their lives and using flexible work practices as a strategy to meet the dual agenda – the needs of both business and employees (Seitel, 2006).

Human Resource staff at the City of Lafayette desired a comprehensive study on work life benefits that included job flexibility, (flex time, job shares or job splits, telecommuting, compressed work weeks, and benefits for part time work), childcare and eldercare assistance, and further expansion of wellness initiatives. The objective over time was to consider the possibility of building on and strengthening a broad based program that met the needs of all – employees, managers, males, females, parents, and singles. By focusing on work life benefits, the City of Lafayette desires to remain a competitive employer and to impact benefit costs, as well as recruitment and retention, absenteeism, turnover, job commitment and satisfaction, mental and physical well being, and job productivity. The city desired a culture that fosters an employee, family, and community friendly reputation.

Areas of Concern. Although the city has not experienced significant problems in areas of turnover, absenteeism, and productivity, they are concerned with their ability to remain competitive in light of changing workforce needs. Historically, turnover at the City of Lafayette has remained relatively low, yet it has also been inconsistent over the

past few years. In 2001, turnover was at a high level of 16%. Turnover rates dropped to 8% in 2002, jumped to 11% in 2003, declined again to just under 10% in 2004, and then dropped again slightly to a little over 6% in 2005. HR staff also revealed that employees often terminate employment with the city for career opportunities in larger municipalities. Thus, the City of Lafayette (like many municipalities of their size) is often viewed as the training ground for employees who wish to be in larger organizations (Spring, 2006).

The City of Lafayette currently has an employee wellness program, an employee assistance program, and they adhere to the federally mandated Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The city does not have any formal policies on a work-life benefits program, nor does it offer a complete benefits package to part time employees. Supervisors who have allowed employees some flexibility in their work schedules have recently discontinued the option, as they felt it decreased productivity and efficiency in the department.

Since the City of Lafayette does not offer a full benefits package to part time employees, part time employees have expressed concern over the lack of a full benefits package. Part time employees who work less than 20 hours per week receive no benefits except a free recreation center pass after one year of continuous employment with the City. Those employees regularly scheduled to work 20 hours to 39 hours per week, receive prorated time off accruals for sick and vacation leave, a City matching contribution of 4% of salary to a 457 account, an Eco Pass, free recreation center memberships, and the option to purchase additional supplemental life insurance.

Overview of the Problem and the Organization

History. According to the Annual Budget (2006), the city has a strong historical heritage and is proud of its focus on the community. The city was founded as an agricultural and coal mining center, and was incorporated in 1889. Mining and agriculture supported a slow but steadily growing population from 1910 to 1950. By 1960, the city's population had grown to slightly over 2,600. Boulder County experienced significant growth from 1950 – 1960, and the City of Lafayette recognized that growth was in their future as well.

On April 1, 1958, residents of Lafayette elected to adopt a home rule charter, allowing them to become a home rule city. A home rule system is a common structure that has been adopted by many local governments. This form of government allows cities the right to draft and amend its own charter (a charter is a document that outlines the principles, functions, and organization of a corporate body). Charters allow a municipality to regulate purely local matters without interference from the state legislature. Prior to the 20th century, state legislatures controlled most city governments. However, due to the rapid growth of urban centers in the latter part of the 19th century, the state legislatures found themselves incapable of handling the fast growing cities. The rapid growth brought about new and complex problems that state legislatures could not handle, so a home rule system was developed and adopted by most cities. Rapid growth at the City of Lafayette accelerated after the adoption of a home rule charter. The current estimated population is slightly less than 26,000.

The 2000 U.S Census Bureau reports that within the City of Lafayette, approximately 78% of the population is Caucasian, 16.4% Hispanic, 3.3% Asian, 1%

African American, and 1% American Indian or Alaska Native. The estimated median age of residents living in the city is 35 years, with a median average income of \$64,700.

Local economy. The City of Lafayette's Annual Budget (2006) states that the city is currently experiencing a healthy, favorable economic environment. Quality, controlled development continues to be a top priority at the city. Attracting desirable development is aimed at improving the quality of life for residents. The city also focuses its efforts at small business retention, adding to the small town feel that city leaders desire to keep.

The city continues to attract businesses to their community. The City of Lafayette was able to recently attract several large businesses that have added to the city's employment base. In 2004, Exempla Hospital and Kaiser Permanente opened for business, and greatly enhanced business development in the health services industry. The city also offers a healthy mix of business types such as retail establishments, laser optics, software development, data processing products, specialized wholesale trade, and professional services. In addition to Exempla Hospital and Kaiser Permanente, major employers include Wal-Mart, Boulder Valley School District, Advanced Component Systems, Northrup Grumman, and Rocky Mountain Instruments.

Governing body. The City of Lafayette's Charter provides for a strong council/administrator form of government. A council/administrator form of government gives the City Administrator the authority to direct the day-to-day operations of the City. The City Council is elected by Lafayette residents, and consists of seven members. City Council represents the City's legislative and governing body, and has the power to pass ordinances, determine policy, and appoint certain city officials such as the City Administrator, the City Attorney, and the Municipal Judge. The seven members of City

Council are elected at large, and serve staggered two-year and four-year terms of office. From its membership, the City Council elects the Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem. The mayor serves as the head of government for all ceremonial and legal purposes and the mayor pro tem serves in absence of the mayor. Ultimately, City Council and all city staff members serve the citizens of Lafayette (Annual Budget, 2006).

Management of departments. As shown in Figure 1, the City Administrator serves as the Chief Administrative Officer at the City of Lafayette. The City Administrator is responsible for all department operations within the city government. The City Administrator, City Attorney, and Municipal Judge, along with members from a variety of Boards and Commissions, all report directly to the City Council. The City Administrator oversees ten Directors who are each in charge of their functional area within the organization. Each Director is appointed by the City Administrator, and includes those who manage Community Development, Community Life, Finance, Public Works and Utilities, Fire, Municipal Court, Planning and Building, Police, Parks, Open Space and Golf, and Recreation and Facility Management functional areas.

City employee information. The City of Lafayette currently employs 180 regular full time equivalents (FTE's), and approximately 61 regular, part time positions (for purposes of this research project, part time is defined as those working at least 20 – 39 hours per week on a regular basis). One hundred and eighteen of the full time employees are male, and 62 are female. Of the regular part time employees, 33 are female and 28 are male. Ethnicity reports indicate that 89% of full time employees are Caucasian, 10% are Hispanic, 0% are Asian, <1% are African American, and <1% are American Indian or Alaska Native. Part time employee ethnicity representation is similar, with 86%

Caucasian, 11.5% Hispanic, <1% Asian, 1.5% African American, and <1% American Indian or Alaska Native. The average employee age is 43 years (Ford, 2006).

Only full time employees (those who work 40 hours per week) receive the full benefits package offered by the city. The City of Lafayette utilizes a cafeteria plan that allows employees to select parts of their benefits package. Required benefits include a medical insurance plan, group term life insurance, social security, workers compensation insurance, long-term disability, and a retirement plan. Also included is time off for holidays, vacation, and sick leave, all of which are based on years of employment with the city (Spring, 2006).

Remaining city contributions and/or employees own money may be used to pay for the remaining optional benefits. These benefits include dental insurance, vision insurance, deferred compensation, voluntary term life insurance, and medical and/or child care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA's). Additionally, the city provides a wellness program, automatic deposit, a credit union and group banking, and an ECOPASS at no additional cost to employees. If an employee participates in the wellness program, the city pays an additional \$5.00, \$10.00, or \$15.00 per month towards the employee's health insurance premium. An employee may receive \$5.00 per month for single coverage, \$10.00 per month for couple coverage, and \$15.00 per month for family coverage (Spring, 2006).

Revenue sources. According to the City of Lafayette's Annual Budget (2006), all municipalities use funds to account for the budget of specific city programs or functions. Each fund operates independent of the other funds, and each fund must maintain an independent, balanced budget on an annual basis. Colorado law prohibits municipalities

to overspend their legally adopted budget authorized by City Council. The funds established by City Council for the City of Lafayette include: General Fund, Debt Service Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Capital Project Funds, Enterprise Funds and Internal Service Funds.

Revenue sources from the General Fund include property, sales and use taxes, and services (such as charges for the use of recreation facilities, and building code inspections and review). The Debt Service Funds also receives its revenues from property and sales and use taxes. Special Revenue Funds receive revenue from property, sales and use taxes along with property assessments. Major sources of revenue for the Capital Projects Funds include development fees, park fees, and lottery proceeds. Enterprise Funds obtain their revenue from payments for water and sewer bills, water rights, water tap fees, and green fees from the golf course. Finally, Internal Service Funds receive revenue from the Employee Benefits Plan Fund and the Insurance Fund.

Sources of revenue for the City of Lafayette are consistent and yet fairly limiting. The majority of municipalities rely on sales and use taxes and development as major sources of revenue. Consequently, cities are dependent on a stable economy and a certain amount of growth. Water issues can also place a substantial impact on a city's budget.

Purpose of the Project

Municipalities in the Denver-Metro area have struggled over the past few years. Although the economic outlook for the Denver metro area remains positive, the public sector continues to struggle. Sales tax revenues remain low for most local municipalities. Several factors contribute to this problem. The economic slowdown the entire nation has experienced since 2000 has forced individuals to curb spending habits. Decreased

consumer spending equates to less sales tax for municipalities. Furthermore, Internet sales continue to rise, taking away from the sales tax base municipalities depend on. Water conservation efforts, along with the rising cost of energy and health care add to the financial struggles municipalities are experiencing. Many municipalities in the Denver metro area have been forced to cut budgets, even to the point of laying employees off. The City of Lafayette has not had to lay any employees off, yet they have had to periodically place hiring freezes on vacancies. They plan on giving a 1% across the board to all employees effective January 1, 2007.

The City of Lafayette has been able to maintain a competitive compensation and benefits package, and has kept up with market across the board increases. Although the City of Lafayette is in a better position than most municipalities, they are not immune to problems and are looking at ways to be more efficient. Municipalities operate on a limited financial capacity. Leaders at the City of Lafayette recognize limited resources and the need to properly prepare in an unpredictable market. Furthermore, City officials are compelled to remain fiscally responsible to taxpayer dollars.

The City of Lafayette is evaluating its benefits package for quality and efficiency purposes. Staff would like to consider a work life benefits as part of the entire benefits package in order to remain a competitive and desirable place of employment. The purpose of this research project is to determine whether a work life benefits program would be advantageous to the City of Lafayette, and what specific benefits would be the most beneficial. Potential returns on a work life program include an increase in loyalty, productivity, and job satisfaction, as well as a reduction in absenteeism, turnover, stress,

and medical related health insurance claims. All of these returns can enhance an employee's quality of life, work environment, and ultimately the company's bottom line. Although the City of Lafayette realizes there may be initial start up costs, they believe the longer-term pay off is worth considering.

Chapter Summary

The City of Lafayette is currently a desirable place to live and work. City leaders should be commended for their proactive approach to evaluating the utilization and effectiveness of their benefits program. They have a strong desire to offer a competitive benefits package, and to address the changing needs of the workforce by considering work life benefits for employees.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The concept of work/life balance came about in the late 1970's, spurred by the feminist movement and the entrance of more women in the workplace. The practice of work life balance and work life benefits has since expanded, however it is still in its infancy (Schroede, 1999). Today, women are not the only ones who desire work life benefits. Many organizations are implementing or expanding on work life policies as part of their employee benefits package. It is important to not only consider employee needs, but to also evaluate demographic trends, generational issues, societal issues, and the overall impact that a work life benefit program would have at the City of Lafayette.

Overview of Work Life Benefit Issues

Every year, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), conducts a survey to gather information on the types of benefits employers offered to their employees. Burke (2005) compiled data from this survey, and revealed that benefits that help employees to balance their work and personal lives remain popular, and that larger organizations tend to offer more benefits than smaller organizations. Table 1 summarizes one part of the SHRM Benefits Report by illustrating the percentages of human resource professionals in the government sector versus an overall industry average (includes finance, health, manufacturing services, and wholesale/retail trades) who indicated their organizations offered certain family friendly benefits.

Additional studies support the need for work life benefits. According to *Work-Life Benefits* (2004), HR professionals are recognizing the need to address work life benefit programs. Seventy three percent of survey respondents claimed that the number one reason for offering work-life benefits was to enhance recruitment efforts.

Many studies suggest the need for change in how Americans work and live. Our fast paced, competitive, technologically advanced, global 24/7 nation has distorted the traditional boundaries between work and home life. According to Galinsky et al. (2001), one in three American employees are chronically overworked, while 54 percent have felt overwhelmed at some time in the past month by how much work they had to complete. The study of more than 1,000 wage and salaried employees identified for the first time why being overworked and feeling overwhelmed have become so pervasive in the American workplace. Overworked employees are more likely to make mistakes at work, more likely to feel angry at their employers, and are more likely to resent coworkers. Personal outcomes include higher levels of stress, more symptoms of clinical depression, and more personal neglect, all of which are linked to more physical and mental health problems.

Galinsky et al. (2001) also discussed other issues related to overwork. This report suggested that gender and generational differences, the level and type of work, and personal responsibilities help to define how overworked individuals may be. For example, this study concluded that due to the larger variety of tasks women generally have to perform, women usually felt more overworked than men. Furthermore, members of the Baby Boomer generation felt more overworked than employees in other generations, and parents of teenagers and those with eldercare responsibilities are more

overworked than parents with younger children. Last, managers and professionals who typically have jobs with greater responsibilities are more overworked than others. This demographic data supports the need to create more effective workplaces.

In addition to these studies on overwork, Kirchoff (2006) summarized data collected from the Families and Work Institute National Study of the Changing Workforce on work life balance and organizational productivity. Low job satisfaction ratings were correlated to multiple organizational problems such as increased levels of turnover and absences, ultimately costing companies in terms of low performance and decreased productivity. In an effort to increase employee productivity, organizations are paying more attention to work life balance and practices in hopes of creating higher job satisfaction, consequently resulting in the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

Additional research by Hewitt Associates, a global management-consulting firm, also supports the need for work life benefits. Their research indicated that work life benefits were on the rise, with significant increases in the areas of child care and elder care benefits. According to Carol Sladek, a consultant at Hewitt, “Employers know that in order to remain competitive, they need to offer benefits that help employees balance their work and personal lives” (Salopek, 1999).

