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**INTRINSIC REWARDS INCREASE JOB PERFORMANCE  
WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION**

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**A Research Project  
Presented to the Faculty of  
The George L. Graziadio  
School of Business and Management  
Pepperdine University**

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**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science  
in  
Organization Development**

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**by  
Meredith Catalini  
August 2012**

This research project, completed by

MEREDITH CATALINI

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2012

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## **Abstract**

Employee motivational programs consist of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. This project showed the impact the use of intrinsic reward systems had on employee feelings of satisfaction and increased performance. The study was conducted with an organization that supports developmentally disabled adults. The focus was to improve medication administration practices by decreasing the number of medication errors made by employees. The data utilized to conduct this study consisted of pre- and post-intervention employee interviews, database information, and application of intrinsic approaches with employees. The conclusion showed that there was a significant decrease in errors after intrinsic management practices were implemented. The findings also revealed that an increase in teamwork and job satisfaction were additional positive results of the project.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Revenue decreases and budget constraints brought on by the current economic crisis can take a toll on employee performance and satisfaction. Many organizations are being forced to decrease or eliminate monetary reward systems and are therefore seeking ways to show appreciation for employees while continuing to motivate employees without incurring more cost.

With the stress and strains of the economic downturn in the United States, it is important that employees feel appreciated and satisfied at their place of employment. Organizations can benefit from a serious review of their non-monetary reward systems to see where they might be enhanced. The impact of not ensuring that employees are connecting with their employers may be seen in products or services that are not up to standards and an increase in turnover and increase in cost for employers. Feelings of importance and belonging can lead to a high quality of work without incentives from monetary rewards.

Focus on employees has evolved over the past several years, and companies are taking more of a proactive stance towards ensuring employees are satisfied with their place of employment and feel a level of commitment and connection to employers. Employee satisfaction is often not a primary focus of an employer. Companies routinely focus on finances, production, and pleasing customers and neglect the impact their actions or lack of action has on employee satisfaction. “The essence of competitiveness is liberated when we make people believe that what they think and do is important—and then get out of their way while they do it,” said Jack Welch of General Electric (n.d.).

The importance of employee satisfaction should not be underestimated. Take Google, for example. Google has been praised for its unique approach to rewarding employees. Its practices include an approach that streamlines creative ideas from all employee levels, and the results have brought about ideas that produce blockbuster new products on a regular basis. Google also shows employee appreciation by creating work environments that are supportive of employees' work and personal lives. Items such as large cafeterias and break rooms with free food, on-site swimming pools and exercise rooms, childcare, and pets allowed on site are enhancing the work experience of employees ("How Google Inc. Rewards Its Employees," 2010).

Several research projects have been conducted to show a correlation between employee satisfaction and its enhancement of employee motivation and performance. Finding the right balance is important as it will have positive effects on several aspects of an organization including lowering turnover rates and increasing productivity and profit. Several case studies have been conducted on organizations that have seen financial gain due to employee satisfaction. For example, T-Mobile USA has ranked low in employee satisfaction in past years. It has focused on improving employee satisfaction and has made improvements to the gap between its brand promise and employee engagement. T-Mobile's implementation of its rewards and recognition program has had a direct impact on sales which led to a profit increase by allowing it to grow into an agency that holds over 20 million customers. It is also important to note that it has seen an attrition decrease of 15% as employee satisfaction has been increased by 10% (Flanagan, 2005).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to conduct an action research project to increase client safety through creating conditions of high performance. Focus was placed on using

intrinsic rewards and motivators to enhance the work quality of employees while creating an environment that was more conducive to maintaining and improving client health and safety.

### **Outcome Goal**

The expected outcome of the project was to reduce errors in medication dispensing to disabled adults through the use of intrinsic practices with employees.

The intrinsic practices utilized to reduce errors included (a) the development of managers to modify their management style so they deliberately used intrinsic reward practices and adopted a higher level of participative techniques and (b) the use of trainings such as Appreciative Inquiry in meetings to enhance opportunities for employee input and engagement.

The research question was as follows: Could the implementation of intrinsic reward practices decrease medication administration errors?

### **Organization Information**

This action research project was conducted at People Creating Success, Inc. (PCS). PCS is an organization which provides support services to adults with developmental disabilities within the state of California. PCS opened in 2001 in California and agency locations include Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, Northern Los Angeles, and the Antelope Valley region. The organization's mission is to provide exceptional support to the disabled adult population so they can remain living in the environment of their choice while having the benefits of accessing their communities and being included in the neighborhoods and communities where they reside. The population supported varies in ability levels and service hours. Levels of support hours range from a

few hours per week to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week depending on a person's wants, needs, ability levels, and safety skills.

During the duration of the project, the agency was supporting 200 individuals within California and employed more than 400 employees. PCS focuses on setting up each region with appropriate infrastructures so that high-quality services and support can be delivered.

The organization is responsible for hiring, training, and oversight of support employees; additional responsibilities include the well-being and quality of life for the people receiving service. Employees range in age and experience; each region is unique in its employee pool. The Santa Barbara region has a younger employee pool due to the location of the University of California, Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara City College. The employees are often college age and working while completing their education. The region does experience a higher turnover rate than the other locations due to students graduating and moving on. The Ventura, North Los Angeles, and Antelope Valley regions tend to have older employees who are looking for long-term employment. Employees in these regions tend to have less formal education but have many years of care-giving experience.

The agency is funded by the state of California through the Department of Developmental Services. The past few years have challenged the financial security of the agency and industry with state budget cuts, rate decreases, new state regulations, and mandates. The effects of the state's economy correlate with the decreased ability of PCS to provide regular salary increases, performance-related bonuses, and other monetary rewards to employees. State funding is low, which leads to low hourly pay for employees. The goal to empower employees, encourage high work performance, and

promote work satisfaction is a challenge to express through pay rates and monetary incentives. Providing a work environment that encourages employees to take ownership of their work and understand the importance of supporting someone in need can be a powerful tool in achieving success for clients and employees.

It is important that employee satisfaction and motivation are high at PCS because, when lacking, this can lead to inadequate oversight of the disabled individuals to whom PCS is committed.

### **Client Safety**

The health and safety of the clients who receive support from PCS is of the utmost importance. Many supported individuals have medical needs that include receipt of daily medications, monitoring of blood pressure and blood sugar levels, seizure oversight, swallowing and aspiration concerns, and use of gastric tubes for feeding purposes. PCS employees dispense over 900 doses of medication daily. The client population includes aging adults who have been on medications for more than 30 years and have high health risks due to the years on medications which have caused harm to their internal organs.

Support employees are responsible for administering or supervising the administration of medication several times per day. It is common that an individual would have five or more medications that he or she is required to take three to four times per day. PCS follows the five rights protocol when training employees on medication.

The rights are as follows:

1. Right person
2. Right medication
3. Right dose

4. Right time
5. Right route

Employees currently receive a four-hour classroom training which includes lecture, hands-on exercises, and a written and hands-on test. Each employee is required to complete the training prior to giving medications. Additional training also includes a hands-on practice session within the home where they will be working. Trainees watch a senior staff or manager administer medications and then they are shadowed while they complete the process themselves.

### **Employee Discipline Protocol**

The following is an excerpt from the *PCS Employee Handbook* stating the progressive discipline protocol:

The discipline process outlined in this handbook is designed to ensure fair and reasonable treatment of our employees and to provide employees with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to correct and improve. All written and verbal warnings will remain in the employee's personnel file.

The following measures are available under progressive discipline:

- Verbal/First warning with documentation. This is conducted as an in-service/training. Documentation must be submitted to Human Resources.
- Written/Second warning with documentation. Documentation must be submitted to Human Resources.
- Suspension of up to three days without pay and a final warning. Human Resources must be notified prior to suspension and must receive all documentation.
- Terminations must be authorized by Human Resources.

Typical procedure for a staff-caused medication administration error is disciplinary action and re-training. Disciplinary action can include verbal or written warning, suspension, or termination depending on prior disciplinary action for similar offences and/or severity of incident. For example, a staff member whose first medication error is forgetting to sign the medication administration record after medication is successfully taken by the client may be given a verbal warning. A staff member who incorrectly assists an individual with administration of a seizure-related medication that causes an increase in seizure activity would get a written warning or be suspended. All medication errors that are clearly staffed-caused errors will result in some type of disciplinary action that includes mandatory re-taking of the medication training and testing process.

### **Management Style**

The overall leadership style within PCS is centered on a participative approach. It can be seen throughout the agency daily as leaders, employees, clients, and families come together to plan future goals, brainstorm ideas, and create person-centered approaches to care for each client. Employees, regardless of level, are encouraged to participate in meetings and planning sessions each month, including administration team meetings, manager meetings, and planning sessions. Attendance at the higher level meetings by direct-care employees is optional, but an open invitation is commonly extended. Employee and staff teams are encouraged to participate in annual agency strategic planning as well.

While the espoused management style is participative, at times the practiced style could be considered more of an autocratic style. The agency is focused on treating each client and employee as an individual; and although group discussions and planning



sessions are the norm, there are outside factors that can lead managers to an autocratic leadership style during certain situations. PCS is governed by the state of California through the Department of Developmental Service and state-run regional centers. As a provider agency, it is mandatory that certain state regulations are maintained at all times. State-wide policies and protocols do dictate agency practices on items such as housing, medication, and staffing ratios. Due to the mandate to have these practices followed and upheld, it has been observed that managers can fall into a directive, command-type leadership style when approaching these items with their teams and when implementing the progressive discipline policy pertaining to medication errors.

Another contributing factor that hinders managers' styles is additional demands placed on them as a consequence of the funding reductions from the state to social services. The organization determined three years ago that a manageable caseload consisted of 8 to 10 clients. The recent cut in revenue caused manager caseloads to grow to 12 to 15 clients, which caused an increase in the number of employees they supervise as well. The increase in case loads, employee teams, and tasks caused a decrease in the amount of time each manager has to spend with teams and within each home.

### **Organization of Thesis**

This chapter began with a brief discussion of the benefits of intrinsic rewards and the importance of their use in today's financial climate. Then an introduction to the action research project that was conducted was outlined. Information was shared pertaining to the organization that participated in the project.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review of past research regarding worker satisfaction and motivation and their relationship to performance. It presents studies that show the impact rewards, leadership, and culture have on feelings of satisfaction and

significance amongst employees. The chapter summarizes completed research projects that focused on either intrinsic or extrinsic systems of motivation. Results are discussed in detail.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology used during the research. The overview describes the practices used to acquire both qualitative and quantitative data. Both hard and soft data were collected to compile information throughout the project. The research design and setting are explained, including the research population.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, which includes a detailed description of the results. The chapter includes the qualitative information gathered from the pre- and post-interview process as well as the quantitative information from the database. The chapter also provides a detailed description of the trainings and the results from the manager and employee training sessions.

Chapter 5 ends the study with a brief summary of the study and its findings, followed by the conclusions drawn and limitations of the study. It also shares recommendations to managers at the case organization and includes suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

This chapter will review past studies and articles that have been presented on the subjects of employee motivation, reward systems, and employee satisfaction. The studies reviewed were chosen because they all focus on the correlation of both an intrinsic or extrinsic reward system and the benefits they have towards employee motivation and satisfaction.

Numerous research projects and articles have been completed to show the importance of employee satisfaction to enhance motivation. Theorist Frederick Herzberg developed a well-known theory pertaining to satisfaction and motivation (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). One of the most used theories worldwide, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Two-Factor Theory) was designed to better understand employee motivation and attitudes. Studies were completed to determine which factors in the workplace caused satisfaction and which factors caused dissatisfaction. The model depicts satisfiers as motivators and dissatisfiers as hygiene factors. The following top factors were discovered as items that affect job attitudes:

- Leading to Dissatisfaction: Company policy, supervision, relationship with boss, work conditions, salary, and relationships with peers.
- Leading to Satisfaction: Achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth.

Herzberg challenged basic assumptions about what motivates employees. His theory states that pay has little impact on employee motivation. Herzberg argued the point that it is important to have job enrichment to enhance intrinsic motivation. Satisfaction and motivation can be improved by offering challenges, increasing

responsibility, and matching job tasks to employee skills so employees can be utilized in tasks they can successfully complete. Effective task matching provides a higher level of significance to the work task for employees, therefore providing feelings of satisfaction and self-esteem based on successful completion of job responsibilities.

It is important to note that while widely popular, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is sometimes criticized as biased and based on inaccurate research. The controversy regarding the theory has been debated for years, but the theory is now being reexamined in a positive light as a leadership tool amid emerging research around positive psychology. The practice of positive leadership is in line with many of the findings of Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Sachau, 2007).

Another group of historical motivation studies that dates back to 1924 is the Hawthorne studies which produced the Hawthorne Effect. The Hawthorne Effect is based on numerous experiments carried out from 1924 to 1932 at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in Chicago. The experiments tested the effects of environmental differences on employee performance. The findings showed that there was not a large discrepancy in how employees performed when some had best practice work conditions and others had less than favorable conditions. Four general conclusions were drawn from the Hawthorne studies:

- "The aptitudes of individuals are imperfect predictors of job performance."
- "Informal organization affects productivity."
- "Work-group norms affect productivity."
- "The workplace is a social system" (Mayo, Roethlisberger, & Dickson, 2009, p. 1).

An important piece of information derived from the Hawthorne studies was that something more than pay incentives was improving the employees' output within work groups. Researchers found there was improvement in the work due to the fact that employees felt important because someone was studying them at work and called that the Hawthorne effect (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996).

Several approaches or theories are thought to be correlated with employee satisfaction. Approaches may be used as independent motivators or used in conjunction with other motivating practices. Some examples include a positive work environment, an inclusive culture, extrinsic and intrinsic reward systems, and leadership and empowerment opportunities.

The approaches reviewed are extrinsic and intrinsic reward systems. Extrinsic motivation can be described as motivation that comes from outside an individual. The motivation comes from an external item such as money, additional benefits, trips, and material incentives. The significance of the reward can cause motivation within people to do a job well even if they are not receiving satisfaction from the particular task. Intrinsic motivation can be described as motivation that comes from within a person such as happiness, gratitude, and self-worth. Employees may place a value on receiving the extrinsic motivation or feeling intrinsic motivation and therefore can feel a sense of satisfaction about their performance which may cause increased motivation.

This thesis studied the value of employee satisfaction and its direct effect on motivation and performance. It is hypothesized that employees who feel valued and satisfied within their work environment will display higher levels of motivation. The following review will examine studies that demonstrate and support that hypothesis.

## **Extrinsic Rewards**

Monetary rewards are a commonly used approach in many work environments; there are countless reports of research done on the positive effects of monetary and other extrinsic rewards. In a book by Gerhart and Rynes (2000), it was noted that “There is overwhelming evidence that money is an important motivator for most people” (p. 391).

A research article by Jenkins, Gupta, Mitra, and Shaw (1998) showed that there is motivation to enhance work performance when extrinsic rewards are provided. The study was conducted using a meta-analytic review of empirical research, and the goal behind the study was to determine whether monetary rewards or gifts and material items were more apt to increase motivation and productivity amongst employees. The method used was to identify empirical studies of financial incentives and performance and then identify them in three categories: computerized database, manual searches, and examinations of reference lists. An inclusive criterion was set and seven decision rules were completed to define inclusion criteria. In all, 39 studies containing 47 incentives based on financial value and performance-related statistics made up the database. Forty-one of the statistics pertained to the quantity of performance and six pertained to the quality of performance.

The results of this meta-analysis study showed that extrinsic rewards do correlate with a higher level of performance and outcomes from employees seeking to obtain the rewards. Data concluded that an increase in activity ranged from .24% to .54%, showing a positive correlation between extrinsic rewards and increased quantity. Material rewards were more effective in increasing performance, but monetary offerings also had a positive effect and increase in performance.

The meta-analysis study completed by Jenkins et al. (1998) does indicate that extrinsic rewards based on material items and monetary compensation can increase employee performance, but it is important to point out that the study does not prove that employee satisfaction and motivation are maintained for the long term and will sustain at a high level if the material and monetary enticements are not continuously offered.

The research studies summarized above show that extrinsic motivators can improve performance and satisfaction of employees in a variety of jobs and roles. It is important to also explain that there may be a direct relationship between how extrinsic rewards are structured and presented to employees, since the approach can have either a positive long-term effect on motivation and performance or the opposite effect and cause feelings of unfairness among employees, which will lead to job dissatisfaction and decreased motivation. An article titled “Getting ‘More Bang for the Buck’: Symbolic Value of Monetary Rewards in Organizations” (Mickel & Barron, 2008) discussed the importance of setting up an extrinsic reward system so that it is effective in increasing motivation and satisfaction.

Symbolic value can be explained as the meaning associated with the monetary or material reward. If the system set up to decide who receives rewards and how they are dispersed is seen as flawed by employees, the effects of the reward system may have negative results. The article went on to explain that several factors need to be considered when designing a system that has intentions of motivating employees through extrinsic satisfaction. Fairness issues must be considered.