A report produced by the *Corporate Voices for Working Families* (2005), provided evidence that employers who provided flexibility with when and how work gets done is a key component to successful management practices. This report suggested compelling evidence that flexibility has a positive impact on employee retention, job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and lower levels of stress. Ultimately,

flexibility has a positive impact on human capital outcomes, thus creating a positive impact on financial performance.

The same report indicated that recruiting and retaining qualified employees are essential in order to remain competitive. Turnover is expensive, and the cost of turnover is too great to ignore. The report concluded that flexibility and work life benefits are a positive way to impact recruitment, retention, job satisfaction, job commitment, and physical and mental health.

Schroede (1999) also supports this belief. Companies that offer work life benefits help employees to succeed, both on and off the job. Wellness programs and employee assistance programs further provide employees with the support and assistance they need to foster a healthy life balance.

Benefits for part time employees are a less common practice for organizations. Part time employment is often criticized for providing a way to misuse employees; part time employees frequently experience unequal pay and benefits for the same work of full time employees. Since women are more likely to accept a part time job, part time positions are often viewed as being less committed, or on the “mommy track”. Furthermore, part time employees are often viewed as being more expensive to supervise, manifesting higher turnover rates, and taking longer to train and reach full levels of competency. Unfortunately, these employees are often given the lower value work – leading to the perception of dead end jobs (Roberts, 2003).

Even though work life benefits are on the rise, employers and employees view the benefits differently. Bond, Galinsky, Kim, and Brownfield (2005) suggested that there is strong disagreement between employers and employees to the extent in which the use of

flexible policies may jeopardize career advancement. This difference may contribute to less use of flexible work options, or not taking time off for children or other family issues. Furthermore, there are several perceived impracticalities related to work life benefits. Management and/or supervisors may not allow job flexibility if they perceive the job to not allow it, or if they believe it will be too difficult to supervise. A lack of staff, administrative hassles, coworker resentment, union considerations, and size of the organization are all factors that may not allow employees the option of job flexibility and work life options.

Roberts et al. (2004) cited similar concerns. A national survey on traditional and family friendly benefits practices in local governments concluded that availability does not guarantee utilization. The lack of utilization of flex time, job sharing, part time-work, or child and/or eldercare may be related to the absence of need, or may indicate barriers in the workplace. Supervisors may not fully support work flexibility due to fears of work productivity and quality, communication, loss of control, and increased burdens. Usually, this lack of support is due to an absence of knowledge on the possible benefits of work life programs, or an overall lack of support from top management. Furthermore, employees may choose not to participate in work life benefits for fear of being labeled as less committed. There is also a fear that reduced face time may decrease an employee's chance of promotion and career advancement opportunities.

Gender biases also contribute to a lack of participation in work life programs. Many view these programs as benefits only for women. Men in particular may be viewed as less desirable candidates for advancement if they utilize these benefits.

Rosen (2004) also discussed issues that are unique to work life initiatives. Some employees simply do not or cannot benefit from a particular work life program. These employees are often those who are single, child less, lower paid or part time employees, or non-benefited employees. Often these non-traditional employees resent the organization for spending money on benefits they will not use. Spending money on these benefits denies them of the potential funding of other useful benefits. They often feel that others receive preferential treatment, and that they have to pick up the slack from employees who are job flexing, telecommuting, or taking time off to care for a child or aging parent, without any thought or appreciation for their own personal lives.

Workforce Trends

The U.S. labor force has experienced significant changes over the past few decades. According to Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, and Prttas (2003), the proportion of men and women who work is about equal. Their report indicated that 51% of the workforce is male, and 49% is female. Furthermore, over the past 25 years, women's roles have significantly changed. They are now more accepted in the workforce, they have obtained higher educational levels, and they have steadily moved into higher-level positions in organizations. Yet women are still more likely to assume the primary responsibility for family obligations than are men. This places a significant burden on women in the workforce.

Bond, Thompson, et al. (2003) also reported that dual income families, the changing role of fathers in the home, and technological advancements have all placed significant stress on men, women, and families. Today's working couple's have less time to spend with their families, and fathers are expected to fulfill more responsibilities at

home. Personal computers, cell phones, beepers, and pagers further add to the spillover of work into personal time. Employees with families report significantly higher levels of interference between their jobs and their families' lives than employees 25 years ago. This study further supported the importance of work life policies and practices.

Gault and Lovell (2006), demonstrated the need for expanded support of work life benefits and policies from a demographic perspective. Changes in the work force, such as the influx of women in the workforce, a decline in employer-provided benefits that support family care, an inadequate supply of quality child care, and the inequity of work/life benefits across income levels, represent the need for improved work life policies.

Generational Issues

Not only are workforce trends a necessary consideration, but generational issues also come into play. Individuals from Generations X and Y are very different from the generations that preceded them. For example, according *Generation & Gender in the Workplace* (2004), a Families and Work Institute report conducted for the American Business Collaboration, Baby Boomers are more likely to be work-centric, while Gen-X and Gen-Y tend to be more family-centric or dual-centric. Furthermore, Gen-X and Gen-Y employees are more likely to either put family first or rate them about equally. According to this study that analyzed data from 25 years of research, these family or dual centric employees will more likely exhibit better health, and greater satisfaction with their lives and jobs.

Additionally, this report concluded that the number of male employees in all generations who wanted career advancement had gone down from 68% in 1992, to 52%

in 2002, and the number of women who desired career advancement declined from 57% to 36%. Furthermore, 80% of college-educated employees were dissatisfied with the number of work hours they actually worked.

Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (2000) have also studied generational issues, with similar results. Flexibility and convenience benefits are important to Generation Xers. Furthermore, this generation believes it is unfair to expect a seventy-hour week for forty hours of pay, and they are committed to having a life beyond work. A fun, relaxed place to work is important to Gen-Xers.

Zemke et al. (2000) further believes that the following generation, Generation Y, might very well be the ideal workforce. Although there is still much to be learned about this generation, it is anticipated that they will combine the teamwork ethic of the Boomers with the can-do attitude of the Veterans and the technological savvy of the Xers. This generation is willing to work hard, yet they are also a demanding generation. Pre-conceived notions about gender roles do not exist; Nexters are known for gender bending. Men will take on more household tasks and women will take on more traditional male tasks. Although this generation is relatively young and much remains to be seen, flexibility and work environment appears to be a key factor with this group of individuals as well.

Evaluating Work Life Benefits

Return On Investment (ROI) is critical if organizations want to survive. In order for Human Resource programs to be taken seriously and to be included in an organizational strategic plan, any work life program should list productivity gains, time

and money saved, and reductions in absenteeism, turnover, training, and recruitment expenses.

Roberts et al. (2004) suggested concern over the lack of research specific to the effectiveness of work life benefits in local government. Most of the studies have been conducted on the private sector. Furthermore, results from surveys on traditional and family friendly benefits practices in local governments may not support work life policies. One local government study on work life benefits concluded that few local governments provided work life benefits such as childcare, eldercare and telecommuting. This study concluded that traditional benefits were most critical in attracting and retaining employees, and that work life benefits were not correlated with higher benefits effectiveness.

Roberts et al. (2004), further suggested that although work life benefits programs need to evaluate specific outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover, retention, and productivity, the more altruistic values of quality of work life, child and elder welfare, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee well being should not be ignored. Research from private sector organizations indicated a favorable association of work life benefits and increased job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, low turnover, and low job stress. Although this research demonstrated significant support for the efficacy of work life benefits, a major methodological weakness still existed. This study did not accurately address the variance in relation to specific individuals benefits as well as group differences based on age, marital status, and education.

Others argue that the intangible nature of benefits make work life benefits difficult to measure. Since benefits are offered as part of an entire package, it is often difficult to measure the effectiveness that each work life benefit adds to an employee's loyalty, productivity, and job satisfaction. In order to justify and maintain programs, it is important to calculate returns with hard numbers. Returns need to show productivity gains, time saved, reductions in absenteeism and turnover, reductions in recruitment costs, and reductions in health care costs. Measuring health gains, recruitment savings, productivity, employee morale, and job satisfaction are often easier said than done (Carlson, 2004).

Gault and Lovell (2006) concluded that cost/benefit analyses are critical in order to support work life policies. The ability to estimate costs and benefits accurately are imperative yet can be difficult to obtain. Estimates and data collection measures often overlook and elucidate both economic and social benefits. The intangible and altruistic nature of work life benefits cannot always be represented from a purely statistical basis, and yet these factors are critical to take into consideration.

Job Satisfaction/Job Productivity Studies

A recent study cited in *Work-Life Benefits (2004)*, concluded that an employee's moral level affected the number of unscheduled absences. Less unscheduled absences were seen with higher employee moral. The relationship between job satisfaction and job performance is one of the most respected developments in organizational/industrial psychology. Yet research conducted by Organizational and Industrial Psychologists over the course of many years suggest conflicting results between the two. Frederick Herzberg was known for his research and resulting two-factor theory in this area of study.

Maidani (1991) tested how Herzberg's theory of job satisfaction applied to accountants and engineers in the public and private sector. Although the study is dated, the results are interesting, as the purpose of the study was to test the applicability of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Job Satisfaction amongst public and private sector employees. In this study, accountants and engineers in both the public and private sector were tested for comparison analysis on four different hypotheses. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, or Motivation and Hygiene Theory, differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the job. Herzberg referred to intrinsic factors as motivators, and extrinsic factors as hygiene. Examples of intrinsic factors include achievement, advancement, the work itself, responsibility, and recognition. Extrinsic factors include company policy and administration, technical supervision, working conditions, salary, and interpersonal supervision.

The results showed that with employees in both the public and private sector, motivator factors were sources of satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction, supporting Herzberg's theory. However, hygiene factors were sources of satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction. This is in contrast to Herzberg's theory, which concluded that hygiene factors were sources of dissatisfaction rather than satisfaction. Of particular interest with this study is that public sector employees valued hygiene factors significantly more than private sector employees. This means that public sector employees value extrinsic factors such as company policy and administration, working conditions, and salary (which benefits can be considered a part of). Current studies and information are focused on the effectiveness of work life policies in the private sector, and work life policies are typically more common in the private sector than the public sector. Yet this study,

conducted in 1991, indicated that public sector employees value company policy and administration, working conditions, and salary (which could include benefits), more than the private sector. One might conclude that work life policies and benefits would be more valued in the public sector than the private sector, and yet the reverse is practiced.

A more recent study conducted by Lambert (2000), tested the relationship between work-life benefits and organizational citizenship behavior. According to the traditional theories of organizational behavior, benefits should not affect an employee's performance; i.e. benefits are considered extrinsic job factors that may promote job satisfaction but not job performance. In her study, Lambert linked work life benefits to organizational citizenship behavior through obligations incurred as a result of social exchange. Her findings suggested evidence that work life benefits can have beneficial effects. She concluded that the more valuable work life benefits are to employees, the more supportive they viewed their organization. Consequently, a benefit package that workers find useful can enhance their perception that the organization cares about them. Work life benefits packages are important today as employers struggle to balance the overwhelming demands of work and personal life.

Summary

Laudable employers create great "people places". They typically have low turnover rates, offer a competitive compensation and benefits package, present programs that support the environment and the community, support flexibility, and offer work life balance benefits and programs. These organizations are proactive in nature, and strategically align initiatives, policies, and programs to their organizational goals and objectives. There is much research that supports the need for and the effectiveness of

work life benefits. Furthermore, work life benefits and policies are a significant part of successful organizations.

Although there is much support as to the effectiveness of work life policies and benefits, the lack of evidence and data to support such programs is concerning. Most of the research is targeted at the private sector, which makes the justification and support for change initiatives more difficult in the public sector. More studies on the effectiveness of work life benefits need to be conducted on local government.

While much of the research supports the effectiveness of work life benefits, there are still many concerns. The long-term consequences of a lack of work life benefits are uncertain. Certainly, the ever changing political, social, economic, demographic, and cultural changes should continue to support the importance of work life policies and benefits. Creative policy solutions are needed to address the changing work force.

Funding may be a concern for municipalities as well. Local governments may be reluctant to raise taxes to pay for an increased benefits package that includes work life benefits. It is doubtful that such a tax increase would even pass. It is more likely that municipalities would need to find a way to absorb the increased cost of work life benefits programs, start out with programs that are low or no cost, or agree to initial start up costs with the intent of a longer term cost containment strategy.

Chapter 3

METHOD

Participants

The focus for this study was full time employees at the City of Lafayette, Colorado. The researcher first met with human resource staff to discuss the project and concerns regarding benefits and work life programs for the city. Several initial meetings were conducted in order to obtain an overview of the organization and background issues, as well as to garner an idea of the nature and scope of the project. Over the course of the study, meetings were held with human resource staff professionals in order to collaborate, narrow the focus of the project, determine an appropriate survey, discuss findings and results of the survey, and finally to recommend an action. This collection of individuals will be referred to as the collaborative work group for purposes of the research project. Additional discussions and information was obtained from various employees in the organization.

The collaborative group decided to utilize a Human Capital/Work Life Survey developed by the Work and Family Connection. The group felt that a needs assessment would enhance the likelihood of accurately assessing employees' needs and demands. The survey was offered to all full time City of Lafayette employees. It was not mandatory, however Human Resource Staff highly encouraged employee participation. An email was sent out to all city employees, which explained the purpose of the study

and expressed support for the project (Appendix 1). Participant confidentiality was stressed throughout the survey process.

Studies by Roberts et al. (2004) suggest the importance of a needs assessment prior to implementing a work life benefit. Any benefits package needs to address the characteristics and needs of present and future employees. Diagnosis of the problem is an important step in understanding how the city is currently functioning, as well as providing information that will help in designing change interventions. Utilizing an action research model, diagnosis is a collaborative approach that seeks out reasons for problems, and/or looks for ways to enhance existing functions. The goal is to assess the current functioning of an organization in order to discover areas for future development. The survey attempted to assess the current functioning of the city in order to make quality recommendations for change.

Materials

The instrument used to survey employees was obtained from the Work and Family Connection (Seitel, 2005). A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 1. This survey instrument was first developed in 1986 by a statistics professor at Saint Thomas University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Since 1986, the survey has been updated. Over the past 20 years, employers such as Arizona Public Service, Bayer Corporation, Ceridian Corporation, General Mills, Pillsbury/GrandMet, the State of Minnesota, Wisconsin Public Service, and Xcel Energy have used the survey. As a result of this instrument, many employers created childcare centers, and Wells Fargo, General Mills, XCEL Energy and others implemented a host of initiatives designed to make their

workplace more supportive, flexible, and effective (Seitel, S., personal communication, May 31, 2006). Although information about test validity and reliability could not be obtained, the survey is believed to be a statistically valid and reliable instrument.