According to equity theory and distributive justice, employees must feel that the reward is fair and equitable. It is also important the practice of determining who receives the reward is a fair and honest practice. One must consider several aspects of employee

roles and performance and cannot just be based on a sole category such as attitude or performance. If a person has a high output for performance but is not considered a team player or is one who displays a negative attitude in the workplace, that person's receipt of the reward may cause other employees to view the reward practice as not fair. Therefore where the reward might have had a direct motivational effect on one employee, it indirectly might cause a decrease in satisfaction and motivation for a group of employees.

Distribution practices such as who is presenting the reward, why the rewards are distributed, how they are distributed, and who receives them and why are all important factors in the success of extrinsic reward programs. The article discussed the importance employees feel when rewards are given by high-up executives and in a setting where they feel recognized by many at the workplace.

### **Extrinsic and Intrinsic Rewards**

Next, the topic of employee motivation caused by extrinsic as well as intrinsic rewards is addressed in a research article by Lin (2007). Lin's research looked specifically at the effects of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on employees' knowledge-sharing behaviors with others. The idea is that sharing information amongst employees can increase job satisfaction and motivation. From an extrinsic standpoint, the knowledge sharing is approached based on a cost-benefit analysis, comparing rewards (benefits) from an exchange with effort (cost). From an intrinsic motivation viewpoint, the knowledge sharing can enhance self-worth and self-esteem by the increase in knowledge gained and the ability to share knowledge with others.

The study was completed in Taiwan and was based on a survey of 172 employees from 50 different companies within Taiwan. In the research article, knowledge sharing was defined as "a social interaction culture, involving the exchange of employee



knowledge, experiences, and skills throughout the whole department or organization” (p. 136). The research showed that reward systems motivate employees to feel good about themselves and their work and therefore employees are more motivated to share information with co-workers and department teams.

Research was conducted on 50 randomly selected organizations. Five hundred questionnaires were given to the 50 organizations and 172 were completed and used for the study. The results of the study showed that employees are motivated to provide knowledge sharing when it is associated with intrinsic rewards.

Employees who are encouraged to share information and knowledge with co-workers and work teams experienced higher levels of satisfaction about their work experience. The satisfaction is directly related to an increase in motivation. Motivation is enhanced due to the fact that employees want to gain knowledge and information so that they can share with others and enhance not only their work experience, but the experience of their co-workers as well.

### **Intrinsic Rewards**

In addition, several research articles showed that praise and recognition have a greater positive effect on raising employee satisfaction and increasing motivation than monetary rewards can provide.

An article by Luthans (2000) explained that employee recognition is an important and successful leadership tool. Luthans’ study was conducted through research of past articles on the benefits of employee appreciation as well as through a survey that involved 254 respondents. The survey was based on two simple questions: The first related to the need employees felt to be recognized for their work performance, and the second related to the criteria by which employees felt they should receive praise.

The results of the simple survey were very clear. Out of the 254 respondents, 243 said there was a strong desire for employee recognition. Based on information shared by participants, Luthans concluded that notes of thanks, acknowledgment of a job well done, and public recognition increased feelings of job satisfaction and increased motivation within the work setting. The second set of answers provided information showing employees' desire to have recognition be based on quality of work, performance, and work contributions. Few felt that recognition was motivating if it was based only on length of service or other subjective categories. The study showed that it was most significant for employees to receive genuine recognition and appreciation for their work and that it was most meaningful to have that as verbal recognition as opposed to a monetary reward. Final results concluded that leaders who take time to interact, listen, and show appreciation to their employees have an impact on employee satisfaction and motivation.

When looking at the importance of satisfaction and its effects on motivation of employees, the studies reviewed above, along with numerous other studies, show that when employees feel satisfied with their work and believe they are valued members of their place of employment, they have an increase in motivation. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational systems can enhance employee feelings of significance and increase motivation.

Leaders who take time to recognize employees for their work have a great effect on employee feelings about the importance of their work. Several articles and studies have revolved around the positive effects that praise and appreciation have on employees. Other studies show that leadership styles that include employee participation and regular feedback from all employee teams and positions have a direct effect on employee

satisfaction and buy-in. The increased level of buy-in to the organization and its mission increases employee motivation because people are made to feel important and are given a chance to share their ideas.

Leadership styles can also play an important part of intrinsic approaches. A study conducted by Webb (2007) compared three leadership styles. The models of leadership included transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. The study was conducted with 233 vice presidents and chief officers from 104 different Christian colleges. The participants rated the leadership styles of the college presidents. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was used to gain information on the three variables of leadership styles and the dependent variable of motivation towards extra focus and effort of work.

The findings showed that the majority of the presidents of the universities in the study practiced a transformational leadership approach with their employees. The study then went on to show how the hands-on, positive approach to leading teams directly affected the motivation of subordinates towards extra effort with their work responsibilities. The results indicated that the chief officers and vice presidents responded with high motivation to leaders who recognized followers as individuals; considered the unique abilities of others; focused on needs and ambitions of team members; and created environments that allowed workers to evaluate their values, goals, and human relations.

Psychology is another important piece of the intrinsic process. In an article by Wiegand and Geller (2005), positive psychology was defined as “a science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions which promises to improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and

meaningless” (p. 4). The article went on to state that the focus is on positive features of life, such as factors that enable hope, wisdom, creativity, future mindedness, courage, spirituality, and responsibility. It is noted that if one can understand the factors that can create positive human characteristics, the world can be a more perfect place.

The discussion by Wiegand and Geller was taken a step further in an article by Martin (2005). He analyzed the information shared by Wiegand and Geller regarding positive psychology and its effects on students and focused on applying the information to organizations. Martin discussed the role of positive psychology in enhancing satisfaction, motivation, and productivity in the workplace by looking at several items including leadership and management styles and their effects on motivation.

Authoritative leadership was defined as those leaders who set a high example for employees while also providing the necessary supports to attain those standards. Focus was given to leadership that is supportive rather than punitive and styles that are responsive to the needs of employees. Leadership styles that provide direction and accountability as well as praise, appreciation, and support were proposed to be the most effective leadership elements for nurturing and fostering a workforce that enjoys what it does and feels important and therefore is productive.

Many researchers believe that an organization’s provision of motivating environments is directly related to high levels of employee morale. Cotton and Hart (2003) found that interventions aimed at reducing withdrawal behavior are effective when improving staff morale and that achieving this must be done by improving the organizational climate, enhancing leadership, providing effective approaches to people management, and supporting appraisal and recognition processes, amongst other things.

It can be argued that providing a solid positive psychological approach to leadership within organizations can contribute to the feelings of significance of employees. Leadership styles that strive towards recognizing employee strengths and showing appreciation for team effort and insight are styles that enhance motivation of employees as well as improve feelings of belonging and meaningfulness of employees.

In addition to the research articles summarized above, an article by Bishay (1996) outlined research done on a group of teachers; the focus was to measure levels of job satisfaction and motivation. The study was done using 12 teachers; each teacher was given a pager that randomly beeped every day for a five-day span. Each time the pager beeped, the teachers immediately took six short surveys to rate their mood and activity. The Experience Sampling Method resulted in reports of teachers' daily moods and experiences. The Experience Sampling Method approach to collecting information allowed a good snapshot of a teacher's day and could assess what each teacher's thinking process and emotion ranges were throughout the day and week.

The study results showed that the teachers within the study were overall satisfied with their work and that they enjoyed teaching. The study found that teachers who had higher levels of responsibility were more satisfied with their jobs and therefore motivated to do their best. This does raise the question of whether job satisfaction increases as a result of responsibility or whether motivated teachers are more inclined to accept additional responsibilities. Increased responsibilities may lead to satisfaction because of the greater involvement, challenge, and control (Bishay, 1996).

### **Summary**

In summary, it is evident that a number of studies and discussions have occurred, and continue to occur, pertaining to the effects of rewards, their impacts on employee

feelings of satisfaction, and the effects those feelings have towards motivating employees and increasing performance.

Several methods can be used to enhance employee performance, but some approaches have a greater efficacy in creating employees who feel their work and input are relied upon and needed by an organization. Monetary rewards and gift items have been shown to have an effect on motivation but may not always lead to improving feelings of significance among workers. Long-term enhancement of employee importance can be shown through effective leadership styles and methods that may or may not be partnered with monetary rewards.