The work life survey is an instrument that focuses on the reciprocal effects of work and non-work issues – especially family life – for employees. The survey is completely anonymous and employee's identity cannot be connected to their survey responses. The survey consisted of four sections. The first section of the survey focused on Work-Life Impact. These questions concentrated on how employees balance work and home life. The second section addressed the company culture, management and supervising practices. This section asked questions relating to how managers or supervisors help or hinder employees who have outside stresses. The third section addressed programs and practices. These questions asked about the employee's awareness of and satisfaction with company programs, policies and benefits. Finally, the fourth section asked about basic demographics. Also included were questions about current and anticipated care-giving obligations related to dependent children or adult. This section was voluntary, yet highly encouraged, as it helped to categorize and analyze the responses.

Design and Procedure

Testing occurred in August of 2006. The email explaining the survey was sent out to all city employees in late July/early August. Employees were given two options to complete the survey. They could obtain a copy of the survey from Human Resource staff, complete the survey on their own time and then send it back to Human Resources in

a sealed envelope. Or, employees could complete the survey during a session in which the researcher was present and available to address questions or concerns. About one third of the respondents completed the survey on their own, and the other two thirds completed the survey during a session. The survey time period was two weeks. In order to encourage participation, gift certificates were given away. The names of those who completed the survey were placed in a drawing and individuals were randomly selected to receive \$10.00 “Chamber Bucks” gift certificates.

Responses

Thirty-seven survey employees completed the work life survey. The total number of full time benefited employees is 180, which yielded an overall response rate of 21 percent. All of the employees who participated in the survey were full time, benefited employees. At the beginning of the survey process, many employees expressed interest and said they would participate in the survey, however the actual response rate was lower than expected.

The data that was collected came from a variety of sources, not just from the Human Capital/Work Life Survey. The majority of the data came from the survey itself, however it is important to note that data was also collected from and compared with other sources of information. Additional sources of data included responses and comments by employees, discussions with employees and with the collaborative work group, and overall organizational trends and information.

Unobtrusive measures were used to gather the statistical data about turnover, gender, age, and diversity at the city. This information has high face validity and is

easily quantified. Unobtrusive measures were a great way to obtain statistical information about the organization, yet it did not have the capabilities of getting information about the thoughts, opinions, and attitudes of employees. The Work Life Survey was utilized to obtain this very important piece of information.

The data was sorted, analyzed and compared in a variety of ways to ensure consistency and accuracy. For example, data from the survey was generated from an overall perspective, as well as broken down by male, female and age responses. Generational information from the survey was also compared to generational trends and information from the organization. Obtaining data from several sources was key. This method allowed for comparison of results, with the goal of data correlation and cross-reference of data. If the data did not correlate, it was questioned or thrown out. As Cummings and Worley (2005) concluded, the objective of an action research project is to gather information that is valid, consistent, and helps to determine the underlying cause of the problems. This will allow the researcher to obtain a thorough and complete analysis of the organization, and consequently formalize final recommendations based off of solid and complete data.

Diagnosis of the problem was an important step in understanding how the city is currently functioning, as well as providing information that will help in designing change interventions. Utilizing an action research model, diagnosis is a collaborative approach that seeks out reasons for problems, and/or looks for ways to enhance existing functions. The goal is to assess the current functioning of an organization in order to discover areas for future development.

Organizational Concerns

Human resource staff was a little bit concerned about the survey process, and exposing themselves to a potential weakness in their benefits package. There is always a certain amount of risk any time that issues are brought to the attention of employees.

When employees are asked for their input, they may perceive more of a problem than there really is. Or, they may perceive the city to “owe” them more work life benefit programs. This entitlement mentality is common in the public sector, and is a concern for human resource staff. The survey and letter that accompanied the survey made it clear that the instrument is being used to gather thoughts, opinions and needs, and is part of an overall research project.

With any change initiative, there is usually some discomfort and fear of the unknown. The researcher addressed the concerns with human resource staff, and they seemed to be comfortable with the direction. The potential for positive change appeared to outweigh the potential negative impact.

Chapter 4

Results

Data collected from the Human Capital Work Life Survey at the City of Lafayette provided insightful information in a variety of work life areas. For purposes of this section, the data has been organized into overall demographics, organizational climate, top issues for respondents, and benchmark information.

Overall Demographics

Organizational characteristics will determine the demand for certain work life benefit programs. Key employee characteristics such as age, gender, and the percentage of those who are caregivers are important considerations for a comprehensive analysis of work life issues at the City of Lafayette. Respondent characteristics are demonstrated in Figures 4-8. There was a fairly even distribution of males and females, and most of the respondents were married. The majority of respondents reported dual incomes and could be classified as middle aged. Additionally, there was a fairly even distribution of job classification status between Exempt Supervisors, Exempt Non Supervisors, and Non Exempts.

Since generational issues are an important consideration in any organization, Tables 2 and 3 demonstrates age and gender related information. The majority of female respondents were in the 40-54 years of age category, while males represented most respondents in the 55 and older category. There were more males in the Exempt

Supervisor/Manager classification, and more females were represented in the Exempt Non Supervisor and Non Exempt classifications. Gender information proved to be particularly useful in evaluating the survey responses at the City of Lafayette. Demographic information should be considered when evaluating the key areas of concern.

Organizational Climate

Overall, the organizational culture appears to be very supportive of work life issues. Eighty six percent of all respondents were generally satisfied with how they are treated at the City of Lafayette, and 78% trusted the organization's leadership. Additionally, 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was usually easy for them to manage the demands of both work and home life, and an overwhelming 84% felt that the organization had fair, appropriate, and supportive work life policies. Seventy eight percent also agreed or strongly agreed that the organization gave them all the support they needed to deal with home life related issues, and 76% of the group disagreed or strongly disagreed that the stress of dealing with home life issues had a negative effect on their work. While the stress of dealing with home life issues did not seem to negatively impact work, the impact at home seemed more significant. Forty three percent of respondents felt that the stress from work issues had a negative effect on their family.

Respondents also felt positively about the support they received from both co-workers and supervisors. Eighty six percent felt that their co-workers were supportive of work life related issues, and 92% felt that supervisors understood when personal issues interfered with work. Additionally, 84% agreed that they were treated with respect by

their supervisor. As far as praise and recognition, 73% of respondents felt that their supervisor gave them the praise or recognition for the work they do.

Respondents' answers dropped slightly when asked whether or not their supervisor would support a flexible work request. Only 65% indicated that their supervisor would support the request for a flexible work option. Responses also dropped when asked whether or not leaders at the organization welcomed and listened to suggestions about work. Only 68% of respondents felt that leaders at the organization welcomed and listened to their suggestions about the work they do.

Males and females disagreed slightly in regard to the overall work life climate. A larger percentage of females felt that the stress of dealing with work issues negatively affected their family than did males. Additionally, even though the respondents felt that the city gave them all the help they needed to deal with home life related issues, a higher percentage of females disagreed with this question than males, and slightly more females disagreed that it was easy for them to manage the demands of both work and home life. Of the 86% who were satisfied with how they were treated at the City of Lafayette, the 14% who were not satisfied were all females. Conversely, a slightly smaller percentage of females than males indicated that their career path was limited because of the pressure of home life demands and because they were currently using or had used a flexible work arrangement. For the most part, both males and females felt equally about the support they received from their supervisors and about the overall leadership in the organization.

Additionally, those respondents in the 40-54 year old age group and 55 and older age group expressed more concern about the stress and impact of dealing with home life

issues than those in the younger age group. Exempt Non Supervisors and Exempt Supervisors/Managers respondents expressed more concern as well.

A couple of employees made comments about the city's responsibility in regards to work life issues. They felt strongly that the city was not responsible for addressing all the needs of employees. One employee stated that it was the employee's responsibility to balance home time and work time within the city's established policies and guidelines. This individual went on to say that it was not the responsibility of the employer to accommodate employees. Others employees expressed gratitude towards the city, and stated that managers have been very supportive of employees in regards to work life balance.

Respondents also felt a high level of commitment and loyalty to the organization. Seventy three percent felt totally committed to the city and the work they do, although males felt more of a commitment than females (93% versus 62%). Eighty four percent agreed that they owe the organization their best effort, with 81% of females agreeing or strongly agreeing and 100% of males agreeing or strongly agreeing to this question. A very small 14% percent of respondents felt that the work they did was not important to the organization, and a very large percent (92%) would describe themselves as engaged at work. Eighty six percent of total respondents would recommend the organization to a friend, with 100% of males agreeing or strongly agreeing to this question, and 76% of females agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Overall, respondents felt valued by the organization. Seventy three percent responded that they would "walk an extra mile for the company" because of the way they were treated. Only 16% said they were working at the city only because they had no

other choice. Slightly more females than males agreed that they were working at the city because they had no other choice, however overall the negative response was low. Most felt that the organization gave them the technology they needed to do their jobs. Again, males and females were relatively equal in their responses to these questions. Nineteen percent of total respondents agreed that minorities and females were at a disadvantage at the company; all who agreed with this statement were female. Moreover, 30% of respondents agreed that they would be more productive if the organization were more supportive. More females than males agreed with this statement. It appeared that all age levels responded similarly to these questions, and the Exempt Non Supervisor group tended to express slightly more concern with these areas than the Exempt Supervisor/Manager and Non Exempt groups.

While at work, respondents reported other areas of concern. Twenty seven percent have left work undone, 30% have been too tired to concentrate at work, and 11% have missed work due to stress or a stress related illness at least three times during the past year. Additionally, 49% arrived to work late or left early at least three times in the past year, 22% missed an important family event due to work, 27% were distracted by negative feelings about their supervisor, and 27% reported that they did not do their best at work.

Twenty four percent of females and 33% of males have left work undone, while equal amounts (approximately 28%) reported being too tired to concentrate at work. Only 11% reported missing work due to stress or a stress related illness of which more reports were from females. There was equal distribution of males and females who arrived to work late or left early. Moreover, equal amounts of males and females

reported missing an important family event, using paid sick leave to care for a sick child or dependent adult, and being distracted by negative feelings about their supervisor. More females than males used vacation days to care for a sick child or dependent adult, although both reported using vacation days for family related issues. Conversely, more males than females reported being too tired to participate in family gatherings, and both males and females were distracted by negative feelings about their supervisor. Last, equal amounts of males and females reported that they did not do their best work. There did not appear to be any age related or job classification related correlations.

One employee summed the organizational culture up nicely by stating that the city values employees, is not overly bureaucratic, and that it is fairly easy to get to the major decision makers, which makes employee input valuable. Additionally, this employee believed that work policies help employees to balance work and home demands.

Wellness program. Since the City of Lafayette has a well-established wellness program, results to questions related to the wellness program are worth mentioning. The wellness program at the city is well established, and has gained top-level support over the years. This has helped to create a fairly health conscious culture within the organization. Wellness programs are designed to educate employees on healthy lifestyle choices, with the business goal of improving productivity while reducing absenteeism and health care costs. Healthier employees, both physically and mentally, help to create a healthy organization. Overall, 78% of employees are satisfied with the city's wellness program.

Employee assistance programs are often an additional feature of a comprehensive wellness program. These programs are designed to assist employees affected by personal problems, and are tailored to the needs of the individual to include individual and group

counseling, medical and psychological counseling, and outside referrals if warranted. Forty three percent of respondents had used or were interested in the employee assistance program. Chemical dependency, separation and divorce, and family violence were not areas of concern, yet 49% of respondents expressed concern with handling conflicts with their spouse or partner. Handling mental health and stability was a minor problem, with 30% of employees expressing minor concern, and 35% of respondents expressed minor to moderate concerns with parenting. Relationships with co-workers and immediate supervisors showed a slight level of concern as well.

Relatively equal amounts of males and females, Exempt Supervisor/Managers, Exempt Non Supervisors, Non Exempts, and age groups felt the same about the wellness program and the employee assistance program. However, 60% of males expressed some level of problem regarding conflicts with a spouse or partner, while only 29% of females reported concern. Likewise, the 24-39 years of age group reported more concern with conflict with a spouse or partner, and Exempt Supervisor/Managers expressed the most concern as well. The other groups reported relatively equal and less concern.

Last, there were no significant trends with age, gender or position classification regarding parenting concerns, except that the 55 and older age group expressed no concern at all with parenting (probably because they were no longer parenting children). The only other significant result worth mentioning was that the Non Exempt respondents expressed slightly more concern with their mental health and stability than others groups.

Recruitment and retention. The cost of recruiting and training new employees is substantial, and successful organizations place a high value on retention efforts. Overall, 41% of respondents have thought seriously about quitting their job at the City of

Lafayette. Fifty seven percent of females have thought seriously about quitting their job, while only 20% of males have given serious thought to quitting. Fifty one percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would leave the organization if they could find another job with better pay, and 65% of respondents expressed some level of concern regarding their future career. Additionally, only females reported being in a position where they had to accept a job with less responsibility.

Three very specific questions addressed at what point an employee would leave the city for another job depending on the variables of more pay, more respect, and/or more flexibility. Forty nine percent of respondents would leave the city for more pay, 30% would leave the city if they found a job that treated them with more respect, and 49% would leave for more flexibility. A higher percentage of females than males would leave the city for more pay, relatively equal amounts of males and females would leave for more respect, and the majority of females would leave for more flexibility as compared to males.

Additionally, slightly more females than males agreed that their family would prefer them to work for a different company, yet the total response for this question was small; only 19% of total respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this question. Only 16% of respondents reported *actively looking* for another job, and yet 57% of total respondents were *considering looking* for another job. Both males and females were relatively equal in response to the job search questions. Just fewer than 40% of both males and females were concerned with job security, and a little over 60% of both males and females were concerned with their future career. Females were much more concerned about the need to find another job (43%), versus males (27%). Moreover,

67% of females would leave the organization if they found a job with better pay, while only 33% of males would leave for the same reason.

Most of the respondents who were seriously thinking about quitting their job were in the 40-54 year age category. The 40-54 year old age group and 24-39 year old age group were *actively looking* and *considering looking* for another job, while the 55 years and older age group was only *considering looking* for another job; they were not actively looking for another job. Exempt Supervisors/Managers and Non Exempt Employees were more actively looking than Exempt Non Supervisor employees.

Top Issues For Respondents

In order to get a general idea of the most common issues at the City of Lafayette, Table 4 provides means for the top 20 items. The higher the mean, the more of a problem the item is for respondents. This data provides important information in all areas of concern, as the top concerns are integrally linked throughout the key issues. The researcher felt that the top 20 items were the most significant issues, and the top 10-15 items continually surfaced during data analysis.

Flexible work arrangements. Results on flexible work options were inconsistent. There appeared to be a lot interested in some flexible work arrangements, however, respondents were not as interested in part time employment and/or job sharing. Only 7% of respondents indicated an interest in part time employment, and only 34% indicated an interest in job sharing. One employee commented that she would be interested in part time employment if full benefits were offered. Another employee commented that they were currently looking for another job with an organization that provided full benefits to part time employees.

Even though employees did not express much interest in job sharing or part time employment, they were interested in other flexible work arrangements. Over 50% of all respondents indicated an interest in telecommuting options, compressed work weeks, and flex time. Both males and females expressed about equal interest in these flexible work arrangements, and all positions classifications (Exempt Supervisor/Manager, Exempt Non Supervisor, and Non Exempt), were interested in these options.

Comments from employees supported the data from the survey. Numerous employees commented on interest in flexible work options. Employees also expressed concern that although the city tries to be supportive in regards to flexible work options, policies and procedures vary too much from supervisor to supervisor, department to department. One manager might be okay with job flexibility, while another is not.

Childcare related issues. It was interesting to note that traditional work life issues that are focused on the needs of parents with younger children did not appear to be much of a problem with this group of respondents. In this particular sample group, the total number of reported dependents (newborn to young adult) was 50. The total number of dependent children of high school age and younger was 32, and the total number of dependent young adults was 18. More males reported being responsible for dependents (n=7) as opposed to females (n=5).

Respondents also reported the number of estimated hours spent arranging for childcare and for eldercare in the 12 months prior to the survey. The average number of dependents for both males and females was two. Total hours spent arranging childcare per year was also identical for both males and females. However, since more males than females reported being responsible for children, the average hours per year arranging for

childcare was slightly less for males than for females. Males spent an average of 32 hours per year arranging childcare, while females spent an average of 45 hours per year. Although over all childcare related issues did not appear to be a significant concern at the City of Lafayette, those who do care for children spend considerable time making arrangements for childcare related issues.

Furthermore, only 8% of the respondents reported that they either plan to have another child or plan to adopt a child within the next 1-4 years. This low response rate correlates with other survey results. The bulk of the survey respondents were in the 40-54 years age group, which puts them at the tail end or completely out of childbearing years. Of the total number of dependents (birth to young adult), 36% were in the age category of young adult. Results for questions that addressed child care related issues, i.e. finding quality day care, affording quality day care, arranging or paying for care for sick children, taking time off to care for sick children, were insignificant. Most of these questions had response ratings that indicated this was a very minor or even nonexistent problem in the organization. The only question that generated a slight concern was a question that addressed the employee's ability to take care of the family's health, nutrition and fitness. This included all family members regardless of age. Forty-one percent of respondents indicated that taking care of their family's health, nutrition, and fitness was a minor concern, however no respondents indicated that it was a major or even a moderate concern.

Eldercare issues. While childcare issues did not appear to be a major concern for employees at the City of Lafayette, eldercare issues suggested otherwise. Fifty nine percent of all respondents reported either currently being responsible for the care of an

adult, or anticipated responsibility within the next five years. Estimated time spent arranging care for older or disabled adults showed less total amount of time spent overall as compared to time spent arranging care for younger dependents, yet the average number of hours spent on eldercare related issues was very comparable to the average number of hours spent on childcare related issues. Eldercare issues included time spent arranging for or providing for care of an older adult, time spent arranging for or providing emergency care for an older adult, and/or time spent arranging for or taking care of errands for an older adult. More women than men reported spending time arranging for eldercare issues, and females appeared to spend more time dealing with eldercare issues than males. The following chart demonstrates gender break down for the responsibility of older adults and for hours spent dealing with eldercare issues each year.

Table 5

Responsibility for Older Adults

	Men (n=15)	Women (n=21)
Now Responsible for Care of Adult	27%	33%
Anticipate Responsibility within 5 years	20%	33%

Table 6

Hours Spent Dealing With Eldercare Issues Per Year

	Men (n=2)	Women (n=8)
Total Hours Spent With Eldercare Issues/Year	40 hours	317 hours
Average Hours/Year Dealing with Eldercare Issues	20 hours	40 hours

Taking care of any dependent places significant stress on any individual. Both males and females who reported taking care of older adults had other areas of concern.

Fifty seven percent reported minor to major conflicts with a spouse and minor to moderate problems with co-worker relationships. They also reported elevated concerns about their future career, missing work due to eldercare issues, and taking care of their own family's health, nutrition, and fitness.

Of the 33% of females who are currently responsible for the care of an adult, 86% reported some level of problem (minor, moderate, or major) with having enough time for themselves, taking care of their own health and fitness, taking care of home or car repairs, and handling school, medical and dental appointments. These individuals also reported significant financial concerns. One hundred percent of the female respondents who are currently taking care of an aging adult reported concerns about retirement and with paying for their children's college expenses. Additionally eighty six percent reported personal financial concerns.

All of these females who reported taking care of an aging adults were married. Fifty seven percent relied on dual incomes and 43% relied on a single income. Thus, there were quite a large number of females who were taking care of an aging adult on a single income. Additionally, all females who had the responsibility of caring for an aging adult, also had the responsibility of caring for children, and most of the children were middle school aged and older. Eighty six percent of these females were in the 40-54 years of age bracket. This places a significant financial burden on females in this category.

Males who reported being currently responsible for the care of an adult reported slightly different problems. All of these males reported being married with dual incomes. Males did not perceive that having enough time for themselves was a significant concern,

and 50% felt retirement concerns were only minor in nature. The impact of caring for elder adults had more of an effect on a male's ability to take care of home and car repairs. Additionally, 50% of males had minor concerns about paying for their children's education, and 50% had problems with handling school, medical and dental appointments. Half of the males were also responsible for children, with all of the children being within the range of infant to middle school.

Caring for an aging adult affects various aspects of work. Approximately half of both females and males who are caring for an older adult have thought seriously about quitting their job. This group of respondents also reported leaving work undone, being too tired to concentrate on work, and arriving to work late or leaving early on a regular basis. Almost half also felt they did not do their best work over the past year.

Since 57% of total employee respondents were in the 40-54 year age group, it may explain why most employees have older children, and why there are considerably eldercare issues at the City of Lafayette. This places most of the survey respondents in the "sandwich generation" – caring for children in addition to their eldercare responsibilities. One employee in particular expressed concern over the number of employees at the city who were in the sandwich generation.

Moreover, respondents expressed a strong interest in long-term care insurance. Thirty six percent of the entire group was interested in insurance to help provide long term care. Of the 36%, 69% were female and 31% were male. Furthermore, 57% of all respondents were in the 40-54 year age group. Most of the interest came from employees who were currently responsible for an older adult, or anticipated responsibility within the next five years. Clearly, those who are aware of the issues and problems associated with

eldercare and aging adults were more interested in long term care insurance than those who did not have that exposure.

Time constraints. A significant area of concern surfaced around time constraints. Seventy percent of all respondents indicated some level of concern with having enough time for themselves, and 68% indicated problems with taking care of their own health and fitness. Although the percentage of respondents who reported concern with time constraints was lower than with other issues such as eldercare, overall the mean was higher because respondents reported a higher level of concern with the time constraint questions.

Time constraint issues impacted the entire group, regardless of whether they were responsible for dependents. Tables 7 and 8 represent the key time constraint issues for males and for females. Both males and females reported fairly significant concern with having enough time for self and with taking care of their own health and fitness. Females reported more problems with taking care of their family's health, while men reported more concern with being able to have time for home and car repairs. Those individuals who were not responsible for a child or an aging adult (n=6) still experienced time constraint problems. Bottom line, both males and females reported time constraint issues, which impacted them in other areas such as personal relationships, co-worker relationships, and work outcomes.

Furthermore, age was not a factor with time constraint issues. All respondents reported equal levels of concern with time constraint related factors. However, of those who held positions with higher responsibility, i.e. Exempt Supervisor/Manager respondents, 100% reported problems with having enough time for themselves. A little

over half of the Exempt Supervisor/Manager group also reported problems with taking care of their own health and fitness. Additionally, 88% of this group reported problems with having to work overtime or take work home on a regular basis. All age levels were represented in the Exempt Supervisor/Manager group, so generational considerations did not appear to be a significant factor when it came to time constraint issues.

Financial concerns. Respondents indicated worries in several financial related areas. Job security, future career, personal finances, the ability to pay for college for older children, the need to find another job, and retirement concerns all surfaced as areas of concern for respondents.

Both females and males reported significant concern about personal finances. Tables 9 and 10 represent the key financial concern issues for males and for females. Eighty one percent of females reported minor to major concern, while 60% of males reported minor to major concern with personal finances. Additionally, 80% of respondents reported significant concerns about retirement. The retirement concerns were not age, gender, or position specific – clearly everyone was concerned about their retirement. Fifty one percent of males and 67% of females also reported significant concern about paying for college for their children. Males and females were equally concerned about paying for college, as were the various levels of positions within the organization. The 40-54 year age group was most concerned about paying for college as compared to the 24-39 year age group and the 55 and older group.

Benchmarking.

Information about work life benefits was also obtained from other municipalities in the Denver metro area. Information was acquired from a Wage and Benefits Report

arranged by Mountain States Employer's Council in Denver. Of the 420 respondents from the Denver/Boulder area, 55% of employers provide employee assistance programs, and 13% provide long term care for employees (100% employee paid). Fifty five percent of employers required a minimum of 20 hours per week for employees to receive the same benefits as full time employees, and 40% required a minimum or more than 20 hours per week. Thirty nine percent of employer did not offer complete benefits packages to regular part time employees. Additionally, over 90% of employers considered full time to be 30 hours or more (Mountain States Employer's Council Survey).

Chapter 5

Discussion

According to Cummings and Worley (2005), organizations are open, complex systems that consist of inputs, transformations, and outputs. There are many inter-relationships that exist between the overall organization, groups, and individuals. This systems thinking approach suggests that diagnosis is the search for disconnects among the variety of parts and subsystems in an organization. Systems thinking requires a radical change in how members view the world: from seeing parts to seeing wholes; from seeing linear cause and effect chains to seeing interrelationships; and from seeing static entities to seeing processes of change. It is beneficial to approach work life issues at the City of Lafayette from a systems thinking perspective.

Intervention Plan

The data collected from the Human Capital Work Life Survey at the City of Lafayette suggested several key issues. After thorough analysis of the data, three major areas of concern continued to surface. They included elder care issues, time constraint factors, and financial concerns. The most significant time constraint concerns were having enough time for self and taking care of one's own health and fitness. The chief financial issues included concerns about personal finances, paying for college for older children, and retirement. However, it is important to note that all of these issues are very interconnected and interrelated.

It is also important to point out that using more than one method of analyzing data is key. Although the survey alone provided very useful information, data was also collected from other sources. This included discussions with employees and the collaborative work group, information from other municipalities in the Denver metro area, as well as statistical information, demographic records, and trends provided by the Human Resources Division and Finance Department. The goal was to try and gather data from different sources and correlate results. This allowed a more thorough and complete analysis of the issue.

Key Considerations

The City of Lafayette must consider several key areas along with their major matters of concern. Gender related issues, workforce diversity, generational concerns, cultural factors, and recruitment and retention should all be integrated into the overall analysis.

Gender related issues. There appeared to be several gender related issues, however many of the problem areas suggested equal concern to both males and females. Clearly, females tended to have more time constraint issues and were more involved with eldercare issues. Additionally, more females than males were interested in long term care insurance, probably due to their increased exposure to eldercare issues. More females also reported missing work due to stress or a stress related illness. This corresponds to research indicating that women are more overworked and exhibit more symptoms of stress than males. Even though females are more accepted in the workforce than they were decades ago, there are still expectations for them to fulfill the often-conflicting roles of primary caregiver, wife, and career woman (Galinsky et al, 2001).

Although overall response for satisfaction with the organization was high, some of the results raised gender related concerns. For example, of the 86% who were satisfied with how they were treated at the City of Lafayette, the 14% who were not satisfied were all females. Additionally, a fairly large number of female respondents reported that they had seriously thought about quitting their job, and were considering looking for another job. Clearly, females were much more concerned about the need to find another job, and pay seemed to be a primary factor. Females were also more concerned with personal financial issues than were males. Additionally, females expressed less of a commitment to the organization than did males, and were less apt to recommend the organization to a friend.

Research in the area of job engagement and job commitment have concluded that employees who are employed in effective workplaces are more engaged, committed to, and satisfied with their jobs. Additionally, they are less likely to seek employment elsewhere (Bond, Galinsky, & Hill, 2002). Clearly, male survey respondents at the City of Lafayette felt more of a commitment and more loyalty to the organization than did females. Females also felt they, along with minorities, were at more of a disadvantage in the organization.

Other studies by Galinsky et al. (2001) revealed that among the major predictors of not wanting to move to positions of greater responsibility is being overwhelmed by everything one has to do. One question in the survey asked whether or not the respondent has had to accept a job with less responsibility. Although the overall response was small, only females admitted to being in this situation.

These gender related results suggested several areas of concern for females at the City of Lafayette. Females were clearly more involved with eldercare issues, and appeared to exhibit more symptoms of stress. Pay and financial worries were fairly significant with this group of females, as was the concern of less commitment to the organization. It seemed that many related factors contributed to the higher stress levels amongst females, with many related consequences. Additional research should be conducted in this area to determine specifically why females were looking for other employment opportunities, felt less committed and at a disadvantage, were less satisfied, and were experiencing financial difficulties.

Furthermore, gender related data regarding child-care related issues suggested that males in the organization were actively involved in childcare related issues. More males than females reported having the responsibility of caring for younger dependents. However, these results should be interpreted with caution, due to the small sample size of males who were responsible for the care of a younger dependent (n=7).