Encouraging employees to be true members of an organization through solicitation of their ideas, regular interactions with leaders, along with praise and recognition for work well done all contribute to the enhancement of employee satisfaction, which has been shown to lead to highly motivated employees who produce a high level and quality of work.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to conduct an action research project to increase client safety through creating conditions of high performance. Focus was placed on using intrinsic rewards and motivators to enhance the work quality of employees while creating an environment that is more conducive to maintaining and improving client health and safety.

#### **Research Design**

The study reviewed past information on medication errors when a consequence-based practice was in place. The initial data was based on practices that did not include open dialog and input from employees. The project then interjected intrinsic rewards with the sample population. The study then compared the original error data with the data collected on errors after the implementation of intrinsic approaches.

#### **Research Setting**

The project took place in five separate homes run by PCS. The homes were selected because of the number of medications administered daily, the amount of past errors, and the need for proper medication administration to ensure the health and safety of the clients. The sample type was purposive as homes were chosen because of the high medical needs of residents and the amount of medications administered daily in the sample homes.

Two of the homes were Adult Residential Facilities. Each home is operated by PCS but also has two governing agencies that require rules and regulations be in compliance at all times. The other three homes were Supported Living Service Homes, where the clients own or rent the homes they live in and have fewer state-mandated

regulations. Supported Living is set up so people have the same lives as those without disabilities. The two types of homes serve a range of one to four clients. For the use of this study, the five homes were labeled Home S, Home G, Home J, Home D, and Home C.

### **Research Population**

The research population consisted of 22 employees and 4 program managers. The 22 direct-care employees consisted of full- and part-time employees who work in the homes. The 22 employees represented a sample population from the employee pool of the five homes. A total of 50 employees worked in the five homes. All 50 employees were introduced to the project and their participation was requested; 22 of the 50 employees chose to participate. Each employee reviewed the study cover letter and participants signed a participant consent form (Appendix A). The employees ranged in length of time of employment from three months to three years and also ranged in the amount of hours they worked each week from 16 hours per week to 40 hours per week. All employees were responsible for oversight and administration assistance with medications and other medical needs such as doctor's appointments, follow-up care, hygiene maintenance, blood pressure and blood sugar readings, and notifying additional parties if a medical concern arose.

PCS program managers oversee an average of 30 employees each who work in several locations. This study also included the four program managers that oversaw the homes and employees involved in the project.

The PCS quality assurance database was the source of information and performance data. PCS conducts monthly reviews of medication and medical errors on an ongoing basis, and the information is kept in a PCS database system. The study



reviewed the database for medication errors to gather pre- and post-study statistics. No clients were directly involved. For confidentiality purposes, the client names, addresses, diagnoses, and other private information are not shared.

### **Sources of Data**

The organization used for this study is PCS. The organization has given permission for this project which included database information and access to employees for interviews.

Data was collected from pre-existing data collection systems which were derived from incident reports. Information on type of error, location of error, result of error, person making error, and amount of errors was collected and recorded in the database. Baseline data was reviewed for October, November, and December 2011 and post-action data was gathered from January, February, and March 2012.

In addition to the data collected from pre-existing systems, interviews were conducted with the 22 support employees. Each participant completed a pre- and post-intervention interview. The purpose of the interview process was to access information from each participant to gain better insight as to how the change in approach of leadership and the implementation of intrinsic practices supported their outcomes and medication practices.

### **Method of Research Used**

For this study, qualitative and quantitative methods of research were utilized. The qualitative approach was utilized to assess the feelings of employees through a voluntary interview process. Qualitative research was used to gain supporting information on employee levels of satisfaction, feelings and attitude towards their work, comfort level with medications, and the intrinsic reward practices.

The same interviewer met with each employee on an individual basis for the interviews. Interviews were conducted at the PCS Ventura office after work hours. Focus was given to creating a comfortable setting without interruptions. All interviewees participated on a voluntary basis. Each individual signed a consent form and understood he or she could opt out of the study at any time. Interviews were conducted at the beginning of the process and then a follow-up interview was conducted at the conclusion of the intrinsic practices. The following questions were used for the interview process:

1. How would you rank your job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5? 5 being the highest level of satisfaction. (pre/post)
2. What thought process led to your ranking on job satisfaction? (pre/post)
3. Do you feel your ideas are heard and appreciated? (pre/post)
4. What do you value about your role at work? (pre/post)
5. Have you ever met with your manager for progressive discipline? (pre)
6. What are some things your manager could do/or stop doing to support you with reducing medication errors? (pre)
7. How comfortable are you with the medication administration process?  
(pre/post)
8. Do you feel your input is valued when protocols are developed within the agency or the home you work? (pre/post)
9. What style of communication do you relate well to in regards to talking with managers and leadership teams? (pre)
10. What changes, if any, did you feel about your job satisfaction in the past 5 months? (post)

11. Which management style change/training practice did you appreciate most?  
(post)

12. Which, if any, did you feel was effective at decreasing medication errors?  
(post)

A coding process was used to determine themes from the employee responses.

The process was used to gather unbiased information from the interview process.

Quantitative data was also collected to show the actual numbers on the decrease or increase of medication errors during the study timeline. The database tracks medication errors monthly within the agency. Information is uploaded onto the database to be used for later analysis and annual reports to governing agencies as well as internal reviews within the organization.

Medication errors include missing signatures on medication administration records and inaccurate information on the medication administration records. Other errors are issues that arise during medication dispensing and administration of items such as missed medication, wrong medication given to clients, wrong doses given to clients, as well as missed medical appointments that are required on a regular basis to monitor medication levels.

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the people, data, and research approach used in the study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to determine whether an intrinsic system can enhance practices and procedures that ensure health and safety. The interview process was utilized to gain information specifically from employees who work directly with the population and who are responsible for daily medication administration.

Their views on the practice were extremely important because they are the people responsible for ensuring another's health and safety.

The data collection tracked pre- and post-study was utilized to show if there was an increase or decrease in errors during the duration of the study and to test the research question. The next chapter reports the results of the study.

## Chapter 4

### Results

This study was an action research project intended to increase client safety through creating conditions of high performance. The study used intrinsic rewards and motivators to enhance the work quality of employees while creating an environment that is more conducive to maintaining and improving client health and safety.

The information and data shared below are based on quantitative and qualitative data which was gathered pre- and post-implementation of intrinsic management practices designed to support the decrease of medication errors while increasing the involvement of employees in developing the medication administration practice, increased training participation and knowledge sharing, and recognition for their important work.

The first section reviews baseline medication error information taken from the PCS database which shows the trend for medication errors for the months of October, November, and December 2011. The second section reviews the interview data themes which were collected from employee interviews prior to the intrinsic approach implementation. The interviews were conducted with 22 employees prior to the focus on intrinsic approaches.

The chapter then goes on to explain the interventions in relation to managers and staff. Details about what intrinsic approaches were implemented for managers are explained. This included changes in manager trainings with the intrinsic approach as a focus, adaptations to team meetings, as well as Appreciative Inquiry trainings and interactive activities with employee teams. Employees participated in Appreciative Inquiry trainings and feedback practices focused on realizing what was working and what needed to be changed. The second-to-last section details data and themes comprised of

the information gathered during the post-intervention interview process in March 2012. The final portion of the chapter compares the pre-intervention database error numbers with the post-intervention error amount from January, February, and March 2012.

### **Baseline Medication Error Data**

The data from the PCS database was reviewed for the months of October, November, and December 2011. The information pulled from the database was specific only to medication errors that occurred for those months and only for the five homes participating in the study. The medication error information is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

#### *Medication Error Information*

	October 2011	November 2011	December 2011	Total
Home S	3	0	2	5
Home G	4	3	1	8
Home J	0	2	2	4
Home D	1	1	0	2
Home C	3	2	2	7
Total	11	8	7	26

Across the five homes that participated in the study, there was an average of 186 medications given out daily. This number is an average based on the number of medications each person residing in the five homes received daily. (Approximately 62 medications are administered three times per day over the five homes.) Thus, in a 30-day month, 5,580 medication doses are dispensed between the five homes. Twenty-six of the 5,580 dispensed medications resulted in an error during the three-month tracking period.

## **Pre-Intervention Interview Data and Themes**

As detailed below, information was gathered through pre-intervention employee interviews that took place in December 2011. A semi-structured interview process was used. Interview questions are included in Appendix B. The interviews were completed with 22 employees who worked with disabled adults and were responsible for overseeing the daily administration of medication. The purpose of the pre-intervention interviews was to gather information on how the employees felt about their work, the organization, manager styles, and medication administration. Employees were sampled from five different homes in order to gather information from employees whose work is overseen by different managers within the organization.