Generational and gender studies support the fact that more males are now responsible for the care of dependents. According to a report by *Generation and Gender in the Workplace* (2004), American fathers are spending more time with their children than fathers did a generation ago. This trend is obviously affected by the increase in number of employed females, however this study also indicated that more males than females have changed their minds about traditional male/female family roles.

Results of the work life survey also indicated that more males than females were concerned with handling conflicts with their spouse or partner. Although it is difficult to interpret this data without additional information, it might be that the increased

responsibility that males have taken on regarding raising children is the cause for the additional stress on personal relationships. Stress and overwork outcomes impact many different areas, including relationships with others. More research would need to be conducted in this area in order to determine why males are more concerned with relationship conflicts than are females.

Workforce diversity. The workforce in the United States has become more diverse, reflecting an increasingly diverse population. Although the City of Lafayette values diversity and promotes multiculturalism, their employee demographic data suggested a need for more diversity. As a general rule, municipalities attempt to mirror the community they serve. The survey instrument did not address ethnicity, so data was not collected on cultural norms or cultural issues at the City of Lafayette.

With the demographic changes our nation is currently experiencing, this is an area that is critical in any organization. The City of Lafayette is under represented in several ethnic areas: African American, Asian, and Hispanic. It would be beneficial for the City of Lafayette to study whether or not work life issues has impeded their ability to attract and retain ethnic groups. Further research needs to be conducted in order to determine whether or not there are cultural issues related to work life balance at the City of Lafayette.

Generational concerns. Extensive generational studies have been conducted in an attempt to understand generational differences. Research conducted by Raines, Zemke, and Filipczak (2000) demonstrated that the values of different generations often clash. For example, the values of Generation X (born between the years of 1960 – 1980) are different from the values of previous generations such as the Baby Boomers (born

between the years 1943-1960). Baby Boomers are often criticized for being very driven, and for placing their loyalties with their work over their family. Conversely, one of the chief complaints of Generation X is their lack of work ethic. Xer's believe that family, friends, and hobbies are more important than work.

The average age at the City of Lafayette is approximately 44 years of age, and 57% of the survey respondents fell into the age bracket of 40-54 years of age. Within this age group, there appeared to be fairly substantial concerns with eldercare matters, time constraints, and financial issues. The survey responses supported Raines' (2000) research findings in this area of study.

Survey respondents in the 40-54 year old bracket consisted of two different generations, Generation X and the Baby Boomers, although the majority of the age group could be classified as Baby Boomers. Employees in this age bracket are also in the "sandwich generation", where individuals experience the responsibility of taking care of their own family and their aging parents. Obviously, a significant amount of stress is placed on individuals in the sandwich generation.

Studies by Raines (2000) have indicated that those in the Baby Boomer generation are dealing with considerable stress. They are the most stressed generation in history who are eager to find creative ways to simplify their lives. Many are wrangling with issues in regards to the care of elderly parents. Even though Raines labeled Baby Boomers as workaholics, she also stated that as the Boomers age, they are committing themselves to a much slower pace. Boomers can also expect to live longer, healthier work lives than any previous generation. The City of Lafayette must take this into consideration when evaluating the work life needs of their employees.

Additionally, according to statistical information from human resources, there are a large number of leaders at the city from the Baby Boomer generation, and future leaders are likely to come from a different generation. Younger workers may look at the employment relationship differently, which could drastically change the culture at the city. Those from Generation X are more family centered, and do not place the same value on work as older employees. Their focus is balance, diversity, fun, and informality. Flexible hours, an informal work environment, and freedom with how they get the work done are important to this generation (Raines, 2000). In order to recruit, retain, and grow future leaders at the city, generational differences must be taken into consideration. These generational issues have the potential to impact the values, goals, and objectives at the City of Lafayette.

Cultural factors. Discussions with the collaborative work group at the City of Lafayette revealed interesting cultural information that should be considered when evaluating the work life needs of employees. Lafayette is a municipality located in Boulder County, approximately 10 miles east of the City of Boulder. Boulder is known for its liberal and at times, non-traditional life styles. Additionally, housing is more expensive in Boulder than in surrounding cities, which tends to attract individuals who are able to afford a higher cost of living. Discussions revealed that this culture transcends into Lafayette. A handful of employees at the City of Lafayette have adopted non-traditional lifestyles, and are independently wealthy so they do not need to work. This might be a contributing factor that explains the lack of interest in child-care related programs, family associated benefits, and other more traditional work life issues that were evaluated in the survey.

Recruitment and retention. Human resource professionals nation wide have indicated that recruiting and retention were top challenges in 2005, and well-run organizations are making sure they have competitive work-life benefits in their recruitment arsenal (Kirchhoff, 2006). According to a report from Mellon Financial Corporation Human Resources & Investor Solutions, 73% of respondents said the top reason for offering work/life programs was to enhance their ability to attract and retain top talent (Work Life Benefits, 2004). Employers are offering an ever-widening array of programs that recognize employees' need for work/life balance, and the number one reason for offering such benefits is to enhance recruitment efforts.

In today's workforce, employees are expressing a desire to address balance issues and work life concerns. The City of Lafayette is no exception. There are a wide variety of issues that surfaced in the survey that correspond to recruitment and retention concerns, with often conflicting information. Almost half of the respondents have thought seriously about quitting their jobs at the city. In the more direct questions that addressed at what point an employee would leave the city for another job, pay and flexibility appeared to be the primary reason. Respondents also expressed concern with job security, and the future of their career. Yet respondents also felt valued by and committed to the organization, and were generally satisfied.

Turnover information from the city human resources department does not point to any glaring retention concerns at the City of Lafayette. Although turnover has been rather inconsistent over the past five years, in 2005 the turnover rate was a little over 6%. To date, the turnover rate for 2006 is a very low 3%.

Since pay and flexibility consistently surfaced in other areas throughout the survey, the researcher concluded that these were the overriding factors in regards to recruitment and retention concerns. Because there are conflicting pieces of information, further research should be conducted to determine whether or not these two areas are truly the cause of discontent and reasons for leaving employment at the city.

Major Areas of Concern

The major areas of concern of time constraints, workplace flexibility, financial considerations, and eldercare issues have been identified as the dominant work life related issues at the City of Lafayette. It is difficult to break them apart into separate areas of concern, as they are all interrelated and interconnected. For purposes of this paper they will be discussed separately in this section, however they should be viewed as a whole.

Time Constraint Issues. Research by Bond, Thompson, et al. (2003) agreed with the survey results in regards to time constraint issues. The proportion of married wage and salaried employees with dual incomes has increased substantially over the past 25 years, and combined work hours for dual earner couples with children rose 10 hours per week. Today's working couples have less time for their lives off the job, with the sacrifice being less time for themselves. Additionally, the father's role in the home has expanded, although the research by Bond, Thompson, et al. concluded that mothers still experience more stress and responsibility than fathers. Again, this supports the results from the work life survey; females expressed more concern with time constraint issues than males at the City of Lafayette, and both males and females expressed concern over not having enough time for themselves.

Additionally, Exempt Non Supervisors and Exempt Supervisor/Managers expressed more concern with time constraint issues than Non Exempt respondents. Research by Galinsky et al. (2001) supports this finding. She concluded that managers and professionals who have jobs with greater responsibilities are more overworked and experience more time constraint issues than others.

Even though there does not appear to be any childcare related issues that raised significant concern at the City of Lafayette, it is important to take a closer look at these results and how they relate to time constraint matters. Studies by Galinsky, et al. (2001) indicated that among those with children, parents of teenagers are more overworked and stressed than parents with younger children. This placed a slightly different perspective on childcare related issues at the City of Lafayette, since the majority of children were in the teenager group.

Almost all who reported time constraint problems also indicated problems with work outcomes such as leaving work undone. Moreover, the top time constraint concerns dealt with having enough time for self-care. While it cannot be assumed that there is a direct correlation to time constraint issues and overwork outcomes, it is interesting to consider work related outcomes of being overworked. Work related outcomes of employees who are stressed and overwhelmed are significant. Research by Galinsky et.al (2001) found that the more overworked employees felt, the more likely they were to have higher levels of stress, and the more likely they were to neglect caring for themselves. Personal outcomes included higher levels of stress and clinical depression, all of which cost an organization more in terms of physical and mental health problems.

Additionally, these studies linked not only time as a major predictor of being overworked, but also considered other aspects of the way we work to be more significant predictors of being overworked. Multi tasking and the inability to focus on one's work because of constant interruptions and distractions all effect an employees overall health and well-being.

It is difficult to determine the exact cause of time constraint issues with this group of respondents; the causes may be due to work related factors, personal factors, or a combination of both. Yet the impact of time constraint issues was substantial, and appeared to creep into many aspects of employees' lives. Respondents who reported time constraint problems also indicated concern in other areas such as leaving work undone, being too tired to concentrate while at work, arriving at work late or leaving early, feeling less committed to their work, and not doing their best work. All of these concerns may be indicative of having too much to take care of. Galinsky et al. (2001) also concluded that employees with eldercare responsibility tend to be more overworked and stressed than employees without these responsibilities.

Workplace flexibility. Even though some of the results on flexibility options were inconsistent, the researcher felt the respondents from the survey sent a fairly clear message – they were very interested in more flexibility in regards to work life options. The interest was not gender specific or specific to a certain level of position within the organization. There also appeared to be inconsistency and concern with how flexibility options have been offered in the past. Some supervisors allowed it, while others did not.

Research conducted by *Corporate Voices for Working Families* (2005) demonstrated the powerful and positive effect that workplace flexibility had on employee

satisfaction. These studies found that employees with access to flexibility were much more likely to report overall satisfaction than those who felt they do not have access to flexibility. When flexible work arrangements were available, employees tended to exhibit more positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment to the employer, and loyalty to the organization. Moreover, employees experienced more positive life outcomes, such as less difficulties with balancing work and family life, less negative spillover from job to home and vice versa, and better mental health.

Likewise, employee engagement and commitment had very powerful effects on employee satisfaction. Commitment and engagement were what prompted employees to recommend the company to others and to identify with the success of the organization (Bond, Thompson, et al, 2003).

Measuring employee satisfaction is a popular element of employee surveys, yet it is often difficult to define employee satisfaction within an organization. It is not a simple measurement of how “happy” an employee might be, but rather a validated research tool that is correlated with a range of behaviors essential to effective performance, including discretionary effort and intent to stay (Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2005). Additionally, Kirchhoff (2006) concluded that low job satisfaction ratings were correlated with multiple organizational problems such as increased levels of turnover and absences, and decreased productivity.

Lambert (2000) also suggested evidence that work life programs have beneficial effects. She concluded that the more valuable work life benefits were to employees, the more supportive they viewed their organization. Consequently, a benefit package that workers find useful can enhance their perception that the organization cares about them.

Since flexibility was a top concern of respondents at the City of Lafayette, it is important that the city considers flexibility options as part of their overall goal to help employees balance the overwhelming demands of work and personal life.

Researchers who have studied issues of workplace flexibility have acknowledged that implementing more formal policies and programs, and adopting a culture that is supportive of flexibility is important. By creating this culture, organizations look for and find flexibility options that work for both the employee and the employer. Yet simply offering job flexibility programs and policies is not enough. Since there is a perception amongst many that use of flexible work options jeopardizes advancement opportunities, employees will be hesitant to use job flexibility benefits unless the employer makes a specific effort to support such policies and reduce the jeopardy.

Additionally, it is worthwhile to mention that males consistently expressed interest in flexible work arrangements. It appeared that traditional views that flexible work arrangements are strictly for females did not apply to this respondent group. The interest of more males with flexible work arrangements such as part time employment, flex time, etc. might be due to the age of the respondents. Since most male respondents were in the 55 years of age and older category, it might be that the Baby Boomers want to slow down and gradually move themselves out of the work force. This correlates to research by Raines (2000) indicating that Baby Boomers are interested in alternative, flexible work arrangements prior to completely retiring themselves out of the workforce.

In addition, generational issues should be considered along with flexibility options. Raines suggested that the Boomers would dominate the workplace until at least 2015. She labeled them as workaholics who are secure in their positions and are well

connected. They are proud of their accomplishments and will not easily relinquish their status and power in the organization. Moreover, Baby Boomers may not have a choice but to work. Financial records show the members of this generation have not adequately saved for their retirement. Along with stock market crashes and slow gaining retirement funds, Baby Boomers may need to work well beyond what they had ever desired. Yet Boomers are also interested in more flexible work options and the ability to gradually ease themselves out of the workforce.

Raines also indicated that individuals from the latest generation entering the workforce (Generation Y or Nexters), possess a very strong work ethic, however they are very inexperienced. As employees, these individuals prefer to be mentored by the older, more experienced workers. They respect the knowledge, experience, and work ethic the older generations possess, and they often clash with Generation Xer's. As the older generations begin to think about retirement and the possibility of working less hours or slowly moving themselves out of the workforce, the city might be able to capitalize on this opportunity. This would provide a win-win situation for everyone. It allows the city to tap into the vast knowledge and experience the older generations possess, it helps to mentor the newest generation coming in to the workforce, and it allows the older employees the chance to slow down and gradually ease themselves out of the workforce.

Employees did not express much interest in part-time employment or job sharing. However, part of the disinterest might be due to the city not offering benefits for part time employment. Further research in this area would need to be conducted in order to determine whether or not the disinterest is due to a true lack of interest, or because part time employment is not feasible for employees due to a lack of full benefits for part time

employees. The interest in other flexible work options has led the researcher to believe that the disinterest in part time employment and job sharing could be due to other factors.

Financial considerations. Financial concerns surfaced in several different areas. Respondents were concerned about personal finances, retirement, and the ability to pay for college for their children.

Respondents with eldercare issues in particular exhibited concerns with their finances. Generational studies by Raines (2000) concluded that the Baby Boomer generation in particular has significant financial strain and worries. This generation has more credit card and financial debt than any other generation. They have not adequately saved for their retirement, which might attribute to some of the concern expressed by respondents. However, generational reasons may not be the sole reason for financial concerns. Due to the economic downturn the entire nation has experienced, financial and retirement worries are a source of anxiety for many.

Job security and concerns about their future career might also be related to financial worries, although more research in this area would need to be conducted in order to determine the exact cause for concern.

Eldercare issues. Eldercare issues were a significant concern with the survey respondents, and are integrally related and discussed in regards to gender and generational issues, as well as time constraint, financial, and flexibility factors. The age of the respondents and the large number of employees who are either currently caring for an aging adult or anticipate such care in the near future, suggested a heavy focus on age related issues and the associated concerns that go along with a workforce that is aging. Although eldercare issues appeared to impact females and those respondents who were in

the 40-54 years of age group more than others, overall, eldercare issues impacted everyone.

Rosen (2004) concluded that eldercare has gained organizational attention due to employee needs, demographic projections, and potential costs to the employer. Absenteeism, stress, decreased productivity, and employee turnover are reasons for concern. Research related to generational and gender studies support the need for more support with eldercare responsibilities. The Baby Boomers are currently experiencing significant eldercare concerns, and as the Boomers age they will find themselves in need of eldercare assistance. This will continue to have a substantial effect on the younger generations who will ultimately need to care for their aging parents. Eldercare issues are not going away, and if anything the demand for support and assistance will only increase. An estimated 22 million American households already provide eldercare at some level. In the next decade, that number is expected to double.

Integrating the Intervention

Harvard Business Essentials (2003) suggests that a critical piece for developing any change initiative is gaining top-level support. Visible support from top organizational leaders will add credibility and desirability. This level of support sends a valuable message about the importance of work life balance within the organization. If the City of Lafayette implements a work life benefits program, it is critical that the City Manager, Department Heads, managers, and supervisors all support the initiative. For employees to fully comprehend and support the change, it is necessary for them to understand how it will affect them.

Moreover, a work life benefits program should be an integral part of the organization's strategic plan. Just as organizations develop strategic plans that identify their goals and key business strategies, they must also recognize and forecast future employee needs consistent with these objectives.

Since every corporate culture is different, managers at the City of Lafayette must determine if a work life benefits program is appropriate for their organization, and the best approach to introduce work life related programs. Although work life benefit programs are often viewed as something that is "nice" to offer to employees, it might be more beneficial to tie the program to concrete, measurable performance objectives. One strategy that may be helpful is to propose work/life balance programs as a way to decrease absenteeism and turnover, and/or to increase organizational productivity as opposed to being something nice to offer.

Work life benefits as a cost containment strategy. The researcher would be remiss if the cost of a work life benefits program was not taken into consideration. While most would assume that any additional program would have a cost to the organization, they fail to consider the savings work life benefit programs might offer.

When attempting to evaluate costly health risks, it is natural to think of high blood pressure, smoking, and lack of physical exercise. Yet according to a study by Dr. Ron Z. Goetzel of the MEDSTAT Group in Washington, D.C., depression and stress top the list of health risks that has the greatest impact on healthcare costs. These conditions exhibit physical and psychological complaints, and can be attributed to significantly higher healthcare expenditures for high blood pressure, high blood glucose, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Stress management and overall well being is

particularly important in helping females and the Baby Boomer generation to manage the demands of caring for children and aging parents while working full time jobs.

Individuals in care giving roles can become depressed, anxious, and exhausted if they do not have adequate support (The Wellness Program Management Yearbook, 2001).

Dr. Jonathan Bloomberg, Medical Director for psychiatric services and chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at Rockford, Illinois, stated, “There’s no doubt that American’s are under serious stress. With people increasingly juggling demanding careers and families, it’s virtually impossible to keep up, let alone remain stress free. It’s how you deal with stress that counts.”

Work, finances, children, and not having enough time, were cited as the top reasons for stress in people’s lives. Two of the top reasons cited for the cause of stress included: (a) Having a seriously ill friend or family member, and (b) working long hours on a regular basis. Additionally, in studies by Bloomberg, nearly half of the respondents claimed that feeling and looking tired or worn out was their chief complaint.

It has been proven that job stress is the cause of many serious health consequences such as high blood pressure. High blood pressure contributes to a greater risk for cardiovascular disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Stress further impacts many other aspects of a person’s life, including family relationships, co-worker and supervisor relationships, and work outcomes. The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) identified eight basic principles that companies should heed to help employees who are overstressed. Being flexible topped the list (The Wellness Program Management Yearbook, 2001).

Additionally, eldercare and childcare related costs can be substantial to an organization. In this particular survey, a total of 818 hours were reported on work time spent on childcare and/or eldercare related issues over the past year. If an average rate of pay of \$25.00 per hour is used, this equates to an approximate cost to the organization of \$20,000 per year. This only reflects the cost of time to an organization. Other non-tangible costs such as reduced productivity in the form of less concentration and less commitment, absenteeism, and stress related illnesses are more difficult to discern, and yet have significant costs to an organization.

An organizational culture that encourages work life balance and fosters a supporting environment can help to address many of the health related issues that have substantial costs to an organization. By dealing with stress and promoting overall well-being, employers are helping employees to be healthier, and healthier individuals cost an organization less.

Evaluation of the Intervention

Intervention evaluation provides feedback about the progress and impact of the intervention. Feedback can provide information on whether or not the modifications produced the desired result, and if change was realized. Information might also suggest the need for further diagnosis or even termination of the intervention. According to Cummings and Worley (2005), measurement is a key aspect of effective evaluation.

In order to effectively evaluate a work life benefits program, it is necessary to determine the objectives and feedback criteria prior to implementing the intervention. There should be both short and long term objectives, and the objectives should be measurable. Those involved in designing the intervention needs to translate general

guidelines into specific behaviors and procedures. The data should be collected repeatedly at short intervals in order to assess how the change efforts are progressing over time. This type of feedback provides immediate information on whether or not the diagnosis is correct, or if the type of intervention strategy is effective.

If the City of Lafayette implemented a work life policies benefits program, they might want to measure turnover and employment stability at various intervals, as well as absenteeism and productivity. They might also measure employee satisfaction at various points of time, and interview employees to determine whether or not objectives were being met. This would allow the city to evaluate whether or not their initiatives were effective.

Furthermore, an annual report adds credibility to any program. This type of report offers objective reporting to management staff, and demonstrates what it is getting in return for support of the program. The annual report should identify what is effective and non-effective, what was accomplished, how much money the organization saved by offering the program, and the return on investment. Additionally, the annual report should tie the program into the overall goals and objectives of the organization.

Overall, the impact of implementing or expanding on work life initiatives should be fairly positive. Employees are a critical part of organizational success, so the importance of job satisfaction and retaining exemplary and loyal employees is fairly obvious. The need for satisfied, productive, and balanced employees is critical if the city wants to sustain its competitive edge.

Although it is very important to address the organizational goals and tie any program into strategic goals and objectives, the researcher felt it was important to also

mention the more altruistic values of work life benefit programs. There was much evidence that suggested the need for change in how we work and live. Although our fast paced, technologically advanced, global 24/7 nation has created many opportunities for career advancement and success, it also has its dark side. The negative consequences of an overworked, stressed out, and fast paced lifestyle is extensive.

The culture shift this type of change requires is substantial. Each individual needs to make their own determination as to the impact this type of lifestyle has on themselves and on their families. Even though it may take small steps to reach a larger goal, organizations owe it to themselves and their employees to take a hard look at how work life issues affect not only their employees, but society as a whole.

Resistance to Change and Cultural Shift

As stated in Cummings and Worley (2005), change often creates resistance in individuals and in groups of people. The unknown can create anxiety and a tendency to hold on to the known. Resistance to change can come from technical, political, and cultural sources. Leaders can help overcome resistance to change by empathizing and supporting employees, by constantly communicating with employees, and by actively involving employees with the change efforts. This not only helps employees feel as if they have some say in the change, it can also lead to a diversity of information and ideas.

The focus on an employee work life benefits program will create the need for a cultural shift within the organization. Although this strategy may provide opportunities for employees to enjoy a richer, healthier work and personal life, the city must also be willing to shift their philosophy. Supervisors may be fearful of how they will manage employees who utilize compressed work-weeks, part time employment options, or

telecommuting opportunities. Managers might worry about productivity and/or how the public might respond to a municipality that offers work life benefits to its employees. Yet full support of a work life benefits program is critical to its success. A work life benefits program that does not allow qualified employees to take advantage of balance opportunities when the need arises is sure to fail in the long run.

Other Factors for Consideration

Survey instrument. The complexity of the instrument was a bit concerning. The researcher felt that the survey was too long and the some of the questions were difficult to comprehend. Some of the terminology used throughout the survey (i.e. job share, telecommuting, and compressed work weeks) confused some employees. Although these are familiar terms in the human resource world, not all employees are familiar with them. It would have been beneficial to provide an explanation of the less common terminology. Employees who attended the sessions with the researcher had the opportunity to ask questions, however those who completed the survey on their own did not have that same opportunity.

Moreover, one section of the survey confused employees. They felt the questions were redundant, and along with the length of the survey, this tended to frustrate several employees. Due to frustration, a small handful of employees chose to not answer the questions towards the end of the survey, or decided to create their own rating scale. This provided data that was not clean, although generalizations could still be made based on other information in the survey. As with any validated study, participants often do not understand the underlying reason for asking a question, or for addressing questions in a certain manner.

Furthermore, although the data provided a wealth of information, the amount of data to interpret was a bit overwhelming for the researcher. The intent of the survey was for employees to take the survey via a computer, which automatically sorted through and summarized all the data. Due to financial constraints, the researcher had to administer, input and analyze all the data by hand. Excel and Access computer programs were utilized to help with sorting and analyzing the data, however this was a very cumbersome and time consuming process. Although the information was very beneficial, the amount of data was cumbersome and at times overwhelming.

Additionally, the small survey sample was disappointing, although a 20% rate of return is fairly typical. Even though the sample was fairly representative of the organization as a whole, it can be dangerous to jump to conclusions based on the small sample size.

Areas for further research. Although the information gathered from this study provided very important and significant information about work life needs of employees at the City of Lafayette, the data should be used as a starting point. The survey instrument addressed a wide variety of issues and concerns as they related to work life issues. Its broad scope provided a good overview and offered quality data on the identification of key work life issues at the city, however more specific studies need to be conducted in order to get to the heart of many issues. Additional research should be conducted prior to making any drastic changes at the City of Lafayette.

As mentioned throughout the discussion section, there were several areas that required further research. More research on gender related issues, in particular why females felt less supported by the organization and were overall less committed to the

city and to their jobs. Moreover, since the survey instrument did not address ethnicity and culturally related information, this was definitely an area that needed further exploration. Additionally, the conflicting data in some areas was concerning. The lack of interest in traditional childcare related issues needs further investigation, and the lack of interest in part time employment and job-sharing opportunities is contradictory to the interest in other flexible work options.

If the City of Lafayette considers more flexibility options, they need to study the specific needs and desires more comprehensively. Overall, there was a lack of information from part time employees – all of the survey respondents were full time employees. The lack of part time benefits may be a contributing factor to diversity and gender related issues at the City of Lafayette. If city officials desire a big picture perspective of the needs of all employees, they should conduct further research specifically targeted at part time employees. Their thoughts and opinions about work life issues would be very beneficial. Further research should also be conducted regarding those municipalities who offer benefits for part time employees. Although general information was provided, it would be beneficial to determine more specific trends with other municipalities that are similar in size and/or operational scope, such as Louisville, Broomfield, Westminster, Thornton, Boulder, and Longmont.

Summary

Organizations are taking a serious look at how work life benefits can help solve the challenges of overwork, an aging workforce, low productivity, and absenteeism. Benefits that only a few years ago were considered nice to offer, are now garnering serious discussion. The top ten work life trends of 2005 were discussed in *Flexibility*

Tops Work/Life Trends of 2005. Flexibility topped the list. Dealing with overworked employees and an aging workforce were second and tenth on the list.

According to this article, major studies have verified the value of work life benefits programs. These studies confirmed that flexibility improved employee productivity, customer satisfaction, and employee turnover. They also verified that overworked employees make more mistakes on the job, and resent their employers and co-workers. The economy, along with higher work expectations, has all contributed to an overworked and stressed out society. Last, they cited that employers are scrambling to accommodate a generation that is redefining middle age by retiring later and by downsizing their work hours. These findings summarized the findings at the City of Lafayette. The City of Lafayette is exhibiting classic signs and symptoms of an aging workforce, an overworked and stressed workforce, and of a workforce that desires more flexibility options.

Recommendation

After thorough research and analysis of work life benefit needs for the City of Lafayette, the researcher concluded that the city would benefit from more work life benefit options, and the most effective and appropriate way to initiate efforts would be through the existing wellness program. The city's wellness program has a successful track record, so it would be natural to try and work off its success.

Wellness programs focus on healthier lifestyles and balance. Wellness is about the entire person, and takes into account an individual's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It focuses on balance and meeting the needs of the whole person, not just the employee at work. It would be natural to tie work life related programs into an already

existing and successful wellness program – a work life dimension would merely be another component of the program.

As Table 1 demonstrated earlier, there are many different programs that organizations offer to support work life initiatives. Although it would be nice to offer an expansive program, it might be best for the city to focus on the basic needs and desires of employees. By dealing with flexibility, stress and overwork, along with an aging workforce, the researcher believes that the city will make a positive impact on the lives of employees. So many of the symptoms are interrelated that initiating even one program should help in other areas. For example, flexible work options might help to reduce stress and overwork, help to ease relationships at home and work, and/or help employees dealing with dependent care concerns. Flexible work options might also help the Baby Boomer generation to slowly ease themselves out of the workforce, while mentoring and growing a new generation. Additionally, flexibility options may help with retention efforts.

In order to establish more flexibility and flexible work options, city management must establish a policy that is supported by all and is consistently applied. It might be beneficial for the city to establish committees to further explore flexibility options and preferences prior to implementing any change.

Furthermore, many other work life programs could be offered at a minimal cost and effort to the organization. For example, eldercare educational programs as well as resource and referral options would be relatively easy to offer and tie into overall wellness program efforts. Lunch hour educational sessions that are focused on elder care issues and/or retirement concerns are relatively easy and inexpensive to set up.

Representatives from community groups might be interested in teaching these at little or no cost. Or, it might be possible to tap into pension plan administrative staff to provide educational sessions on how to meet retirement goals. This same individual might be able to offer educational sessions on how to effectively manage college and eldercare expenses, or offer suggestions for educational savings programs. Likewise, the city might utilize professional staff from their employee assistance program to offer programs on balance, time management, relationship concerns, and/or ways to effectively manage stress.

It is also important to suggest that work life programs meet the needs of all employees, not just those with traditional family related issues. The key is to create a program that addresses the needs of all, regardless of their gender, marital, or family status. A work life benefits program that only addresses traditional family related issues will create animosity amongst employees and management, and will fail in the long run.