The coding process for the interview data revealed categories such as employee needs, common frustrations, ideas for improvement, reasons for doing this type of work, sense of importance, and connection with work and people. A color-coding method was utilized to pinpoint recurring items and feelings and, from there, the information was broken down into themes.

The information revealed the emergence of four common themes:

1. Theme 1: Input—how employees feel about the company’s practice of soliciting input from direct-care staff and if that input is utilized and valued.
2. Theme 2: Job satisfaction—what level of satisfaction employees have and what caused that satisfaction.
3. Theme 3: Communication—what type of communication style employees prefer and in what manner.
4. Theme 4: Comfort level with medication administration—answers focus on level of comfort in regard to medication administration and the level of

responsibility employees have to ensure medications are dispensed successfully. What additional needs do employees have to increase their comfort level with medication administration?

**Theme 1: input.** Two of the nine pre-intervention interview questions led to responses that related to employees' feelings about input.

Interview Question 3— “Do you feel your ideas are heard and appreciated?”— findings showed that

- Eleven of 22 employees felt their input was solicited and utilized 100% of the time.
- Five of 22 employees felt their input was solicited and utilized 50% of the time.
- Six of 22 employees felt that their input was not solicited.

Interview Question 8—“Do you feel your input is valued when protocols are developed within the agency or the home you work?”—findings showed that

- Four of 22 employees felt their input was valued when protocols are developed 100% of the time.
- Eleven of 22 employees felt their input was valued when protocols are developed 50% of the time. It is important to note that they felt it was more so within the home they worked or when it pertained to the consumer they supported but not when it was an overall company policy.
- Seven of 22 employees felt their input was not valued when protocols were developed.

Sample comments about employee input are included in Table 2.



**Table 2***Sample Quotes—Input*

Questions	Sample Quotes to Support Input Value Theme
Do you feel your ideas are heard and appreciated?	<p>“We have team meetings and our ideas are acknowledged.”</p> <p>“I attend volunteer committee meetings and get to share input and feel it is accepted and considered when new practices are implemented.”</p> <p>“My supervisor is good about asking our opinion. She put a feedback/idea box at the house so we can share items with her even if we work shifts that she doesn’t usually come by.”</p> <p>“Yes, I am on the staff appreciation committee and the planning committee. I like to share ideas.”</p> <p>“It would be good to have time to give more input at meetings and more avenues available to share ideas.”</p> <p>“My manager always seems rushed for time so hard to get time with her to share some ideas that would be good for the homes.”</p> <p>“I would like to share more input at times. We have monthly meetings, but I think more are needed.”</p>

**Theme 2: job satisfaction.** In Question 1, employees were asked to rank their level of job satisfaction using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being extremely satisfied. Satisfaction was defined as fulfillment of a want or need. For the purposes of this study, rankings of 1 to 2 were rated as below-average satisfaction, rankings of 3 were rated as average satisfaction, and the 4 and 5 rankings were rated as above-average satisfaction. Employee rankings were as follows:

- Nine of 22 employees ranked their level of job satisfaction as above average.
- Eight of 22 employees ranked their level of job satisfaction as average.

- Five of 22 employees ranked their level of job satisfaction as below average.

There were no rankings of 1 and there were three rankings of 5. Nineteen of the 22 people interviewed had answers throughout the survey that related to satisfaction and value of their work being correlated to the fact that their job allowed them to help people and make positive changes in people lives. Table 3 shows direct quotes demonstrating that employee satisfaction related to helping others.

**Table 3**

*Sample Quotes—Satisfaction*

Question	Sample Quotes to Support Satisfaction Theme
What thought process led to your ranking on job satisfaction?	<p>“I like the job; my consumer I support is fun to be with and is excited to learn so I feel the work I do is important.”</p> <p>“Doing work that helps people have better lives makes me feel worthwhile; the company and people are fun.”</p> <p>“I think the thing I like best about my work is that it is based around helping someone else have a positive and fulfilled life.”</p> <p>“It makes me feel good that this job allows me to help other people—that is a good value to me.”</p> <p>“I value being able to share my strengths to help someone else. I love seeing the growth and change as people evolve.”</p>

The information showed that 17 of 22 employees had an average or above-average satisfaction level with their work. Nineteen of the 22 employees stated that their satisfaction level came from being able to help others. This information is important because it is a strong indicator that people were working at the organization because they

felt accomplishment from helping other people. The focus to better one's life includes the practice of successfully administering required medications so that health and safety is high for each consumer who receives support.

**Theme 3: communication.** Question 9 of the interview process focused on leadership styles that were preferred by direct-care employees. Two individuals did not answer the question. There were a total of 20 answers, and 18 of the 20 respondents clearly shared their desire to have a participative style of leadership.

Verbal communication and face-to-face time with managers and other leaders within the company were the preference. One employee stated, "I appreciate a mellow manager who listens. Sometime we are lectured for issues when the manager doesn't have all the information. Having dialog to share information and facts would allow us to work together more successfully." Another employee shared, "I like a calm demeanor. I appreciate the fact that my manager seems to have time to talk with me when necessary." Many others expressed their desire to have open conversations on a regular basis with their managers. Employees were clear that conversation and dialog was more beneficial to them than memos and meetings where agendas were rigidly followed without much room for back-and-forth communication between the team members and leaders.

**Theme 4: comfort level with medication administration.** Three of the nine pre-intervention questions pertained to medication administration:

- "How comfortable are you with the medication administration process?"
- "What are some things your manager could do to support you with reducing medication errors?"
- "Have you ever met with your manager for progressive discipline?"

The responses to the first question showed that out of the 22 employees interviewed, there was an even split between how many were comfortable with the medication administration process and their oversight responsibility and an equal amount who found the responsibility challenging. The 50/50 split uncovered that those who found it challenging were often fearful that they would make a mistake and uneasy about the responsibility while those who were comfortable did not feel the task was challenging as long as they focused. Sample comments are shown in Table 4.

In response to the second question about what managers could do to support employees in this area, there was an overwhelming response from 19 of the 22 employees that clearly communicated the desire from employees to have more training and regular dialog regarding medications and medical needs of consumers.

The final question revealed that of the 22 interviewed employees, 12 had received some form of progressive discipline since they were first employed by the organization. Out of the 12 who had received progressive discipline, 9 of those actions were regarding some form of error with medication administration.

**Summary.** The pre-intervention interview data showed that employees have an overall sense of satisfaction with their employment because the work is based around helping people. This is a natural part of the work, and all employees' jobs were based around supporting the growth and independence of others. The information also showed that many employees in the sample felt they were not utilized to the best of their ability because the avenues for employee input were limited. Information showed that while there was a system in place through committees and meetings for employees to share ideas that could benefit those they support and/or the entire company, the ability to access

**Table 4***Sample Quotes—Support*

Theme 4: Level of Comfort With Medications	Sample Quotes to Support Theme
Comfortable	<p>“Comfortable with the medication protocol.”</p> <p>“I feel pretty comfortable and always double-check my work.”</p> <p>“I can pass the meds fine—haven’t had any mistakes so feel comfortable, yes.”</p> <p>“I like doing the medications; if I focus, it is easy.”</p>
Uncomfortable	<p>“I have the routine down, but the changes get confusing when people have a lot of new medications.”</p> <p>“There are so many, it is easy to get distracted.”</p> <p>“There are so many rules and policies, it makes me nervous.”</p> <p>“I am not very comfortable; it makes me nervous.”</p> <p>“I get nervous because I don’t want to get in trouble for a mistake.”</p> <p>“Comfortable until there are changes; once a routine is set, it is easy to mess up if a new one starts.”</p>

these could be limited for some. Other information showed that even though the organization and the leadership and manager teams stated their leadership style was participatory, the demands of the jobs and schedules limited the ability for employees to share input. It was clearly realized during the interviews that people were interested in sharing information and being able to co-create systems that work for all.

### **Intervention for Managers**

The application of intrinsic approaches was introduced in three areas throughout the month of January 2012. The first focus was on the organization's management team. This included 20 managers including the four managers involved in this study. All managers oversaw staff teams that ranged from 20 to 30 direct-care employees.

The first interactive training was based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid (Maslow, 1953). The training reviewed the pyramid and then managers were asked to reflect on their lives for a few minutes in silence and write down instances when any of the items in the bottom four pyramid tiers were threatened. There was then the opportunity for people to share what they had written down with the rest of the training participants. Answers included people's homes being threatened, feelings of loss after a divorce, and work life threatened due to budget constraints. After sharing their intimate thoughts, they were then asked how they felt during those times. Managers shared feelings of hopelessness, sadness, frustration, and fear.

Discussion then turned to job responsibilities that managers have that may cause similar feelings amongst employees. Answers included terminations, written progressive disciplines, scheduling of hours, and changing of employees' schedules. Focus was then given to ways the manager team can best communicate with employees, keeping in mind that some of their job responsibilities may threaten people's sense of belonging, sense of

purpose, self-esteem, and feelings of stability. Emphasis was given to enforce the fact that positive praise, open communication and dialog, recognition and solicitation of ideas, and knowledge sharing amongst all team members could improve the employees' sense of purpose and, therefore, improve performance.

The outcome of the training was a better sense of how managers' actions affected employee teams. Managers realized that their communication style when dealing with difficult topics has a great effect on how they are received and how progress towards a positive outcome can be realized through empathetic communication and a supportive approach.

The second focus on intrinsic approaches also included the manager team. The team participated in an Appreciative Inquiry training titled "How Do We Improve Employees' Performance through Communication and Process Participation?" The results of the training are as follows:

1. Discovery (Appreciating)—Direct-care employees have challenging jobs that require them to be flexible and able to change at a moment's notice.  
Employees work hard to care for the consumers they support. Employees do solid work even though they are paid minimal wages.
2. Dream (Envisioning Results)—Creating an employee team that is positive and appreciative of the work they do. Having positive conversations and meaningful interactions with all levels of employees. Creating an organization that is focused on best practices and is able to provide the highest quality of support for the disabled population. Creating protocols and practices that can be shared worldwide to better the lives of those with disabilities.

3. Design (Co-constructing)—Promote conversation amongst all stakeholders. Realize a common level of commitment and understanding. Provide meaningful work for employees through co-involvement in practices. Commit to positive outlooks and actions.
4. Destiny (Sustaining)—Creating commitment to practices that better the organization, the staff's experience, and the lives of those supported. Building a system that allows for follow-through of ideas and continues to focus on group interactions to solve concerns. Providing ongoing trainings and dialog about what is and what can be. Having empathy for employees and the challenges they face with their work and personal lives.

The conclusion of the training provided a possibility statement that managers could rely on when working with employees and while managing their direct-care employee teams. The statement reads: Utilization of communication and shared values will increase the performance of employees.

The above information was relevant to the study because it allowed managers to be a part of the same practice that would be utilized with direct-care employees while providing the managers an avenue to share their goals and thoughts in a positive light. This enhanced the outcome because it provided managers with a sense of belonging and commitment to the practices they are ultimately responsible for with their employee teams. The revelations revealed to the managers that their approaches could be more intrinsic in nature and provided them some insight into how their actions affect others both positively and negatively. Managers' comments after the trainings included statements such as "I was unaware that my tone and actions could have such an effect on



employee performance” and “I feel empowered to make positive changes that will better my work while improving employee performance.”

### **Employee Intervention**

The third focus was directed to the direct-care staff through Appreciative Inquiry. Two trainings were held with the employees from the five homes that were focused on in the study.

There were a total of 80 employees involved in the training, so to reduce the training size, two trainings were held with an average of 40 employees per training session. The employees were mixed up so that representatives from each of the five homes were participating in one of the two trainings. The four managers participated in both trainings. The training was titled “How Can We Take a Positive Approach to Minimizing Medication Errors So We Can Better the Health of Our Consumers?” The results of the training are as follows:

1. Discovery (Appreciating)—The proper administration of medications is important to the health and safety of the people we care about. We are important people in the lives of those we work with, and they trust us to support them effectively. Our roles and responsibilities allow us to be creative participants within the company and the homes we work in. Having responsibilities that include making someone else’s life better is a gift. No one expects us to be perfect; people support our growth and are forgiving of our mistakes.
2. Dream (Envisioning Results)—Work towards providing input into the systems so that they are successful. Focus on aiding in the effort to have open lines of communication. Have practices and protocols that will support the

elimination of errors. Work towards building confidence and security so that the process is not so frightening.

3. Design (Co-constructing)—Share ideas during team meeting. Have an open forum to communicate issues without being fearful of what people may think. Work side by side with employee team and managers to improve the practice of medication administrations. Have a standing agenda item at meetings that reviews medications, current systems, and errors so that we can all learn and grow as concerns arise.
4. Destiny (Sustaining)—Be open to sharing ideas with others. Understanding that participation in trainings and design development sessions benefits the entire team. Be a valuable and positive member of the agency.

Possibility statements were created by both training teams:

1. The use of teamwork and effective communication will allow us to provide best practices while administering medications to the people we support.
2. We will work together to decrease medication errors and improve the safety of our consumers.

### **Manager and Employee Intervention**

The final stage of this process was conducted between managers and their employee teams. The four managers who were part of this project met individually with their staff teams that were also involved in the project and together they developed new practices that would support the goal of their possibility statement. Items that were developed included

1. Increasing the number of team meetings each month so that more time was allowed for open discussions.

2. Hosting voluntary trainings specific to medication and medical needs monthly.
3. Increasing knowledge-sharing opportunities for staff through a variety of avenues.
4. Recognizing staff members who were comfortable and successful with the medication administration practices and encouraging them to do “mini trainings” for their co-workers.
5. Promoting situations that encouraged direct-support staff to share their practices and successes with other PCS employee teams.

It is important to note that managers were given the freedom to implement the intrinsic practices that they were comfortable with and that were created by themselves and employee team members. The benefit of this was that managers and teams co-created workable intrinsic approaches that met the needs and wants of all involved. This study does not show which practice was most beneficial in the decrease of medication errors.

### **Post-Intervention Data and Themes**

The post-intervention interviews were conducted at the end of March 2012. The interviews involved the same 22 interviewees from the pre-intrinsic approach interviews. The general interview guide approach was again taken for the interview process. The purpose of the post-intervention interviews was to gather information on how the employees felt about their work satisfaction, their feelings on newly implemented intrinsic practices, and their level of comfort pertaining to medication administration.

The post-intervention interview information was reviewed with the focus on the same categories that had been determined from the pre-intervention interview process.

The information revealed is discussed in the following sections.

**Job satisfaction.** Employees were asked to rank their satisfaction level using the same 1 to 5 scale from the pre-intervention interviews.

- Fourteen of 22 employees ranked their level of job satisfaction above average.
- Seven of the 14 above-average responses were an increase in satisfaction level from the pre-intervention interview rankings; and of those seven responses, five had been ranked as average satisfaction rankings originally.
- The findings showed an increase in the level of satisfied employees from 9 to 14 and also an increase in employees who ranked their satisfaction as above average.
- Six of 22 employees ranked their level of job satisfaction as average.
- Four of the six rankings increased from below average to average, and two of the rankings stayed the same from the pre-intervention interview answers.
- Two of 22 employees ranked their level of job satisfaction as below average. This is a decrease of three employees from the pre-intervention interviews. The two employees who ranked at below-average satisfaction levels had the same response and ranking previously.
- There were no rankings of 1 and there were five rankings of 5 during the post-intervention interviews.

The findings above show an increase in overall satisfaction, and there were no signs of employees becoming more dissatisfied during the six months of the study.

The pre-intervention interview answers revealed that a majority of employees related their satisfaction rankings to the fact that they are able to help other people. The post-intervention information revealed that the ability to help others was still a key motivator for how they ranked their satisfaction levels, but it also revealed that people felt more connected to their team, their manager, and the organization. Fourteen of the 22 answers to Question 2—“What thought process led to your ranking on job satisfaction?”—included responses pertaining to items other than helping people. A sample of responses is shown in Table 5.

**Input.** Seventeen of 22 employees stated that they feel their input is valued when protocols are developed within the agency or the home where they worked. Four employees stated that they did not feel their input is valued. One employee answered sometimes.

The post-intervention interview answers showed an increase in 13 of 22 employees feeling their input is valued. It also showed a decrease of two of the people who originally did not feel their input was valued at all. Overall, the post-intervention interview revealed that 77% of the research population changed their views on whether their input is valued.

**Comfort with medication administration.** The pre- and post-intervention interview questions both contained the question “How comfortable are you with the medication administration process?” The post-intervention interviews showed an increase in employees’ comfort with medication administration:

- Seventeen of 22 employees stated they are comfortable with the medication process.