Financial considerations. Cost implications must always be taken into consideration. Although the City of Lafayette is more financially sound than many cities, it is not immune to the economic issues that municipalities are currently facing. Due to financial constraints, it is probably not the best time to request funding for an additional programs. City officials would more than likely be most supportive of a program that does not cost much to implement. It would probably be best to start small and build based on success. Concrete, well-established performance measures and key indicators should measure the success of the program, and will help to justify the program in the long run.

The cost of work life initiatives will vary widely depending on the types of programs that are offered, yet the City of Lafayette should change the focus to how they can impact costs associated with health benefit and medical related health insurance claims. Work life benefits will also help the city to contain costs by increasing retention, job commitment and satisfaction, mental and physical well-being, and productivity. Furthermore, work life programs may help to reduce absenteeism and turnover. The program will also help to foster the employee, family, and community friendly reputation it desires. All of these returns can ultimately enhance an employee's quality of life, work environment, and the company's bottom line.

Moreover, a work life balance program can also help the organization during tough economic times. The city is anticipating a 1% across the board for all employees effective January 1, 2007. While a 1% increase is better than nothing, the increase is still small and may create consternation amongst employees, particularly if they are already experiencing financial constraints. By focusing on balance and initiating work life policies and procedures, the city is demonstrating concern for employees. Although management may not be able to offer much in the way of a pay increase, they are showing true concern for their employees by increasing a benefit that helps employees in many different aspects. Plus, a work life program may help the city to retain employees through difficult financial times.

Conclusion

It is more of a challenge than ever before to effectively manage organizations. Recruiting top talent, engaging and retaining top performers, and maximizing

productivity with fierce competition, more complicated jobs, and changing workforce demographics are daily challenges employers now face. Effective organizations are realizing the need to change and adapt if they want to remain competitive. They are giving their employees more flexibility, and are more understanding of their needs. This “people first” approach looks beyond individuals as just employees. Instead, they look at employees as a whole person, with lives outside of work. Such employers provide a vision for the future, with productivity gains and a better quality of life for all.

Although the long-term consequences of family friendly benefits might be uncertain, the larger social, demographic, and cultural changes will continue to increase the importance of work life benefits. Clearly, a work life benefit program would be advantageous to the City of Lafayette in regards to the major areas of concern that were identified in the Human Capital Work Life Survey. Eldercare issues, time constraint factors, and financial concerns are all areas that effective work life benefit programs can address. In return, the organization will gain a more productive, efficient, and committed workforce. If the City of Lafayette takes advantage of the information obtained in this work life needs study and implements an effective program, it has the potential to benefit the entire organization and ultimately the community it serves.

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Figure 1

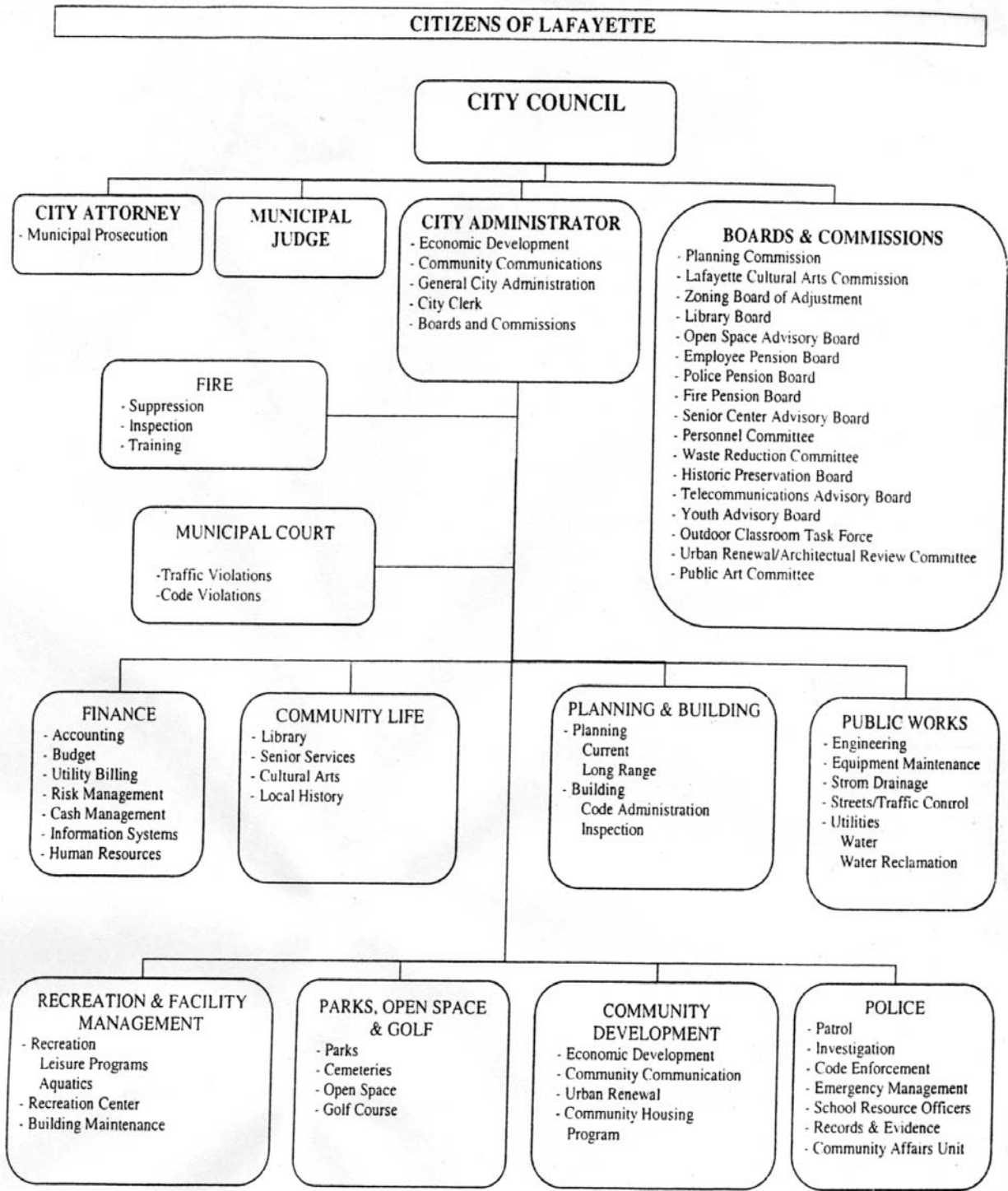


Figure 2

Respondent Characteristics: Gender

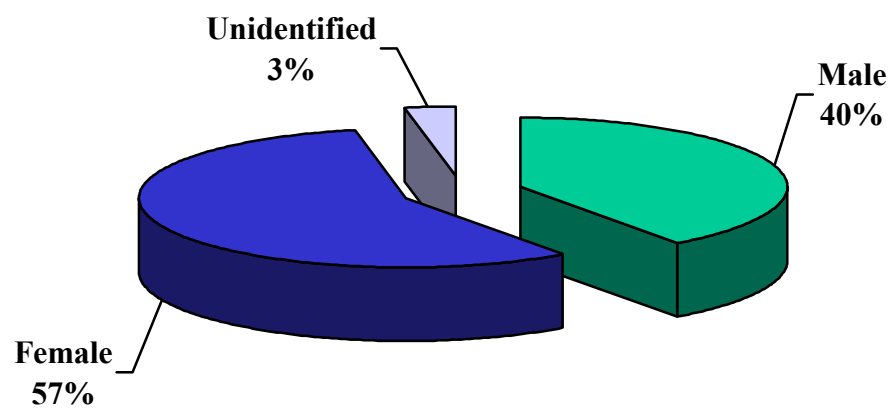


Figure 3

Respondent Characteristics: Marital Status

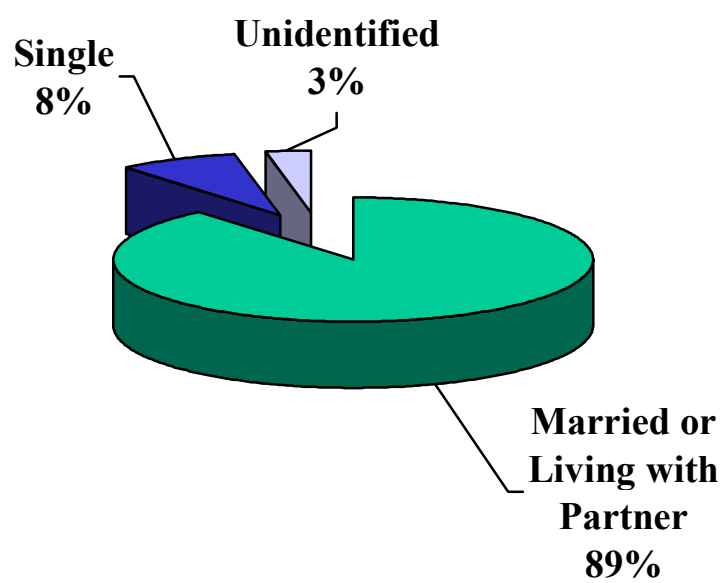


Figure 4

Respondent Characteristics: Age

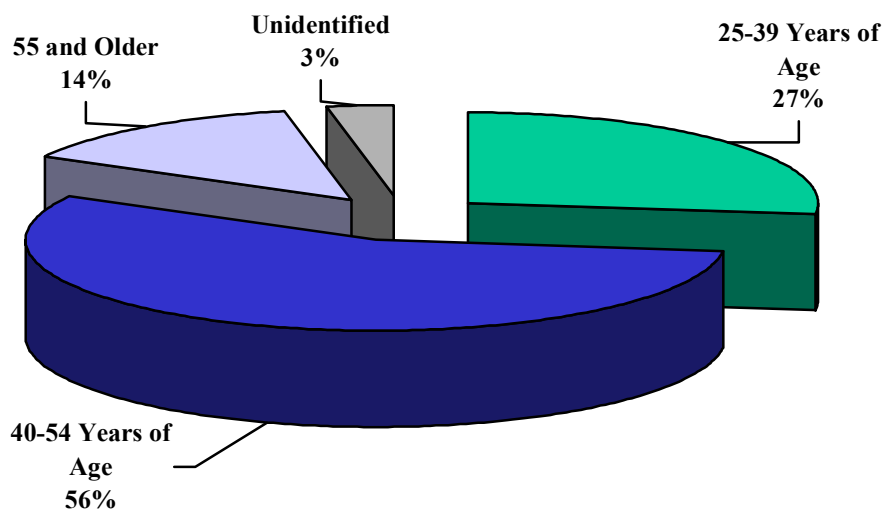


Figure 5

Respondent Characteristics: Income Source

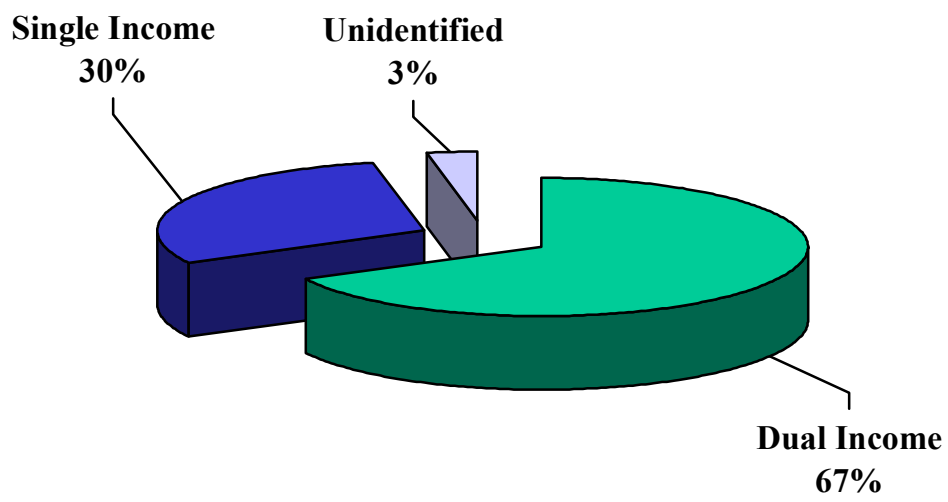
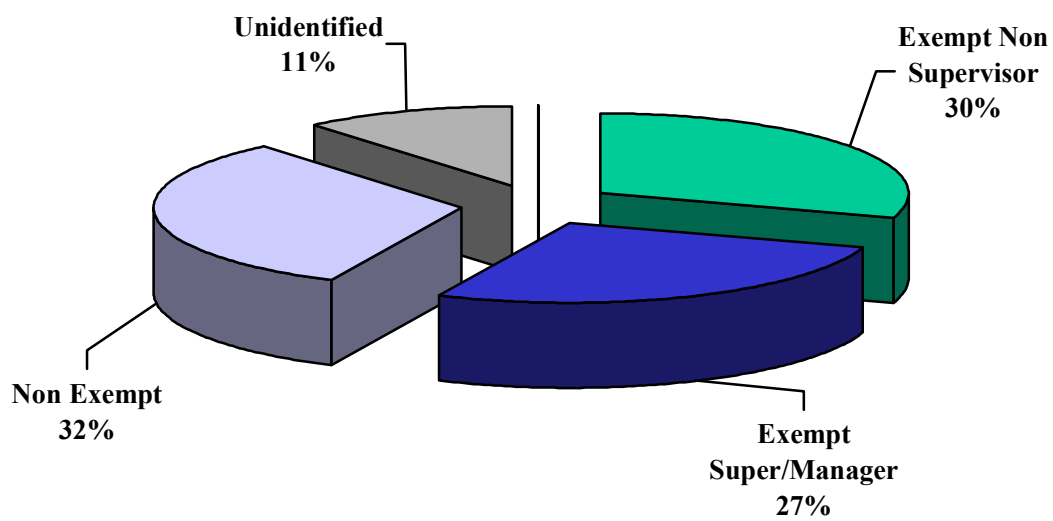


Figure 6

Respondent Characteristics: Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Status



Percent of Government Employers Offering Family Friendly Benefits versus Overall Industry Average