Table 5

*Response Samples to Question 2*

Reason for Ranking	Sample of Responses to “What Thought Process Led to Your Ranking on Job Satisfaction?”
Reasons related only to helping others	<p>“I love working with disabled people.”</p> <p>“I still like giving to others. I feel that is a must for any job I have.”</p> <p>“Being able to watch people grow and learn new skills excites me.”</p> <p>“I enjoy the people and the work.”</p>
Other reasons for satisfaction rankings	<p>“I continue to appreciate the work I do and enjoy helping the person I support. I feel I am an important part of a strong team.”</p> <p>“I have appreciated the past few months. I feel the person I work with is fun, and now I feel I am more valued as a team member.”</p> <p>“The demands of the job and the person I support are still high. I have appreciated having my manager around more and enjoy talking with them regularly.”</p> <p>“Still appreciate the meaningful work—a higher pay is still desired, but I have felt important in my role lately.”</p> <p>“I feel I am needed on my team and I appreciate working with others.”</p> <p>“I have benefited from the additional trainings. The team seems happier—still challenging job but worth it.”</p> <p>“I have been able to participate in some of the recent trainings. It feels nice to be able to interact more with leadership teams.”</p> <p>“I don’t feel as alone as I did before. I still work by myself but see others more often and feel more comfortable about talking to people in the company.”</p>

- Five of 22 employees stated they are more comfortable than they were but are still nervous about making a mistake with the medication administration.

The post-intervention interview information showed that those employees who stated they were uncomfortable during the post-intervention interviews had increased their comfort level with the process to some extent but still had some feelings of fear.

**Communication.** The post-intervention interview had three questions that were not asked during the pre-intervention interview. The focus of the questions was to gain information about how employees related to the newly implemented intrinsic practices that managers had implemented in the homes as well as what they felt about the additional trainings.

Question 11—“Which management style change/training practice did you appreciate most?”—revealed that 8 of the 22 responders felt that the Appreciative Inquiry training was most beneficial. Others felt a combination of the trainings as well as the increased dialog practice amongst team members and managers were beneficial. Others felt that the implementation of practices that encouraged knowledge training added value to their teams and the system.

### **Baseline Compared to Post-Intervention Information**

The information in Table 6 was gathered again from the PCS database. The months show the number of medication errors that occurred during and after the implementation of the intrinsic motivation practices.

The post-intervention database data shows that there was a decrease in medication errors during the three months. It also shows that the decrease improved over the course of the three months. An initial decrease was noted in January, and the increase in administration success continued over the three-month study period. These results

include the period of time in which the intrinsic reward practices were being implemented.

**Table 6**

*People Creating Services Medication Error Information*

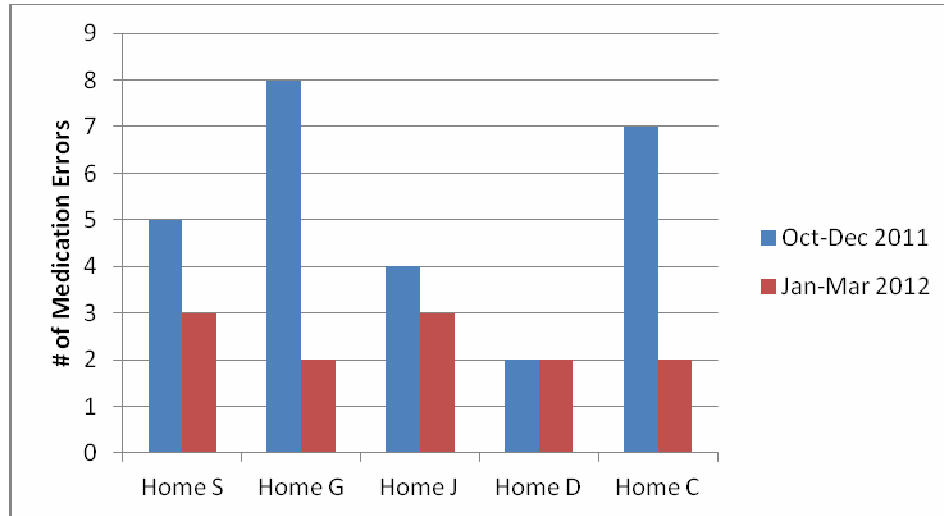
	January 2012	February 2012	March 2012	Total per Home
Home S	2	1	0	3
Home G	1	1	0	2
Home J	1	1	1	3
Home D	1	1	0	2
Home C	1	1	0	2
Total per month	6	5	1	
Total Errors: 12				

Figure 1 shows the information on errors from the first database review compared to the last review: Four of the five homes showed a decrease in errors over the project duration. Home D remained the same with two errors occurring during the first data set and remaining with two at the end of the project. It is important to note that the two error occurrences at the beginning of the project were considerably lower than the error amounts in the other homes.

The data clearly shows there was a decrease in errors throughout the duration of the projects. The most drastic decrease was in Home G where they had a decrease of six errors for the last three months of the study.



Furthermore, 26 errors were documented for the three months prior to the intrinsic practices across all homes, and there were only 12 documented errors for the last three months.



**Figure 1**

*Pre- and Post-Intervention Medication Error Comparison*

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions, Summary, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to conduct an action research project to increase client safety through creating conditions of high performance. The project focused on using intrinsic rewards and motivators to enhance the work quality of employees while creating an environment that is more conducive to maintaining and improving client health and safety. Practices were implemented that were intended to increase intrinsic motivation amongst management and employee teams throughout the course of a three-month period. The study sought to answer the question: Could the implementation of intrinsic reward practices decrease medication administration errors?

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, followed by a discussion of the conclusions from this project. It then outlines the limitations of this study and discusses recommendations for the organization. Future research options are shared to expand the research. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

#### Summary of Findings

The data showed a decrease in errors throughout the duration of the project which leads to the conclusion that medication errors can be decreased through the implementation of intrinsic management practices. Data sets from October, November, and December 2011 show an overall error occurrence of 26. The data sets from January, February, and March 2012 show a decrease in errors of 14.

When analyzing the findings from the pre- and post-intervention interviews along with the data charts regarding medications pre- and post-intervention, it is apparent that the practices not only lent themselves to a decrease in the medication error rate within the

homes studied, but that the project also had a positive effect on employees' attitudes overall.

The ability to co-create practices pertaining to medication administration as well as the increase in trainings were instrumental in decreasing medication errors. The interventions allowed employees to share their ideas regarding protocols, which allowed them to feel more included in the process, which had a direct effect on decreasing their fears around medication administration. The decrease in fear and increase in success during the administration process supported the increase in motivation. The knowledge sharing and dialog strengthened employee confidence, which increased the value they saw in themselves as employees. Employees showed more confidence in the administration of medication, and the majority of the 22 interviewed employees expressed their level of comfort pertaining to medications as higher after the project. They attributed this change to the practice of having been more involved in decisions and being allowed to share ideas with teams. Knowledge sharing among co-workers supported the decrease in fear and conversation, and trainings led by employees were instrumental in the change.

The data found that there was an increase in overall satisfaction among employees. Feelings of satisfaction were originally attributed mainly to the fact that the job involved helping others. Those feelings remained consistent, but the final information on job satisfaction also showed new reasons for employee satisfaction where people expressed their appreciation for being able to share ideas and increased feelings of teamwork and togetherness. Growth and development are positive results of intrinsic practices; the employees benefited from growth within themselves and through the development of creating a stronger team.

The data showing the decrease in errors throughout the duration of the project leads to the conclusion that medication errors can be decreased through the use of intrinsic management practices. The additional data showed that intrinsic management practices had a positive effect on the employees' work as well as an increase in teamwork and satisfaction.

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

A review of the information shared in this document leads to two conclusions. The first conclusion is that the use of intrinsic management practices can lead to an increase in performance pertaining to a decrease in medication errors. The conclusion is based on the pre- and post-intervention data that clearly shows a decrease in the errors. Employees were able to decrease their anxiety surrounding the medication administration and were also provided the avenues to share their ideas and express their fears. All these practices allowed them to be more comfortable and focused during the administration process.

Chapter 2 began with information pertaining to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). The premise of the theory outlines factors in the workplace that lead to dissatisfaction and satisfaction. The model shows that achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth can all be attributed to workplace satisfaction. The practices implemented in this project all lend to improvements in the areas outlined by Herzberg. Employees were able to feel a greater sense of achievement as they became more skilled with handling medications. The change in the managers' practices relating to meetings and trainings supported the increase in employee sense of responsibility and recognition. Employees had

opportunities to train others and lead discussions with co-workers which supported their ability to learn and grow throughout the process.

Using the definition from chapter 2, intrinsic motivation can be described as motivation that comes from within a person, such as happiness, gratitude, and self-worth. This study allowed employees to increase their feelings of satisfaction and self-worth by involving them in dialog, listening to their needs, and setting up practices that would acknowledge their needs.