Work Life Benefit	Government (n = 25)	Overall (n = 370)
Dependent care flexible spending account	80%	79%
Flextime	72%	56%
Telecommuting on a part-time basis	20%	37%
Compressed workweek	48%	33%
Paid family leave	48%	30%
Health care benefits for foster children	20%	29%
Bring child to work in an emergency	24%	27%
Family leave above and beyond required federal FMLA	36%	26%
Family leave above and beyond required state FMLA	32%	25%
Eldercare referral service	17%	21%
Childcare referral service	20%	20%
Adoption assistance	8%	20%
Lactation program/designated area	4%	19%
Telecommuting on a full-time basis	12%	19%
Job sharing	24%	19%
Parental leave above and beyond federal FMLA leave	32%	18%
Parental leave above and beyond state FMLA leave	28%	18%
Eldercare leave above and beyond federal FMLA	20%	11%
Eldercare leave above and beyond state FMLA	16%	11%
Foster care assistance	8%	6%
On site childcare center	4%	6%
Emergency/sick childcare	16%	6%
Subsidized cost of childcare	4%	5%
Company supported childcare center	0%	4%
Emergency eldercare	4%	3%
Subsidized cost of eldercare	4%	1%
Company supported eldercare center	4%	1%
On site eldercare center	4%	1%
24/7 childcare	0%	<1%
Paid childcare	0%	0%
Paid eldercare	0%	0%
Wellness Program, resources and information	83%	62%
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	92%	73%

Table 2

Age and Gender Related Information

Age	Total (n=36)	Male (n=15)	Female (n=21)
24 years and younger	0%	0%	0%
25-39 years of age	28%	27%	28%
40-54 years of age	58%	46%	67%
55 and older	14%	27%	5%

Table 3

Gender and Position Classification

Position Classification	Total (n=33)	Male (n=14)	Female (n=19)
Exempt Non Supervisor	33%	29%	37%
Exempt Supervisor Manager	30%	42%	21%
Non Exempt	37%	29%	42%

Table 4

Top Concerns of Respondents

Area of concern	Mean
Having enough time for myself	2.2973
Taking care of my own health and fitness	2.2432
Concerns about personal finances	2.2432
Concerns about retirement	2.2162
Concerns about paying for college for my older children	2.0541
Concerns about my future career	1.9459
Having time to take care of home or car repairs	1.8108
Handling school, medical, dental appointments, etc.	1.7027
Needing to work overtime or take work home	1.7027
Handling conflicts with my spouse or partner	1.7027
Taking care of my family's nutrition, health or fitness	1.6944
My relationship with co workers	1.6486
Having to care for dependent adults	1.6486
Lack of respect at work	1.6389
The need to find another job	1.5676
Preparing/Educating myself for the future	1.5135
Feeling lonely or lacking emotional support	1.5135
Concerns about job security	1.5135
Concerns about parenting	1.5000
My relationship with my immediate supervisor	1.4595

Table 7

Female Time Constraint Concerns (n=21)

	Minor Concern	Moderate Concern	Major Concern	Total Percent
Having enough time for self	29%	29%	19%	77%
Taking care of own health & fitness	33%	19%	14%	66%
Preparing/Educating self for future	29%	14%	0%	43%
Time for home and car repairs	38%	14%	5%	57%
Taking care of family's health	43%	10%	5%	58%
Handling school, medical appts	38%	19%	0%	57%

Table 8

Male Time Constraint Concerns (n=15)

	Minor Concern	Moderate Concern	Major Concern	Total Percent
Having enough time for self	20%	40%	7%	67%
Taking care of own health & fitness	27%	20%	27%	74%
Preparing/Educating self for future	27%	0%	7%	34%
Time for home and car repairs	47%	20%	0%	67%
Taking care of family's health	40%	0%	7%	47%
Handling school, medical appts	27%	20%	0%	47%

Table 9

Female Financial Concerns (n=21)

	Minor Concern	Moderate Concern	Major Concern	Total Percent
Concerns about personal finances	33%	29%	19%	81%
Concerns about paying for college	24%	33%	10%	67%
Concerns about job security	24%	14%	0%	38%
Concerns about future career	43%	19%	5%	67%
The need to find another job	33%	5%	5%	43%
Concerns about retirement	43%	33%	5%	81%

Table 10

Male Financial Concerns (n=15)

	Minor Concern	Moderate Concern	Major Concern	Total Percent
Concerns about personal finances	40%	7%	13%	60%
Concerns about paying for college	24%	20%	7%	51%
Concerns about job security	27%	13%	0%	40%
Concerns about future career	33%	20%	7%	60%
The need to find another job	13%	13%	0%	26%
Concerns about retirement	40%	33%	7%	80%

APPENDIX A

July 15, 2006

Dear City of Lafayette Employee:

My name is Lisa Chrisman and I work for the City of Westminster as a Senior Human Resource Analyst. I am asking for your help in completing a "Human Capital Survey" for City of Lafayette employees. The purpose of this survey is two-fold. First, the survey is part of my graduate research project, and is necessary for completion of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Organizational Behavior. Second, this survey will provide information to help City of Lafayette Human Resource staff evaluate work and home-life issues. Work life is the practice of providing initiatives designed to create a more flexible, supportive work environment, enabling employees to focus on work tasks while at work. Programs are designed to meet the needs of both the business and employees. We believe that work and home-life issues have a significant effect on one another. If possible, an organization may be able to help employees balance the often-conflicting attention both areas demand

We are conducting this study to help us find out the best way for the city to do just that. While we can promise no specific changes at this time, the study will allow us to hear from each of you about your needs, opinions, and situations, so we can evaluate and design potential appropriate responses. The survey consists of four sections and takes about 15 minutes to complete. The first section of the survey focuses on Work-Life Impact. These questions focus on how employees balance work and home life. The second section addresses the company culture, and supervising practices. This section asked questions relating to how managers or supervisors help or hinder employees who have outside stresses. The third section addresses Programs and Practices. These questions asked about the employee's awareness of and satisfaction with company programs, policies and benefits. Finally, the fourth section asks about demographics. This section is voluntary, yet highly encouraged, as it helped to categorize and analyze the responses.

The information you provide is strictly confidential. Once you complete the survey, you will place the survey in an envelope and seal it. Your name will not be on the survey or the envelope. You will turn the envelope in to human resource staff, or myself and then place your name in a hat for a drawing. The sealed envelopes that contain the surveys will be turned into myself for data input and analysis. Once everyone has completed the survey, ten individuals will be randomly selected to receive \$10.00 Chamber Bucks gift certificates.

In order to guarantee confidentiality, Human Resource staff will not be involved in any part of the survey process. They will not see the returned surveys, nor will they see the raw data. They will receive a summary of the findings and recommendations for change, if any.

Thank you for your participation. We value and appreciate your help and cooperation with this project.

Sincerely,

Lisa Chrisman (Capstone Project Researcher)

HUMAN CAPITAL SURVEY

Section I. Work-Life Impact

I-A. Have any of the following been a source of stress, anxiety or distraction from work during the past year?

	Major Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	No Problem	Not Applicable
1. Having enough time for myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Taking care of my own health and fitness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. My relationship with my immediate supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Feeling lonely or lacking emotional support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Preparing or educating myself for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Having time to take care of home or car repairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Dealing with a separation or divorce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Dealing with chemical dependency issues at home or work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Having to care for dependent adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Missing work when dependent adults need attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Needing to work overtime or take work home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Concerns about my organization's ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The inability to have a flexible work arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The impact of business travel on my family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Needing assistance or destination services for my family when I'm being relocated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Concerns about personal finances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Being a single parent or parent with joint custody	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Handling conflicts with my spouse or partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. My relationship with coworkers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Dealing with family violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Lack of respect at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. My own mental health and stability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Finding quality childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Finding affordable childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Arranging care or paying for care for sick children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Missing work to care for sick children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Taking care of or finding care for special needs children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Concerns about parenting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Concerns about job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Concerns about my future career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Taking care of my family's nutrition, health or fitness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Handling school, medical, dental appointments, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Concerns about paying for college for my older children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. Concerns about retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. The need to find another job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I-B. Impact of work-life conflicts

a. Check any of the following that happened because of or in connection with a personal or family issue, or a work-life conflict

36. I declined to travel on business	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. I thought seriously about quitting my job	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. I was unwilling to relocate	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. I accepted a less responsible position	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. I left work undone	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. I was too tired to concentrate on work	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. I missed work due to stress, or stress-related illness at least three times	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 43. I arrived at work late or left early at least three times
- 44. I had to leave a new baby too soon
- 45. I had to miss an important event in a family member's life
- 46. I had to leave my child unattended because care was unavailable
- 47. I used my own paid sick leave to care for a sick child or dependent adult
- 48. I used my vacation days to care for a sick child or dependent adult
- 49. I was often too tired to participate in family gatherings
- 50. I was distracted by negative feelings about my supervisor
- 51. I felt more committed to the company
- 52. I felt less committed to my job
- 53. I was less concerned about our customers
- 54. I felt more concerned about our customers
- 55. I did not do my best work
- 56. I lied to my supervisor

I-C Estimate the number of regular work hours you have taken off during the past 12 months for each of the items below

- 57. Arranging care for an infant _____ hours
- 58. Arranging care for a toddler or preschooler _____
- 59. Arranging care for a school-age child _____
- 60. Arranging or providing emergency or backup care _____
- 61. Arranging or providing holiday or summer care _____
- 62. Arranging or providing permanent care for an older or disabled adult _____
- 63. Arranging or providing emergency or temporary care for an older or disabled adult _____
- 64. Appointments or errands for an older or disabled adult _____

I-D How do you feel about the following?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
66. This company's work-life policies are fair, appropriate and sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
67. My co-workers are understanding when home life issues interfere with work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
68. The stress of dealing with work issues often has a negative effect on my family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
69. The company has given me all the help I need to handle my home life issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
70. The stress of dealing with home life issues often has a negative effect on my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
71. It is usually easy for me to manage the demands of both work and home life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
72. My career path at this company is limited because of the pressures of home life demands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
73. My career path at this company is limited because I am using or have used a flexible work option	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
74. I would 'walk an extra mile' for this company because of the way I am treated here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
75. I believe my family would rather I worked for a different company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
76. I am actively looking for another job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
77. I am considering looking for another job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
78. I would describe myself as engaged in my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section II. Company culture, management and supervising practices

II-A. How do you feel about the following?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79. My supervisor is understanding when home life issues interfere with work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
80. My supervisor focuses on results, rather than the time I am at my desk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
81. I am working here only because I have no other choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
82. If I request a flexible work option my supervisor will support me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
83. My leaders welcome and listen to my suggestions about the work we do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
84. I believe my supervisor treats me with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
85. I have the technology I need to do my best work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
86. My supervisor seldom gives me praise or recognition for the work I do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
87. I trust my organization's leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
88. I feel I owe this company my best effort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
89. The work I do is not all that important to this company's success	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
90. If I could find another job with better pay, I would leave this organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
91. If I could find another job where I would be treated with respect, I would take it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
92. If I could find another job where I could have more flexibility, I would take it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
93. I am totally committed to this company, and the work I do here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
94. Women and minorities are at a disadvantage at this company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
95. I would recommend this organization to a friend looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
96. If this company was more supportive I could be more productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
97. I am generally satisfied with how I am treated by this company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section III. Programs and Practices

III-A. How well have we communicated about these programs and practices, and how satisfied are you with them?

	Not aware, not interested	Not aware, interested	Aware, not interested	Have used, satisfied	Have used, not satisfied
98. Part-time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
99. Job sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
100. Telecommuting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101. Flextime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102. Compressed workweek	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103. Employee assistance program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104. Personal leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105. Medical leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106. Parental leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107. Educational leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108. Childcare/eldercare resource and referral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109. Dependent care spending account	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 110. Adoption benefit
- 111. Retirement planning program
- 112. Lactation program
- 113. Wellness program

III-B. If the following were available to you, how likely is it that you would use them now or within two to three years?

- 114. Part-time employment
- 115. Job sharing
- 116. Telecommuting
- 117. Flextime
- 118. Compressed workweek
- 119. Help finding or providing summer or school-age childcare
- 120. Quality, affordable infant or toddler childcare at a location convenient to work
- 121. Quality, affordable pre-kindergarten child development at a location convenient to work
- 122. Subsidized sick childcare at a sick care facility
- 123. Subsidized care for sick dependents in my home
- 124. Insurance to help provide long-term care

Section IV. Demographics

Your answers to these questions are strictly voluntary, but they will be much appreciated, since they'll help us analyze your responses by groups.

IV-A

- a. Are you 1. Male 2. Female
- b. Are you 1. Single 2. Married, or living w/partner
- c. Is your age 1. 24 and under 2. 25-39 3. 40-54 4. 55+
- d. Is your income status 1. Single income 2. Dual income

IV-B. If you consider yourself responsible, solely or jointly, for the care of children, how many of those children are in each age group? (Check the appropriate box)

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Infant or toddler (under 3 years) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Preschooler (3 to 5 years) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Kindergarten to 6 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Middle School/Junior High | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. High School | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. College age or young adult | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

IV-C. Do you plan to have or adopt a child in the future?

1. No 2. Yes, within the next year 3. Yes, within the next two to four years

IV-D. Do you consider yourself responsible for the care of an adult, or do you anticipate having that responsibility in the next five years?

1. Now responsible 2. Anticipate having that responsibility within the next year
3. Anticipate within the next five years

IV-E. Are you . . .

1. Exempt, non-supervisory 2. Exempt, supervisor/manager 3. Non exempt

Section V. Your Comments



Academic Affairs
Academic Grants

3333 Regis Boulevard, H-4
Denver, Colorado 80221-1099

303-458-4206
303-964-3647 FAX
www.regis.edu

IRB – REGIS UNIVERSITY

June 23, 2006

Lisa Chrisman
5796 W. 115th Place
Westminster, CO 80020

RE: IRB #: 049-06

Dear Lisa:

Your application to the Regis IRB for your project “Work-Life Benefits for the City of Lafayette, Colorado” was approved on June 23, 2006.

If changes are made in the research plan that significantly alter the involvement of human subjects from that which was approved in the named application, the new research plan must be resubmitted to the Regis IRB for approval. In addition, it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to promptly report to the IRB any inquiries to human subjects and/or any unanticipated problems within the scope of the approved research which may pose risks to human subjects. Lastly, it is the responsibility of the investigator to maintain signed consent documents for a period of three years after the conclusion of the research.

Sincerely,

Edwin May
Director

cc: Robert Collins, Ph.D.