Initial responses to interview questions showed the majority of people ranked their satisfaction level for the work they do based on the fact that they help someone live a better life. This is an important factor for social work settings and necessary when working with a challenging population. As noted, however, the job is hard and pay is extremely low, and there needs to be more than one motivating factor for employees or burnout will occur and turnover and dissatisfaction will increase. The end of the study revealed additional reasons why employees were satisfied with their work. Employees felt empowered. The increase in their ability to be a part of the positive change gave additional motivators for their work.

Monetary rewards are not the only way to increase employee performance and levels of satisfaction. Even organizations that are not being hit with budget cuts and financial issues are realizing the benefit of intrinsic rewards as an added benefit to customary rewards of material items and bonuses. Google is an exemplary example of the power of using intrinsic motivation towards company success and employee satisfaction. Practices of an intrinsic nature also can be utilized in organizations that are struggling financially, such as the organization that participated in this project. Increased benefits and performance are achievable no matter what the financial standing.

The second conclusion is that changing conversations and increasing dialog is an effective tool to achieving higher performance. Shaw (2002) wrote about changing conversations in organizations. She discussed the importance of conversations and how positive stories can help change conversations, therefore changing actions. The approach taken here allowed for employees and managers to change their conversations. The customary approach of disciplinary action when errors occurred was unintentionally causing a fear-based environment in this case organization. This only contributed to errors because employees were uncomfortable with the administration process and were afraid to share their uncomfortable feelings with others. The enactment of practices and opportunities that allowed people to share in a positive light and in a safe environment opened the dialog amongst all team members. This allowed managers to hear what the fears were and also allowed employees the opportunity to see that others shared the same fears. Levels of confidence rose within the employees.

The conclusions of this study and review of other similar research find that intrinsic practices are a key component to the increase in employee performance and satisfaction. This particular study shows the difference that practices can make on client health and safety.

### **Limitations**

This study does present a few limitations:

1. Interview Process: The most significant limitation is that the individual conducting the interviews was the vice president of the organization. Employees' answers were short and many seemed cautious about their answers, specifically during the pre-intervention interviews. Having an

outside, neutral person conduct the interviews might have led to more detailed answers.

2. **Timeframe:** A second limitation is that the implementation of intrinsic management practices was occurring during the same three months that the last set of data was collected. Managers and employees were re-energized by the recent trainings and changes to practices. The data set was collected immediately after the new practices were put in place. The study does not show what the long-term effects will be in regard to the decrease of medication errors.
3. **Hawthorne Effect:** There was an increased focus on medication administration throughout the project's duration. Many discussions were held regarding medication errors, and the fact that more focus was placed on the topic also may have led to the decrease of errors.

### **Recommendations**

This section provides some recommendations for the organization to support the enhancement of intrinsic practices. The idea is that if similar trainings and practices are applied to other topic items, results and outcomes can improve and employee satisfaction will increase as well. Recommendations are as follow:

1. The first recommendation is meant to provide the organization with a priority list. A focus group of all stakeholders should be assembled. Information and idea-gathering sessions such as a "fishbowl" or "world café" can be implemented. The task of the group would be to prioritize areas of focus that could benefit from improvement. The goal is to have a completed list showing what other items could be improved by a similar process such as the

one used in this research project. The organization can then work on each item one by one to improve the overall outcomes and increase the health and safety as well as the daily lives of the participants.

2. The organization should continue the practice of building a better sense of community and teamwork. Increasing opportunities for employees to share their ideas and knowledge throughout the organization provides a strong benefit to the company overall and gives more sense of meaning and belonging to the employees. Utilizing a variety of interactive trainings will enhance the mission as the agency moves into the future and promote ongoing dialog.
3. The organization needs to continue to focus on the employees and even though the financial climate in California directly affects the services provided, getting caught up solely in that aspect causes a negative ripple throughout the agency. Utilizing Appreciative Inquiry practices regularly will allow the financial dialog to continue without it dwindling hope and motivation amongst agency employees.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

If the agency wants to take this project a step further, it is suggested that it continue to review the data for the next three months to see if the decrease in errors is sustained after the focus of the project is over.

Also, additional research could narrow down the practices that were most beneficial in causing the decrease in errors. This study utilized many practices such as knowledge sharing, increased communication and support, additional trainings, and



more. All these practices allowed for the increase in intrinsic motivation, but it is not known which practice was most beneficial.

### **Summary**

The study conducted and reviewed in this thesis showed the benefits of intrinsic management practices, the positive results they have on employee feelings of satisfaction, and the benefits to motivation levels among employees. A clear change occurred with the decrease of the medication errors, but just as important was the change in employee attitudes, emotions, and happiness. The benefits included those receiving medications and the employees who support the disabled population the organization serves.

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**Appendix A: Participant Cover Letter and Consent Form**

Dear (Name):

I am currently a graduate student at Pepperdine University and working to achieve my Master's Degree in Organizational Development (MSOD). Part of our course work includes a thesis project. I have chosen to focus on the effects of an intrinsic approach to work and reward system. The study I am conducting specifically focuses on the effects of an intrinsic reward system on medication administration practices.

I have chosen the home you work in to be part of the study. In total there are 5 homes included. The study includes support employee interviews that are to be conducted pre and post implementation of an intrinsic system. The purpose of the interview is to gain an understanding on your feelings towards your work, the agency and the current reward/consequence system and then information gathered at the end of the study to see if an intrinsic approach had a positive effect on your work. Participation in the interviews is voluntary.

The information gathered through the study will remain confidential and detailed, specific information including your name and role will be excluded from any report shared with others. I will be the only person who has access to your specific answers and information you choose to share during the interview process.

The second part of the study includes participation in trainings that are focused around including all employees in the protocol practice development surrounding medication administration. Your participation in these trainings is voluntary as well.

If you are comfortable in participating in the study, please sign the attached consent form. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I will collect signed consent forms prior to the interview process.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to working together soon.

Thank you,

Meredith Catalini  
805-895-8273  
[mlcatalini@aol.com](mailto:mlcatalini@aol.com)

## Consent to Participate in a Research Study

### Participant Consent Form

**Study Title:** The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of intrinsic rewards systems on increasing the accuracy of medication dispensing practices.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to explore the positive effects an intrinsic reward system has on job performance. This specific study will focus on its effects in relation to medication administration for enhanced client health and safety. This study is being conducted as part of a requirement for a Master of Science in Organization Development degree through Pepperdine University, under the supervision of Miriam Lacey, Ph.D. If you have questions or concerns, please confer with the researcher or you may contact Dr. Lacey directly at 310 568-5598.

**Procedures:** Participation is on a volunteer basis. Volunteers will participate in two sets of interviews. The first interview is developed to help ascertain employee feelings on the current reward/consequences system. The second interview will utilize the same questions as the first interview but will be conducted towards the end of the study to gather information on whether intrinsic approaches had an effect on employees' feelings and performance. Each interview will average 1 hour in length. Participants will also be asked to attend trainings and discussions to learn more about the intrinsic reward approach to management. Trainings and discussions will mainly be scheduled during current team meeting dates and times to limit additional time commitments from participants.

**Participation:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Those who decide to participate as well as those who choose not to participate will not receive any special accommodations or consequences within the agency. It is the right of any participant to remove themselves from the study at any time for any reason. Should you choose to volunteer, you may refuse to answer any question or portion of a question for any reason without risk. Choosing to not participate will have no consequence to you or to the researcher.

**Confidentiality:** Information shared with the interviewer will remain confidential. Everyone's answers will be combined into an aggregate response to enhance the health and safety of our services. Your name will remain confidential and other employees of the agency will not have access to specific information.

I understand the parameters of the study and agree to voluntarily participate in the study:

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Signature of Participant

## **Appendix B: Interview Questions**



### Interview Questions

1. How would you rank your job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5? 5 being the highest level of satisfaction. (pre/post)
2. What thought process led to your ranking on job satisfaction? (pre/post)
3. Do you feel your ideas are heard and appreciated? (pre/post)
4. What do you value about your role at work? (pre/post)
5. Have you ever met with your manager for progressive discipline? (pre)
6. What are some things your manager could do/or stop doing to support you with reducing medication errors? (pre)
7. How comfortable are you with the medication administration process? (pre/post)
8. Do you feel your input is valued when protocols are developed within the agency or the home you work? (pre/post)
9. What style of communication do you relate well to in regards to talking with managers and leadership teams? (pre)
10. What changes, if any, did you feel about your job satisfaction in the past 5 months? (post)
11. Which management style change/training practice did you appreciate most? (post)
12. Which, if any, did you feel was effective at decreasing medication errors? (post)