

**Culture Clash:  
The Corporate Socialization Process meets  
Non-Congruent Organization Subcultures <sup>1</sup>**

**Sharon Novak  
Charles H. Fine**

**Sloan School of Management  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139**

**January 1996**

**Abstract**

The literature on organization socialization suggests characteristics associated with strong organization culture. Key among these is a socialization process that emphasizes well-defined roles, rules, routines, and values; reinforcement with intrinsic and extrinsic reward systems; and conditioning experiences. That literature also suggests that an organization exhibiting a strong culture and socialization process will likely elicit participant behavior that is highly congruent with the espoused values and objectives stated by the organization.

This paper uses a case study of General Motors' Saturn Corporation to suggest an enrichment of this theory. We argue that Saturn fulfills all the requirements of a strong culture and socialization process yet we find patterns of behavior seemingly at odds with the espoused values and objectives articulated in the environment. Co-existing with and within the strong corporate culture at Saturn, we found work group subcultures whose socialization processes can be just as strong as those at the corporate level but whose values suggest individual behaviors that conflict with those espoused at the corporate level.

These observations lead us to suggest a model of culture-influenced behavior that explicitly addresses the existence of distinct subgroup cultures. Interestingly, the workgroup subcultures that generated behaviors at odds with the outcomes desired at the corporate level were encouraged by exactly those reward systems designed by Saturn to reinforce the espoused values of consensus decisionmaking at the workgroup level. Such observations underscore the complexity and subtlety involved in designing coherent organization-wide cultures and reinforcing mechanisms.

---

<sup>1</sup>The authors gratefully acknowledge financial support for this research from MIT's International Motor Vehicle Program and Project Delta at the Sloan School of Management. We are also grateful for the time and consideration accorded to us by dozens of team members at Saturn Corporation and to helpful comments on this work from Dan Juliette of General Motors Corporation and Sloan School Professors Tom Magnanti, Arnaldo Hax, John Van Maanen, and John Carroll.

# **Culture Clash: The Corporate Socialization Process meets Non-Congruent Organization Subcultures**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The literature on organization socialization suggests characteristics associated with strong organization culture. Key among these is a socialization process that emphasizes well-defined roles, rules, routines, and values; reinforcement with intrinsic and extrinsic reward systems; and conditioning experiences.<sup>2</sup> That literature also suggests that an organization exhibiting a strong culture and socialization process will likely elicit participant behavior that is highly congruent with the espoused values and objectives stated by the organization.

This paper uses a case study of General Motors' Saturn Corporation to suggest an enrichment of this theory. We argue that Saturn fulfills all the requirements of a strong culture and socialization process yet we find patterns of behavior seemingly at odds with the espoused values and objectives articulated in the environment. Co-existing with and within the strong corporate culture at Saturn, we found work group subcultures whose socialization processes can be just as strong as those at the corporate level but whose values suggest individual behaviors that conflict with those espoused at the corporate level.

### **Socialization**

Schein defines organizational culture as “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to think, and feel in relation to those problems.”<sup>3</sup> Schein proposes a conical model of

---

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Ed Schein's *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, as well as Chatman and Barsade's, "Mixing and Matching Dispositions and Organizational Culture."

<sup>3</sup>Schein, Ed, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Pg. 12

organizations in order to examine how individual values are shaped by organizations.<sup>4</sup> Such a model implies that the organization which can successfully create a consistent organizational culture will be able to shape employee behaviors to create desired performance outcomes.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, according to Van Maanen, social situations can create their “own logic” to which participants determine appropriate positions. This view extends the behaviorist notion of the self as shaped through reinforcement or conditioning experiences to include recognition of individual interpretations of situations. In Van Maanen’s view, “intrinsic rewards” form as a result of individual interpretations of interactions. Reward and punishment are not necessarily consistent for all individuals, but vary depending on their interpretation.

One strand of recent research in organizational behavior has focused on efforts by organizations to select for, control and elicit desired behaviors in their workforces.<sup>6</sup> Some groups, such as IBM’s “indoctrination” center, focused on formal rules in order to control behavior, through such means as dress codes, while others such as Tandem Corporation, have attempted to foster “corporate values” and group cohesion through events outside the workplace which aim to bring employees to “grasp a good deal of their personal identity from their ability to identify with the firm”<sup>7</sup>. The implications of Van Maanen’s view for organizational culture is that it is critical to understand how individuals value different experiences and exchanges. Van Maanen’s work suggests that

---

<sup>4</sup>Schein, Ed “The Individual, the Organization and the Career” - Schein conceives of organizations as a three-dimensional space, shaped like a cylinder or cone. Individuals can move in an organization horizontally, increasing their rank; radially, becoming more “inside” in the firm; and circumferentially, changing divisions or functions. Boundaries are therefore hierarchical, separating levels; Inclusion, separating individuals who differ from the central organization; and Functional, separating departments. Schein recognizes that “centrality” and “inclusion” are the most difficult to measure, as their existence is usually implicit.

<sup>5</sup>By consistent we mean consistent values, not necessarily similar behaviors. A corporation can value individuality, by which consistent behavior can be seen to mean reflection of individuality across all workers.

<sup>6</sup>For ex. Van Maanen’s “Working the Street”, Ed Schein’s “The Individual, the Organization and the Career”

<sup>7</sup>Van Maanen, John and Gideon Kunda, “Real Feelings: Emotional Expression and Organizational Culture” Pg. 45

organizations should focus on creating an environment which is strong enough to overcome people's previous identities in favor of identification with the core values of the organization. That is, that behavior follows from attitudes and identification with organizational values. Van Maanen's view contains less explicit acknowledgment of whether early learned behaviors or identities are more or less difficult to overcome than recent identities, focusing instead on the process of socialization, by which new identities are assumed.

In his study of police organizations, Van Maanen identifies what he describes as a four-phase socialization process - choice, introduction, encounter and metamorphosis - by which new members assume a group identity.<sup>8</sup> At the core of Van Maanen's model of socialization is the idea that behavior and socialization are closely related, that in an environment which constitutes strong socialization, that congruent individual behaviors are likely to follow. We illustrate this model with the illustration in Figure 1.



**FIGURE 1: Standard model of culture, socialization and behavior**

## **II. RESEARCH SETTING AND PROCESS**

Saturn Corporation appears to represent a strong case to examine the socialization process. First, few organizations have attempted as explicit and normative an attempt to shape corporate culture as Saturn Corporation, a small-car subsidiary of General Motors. Saturn's employees are former General Motors autoworkers and managers previously trained under the traditional auto plant system, which has been frequently marked by significant hostility between

---

<sup>8</sup>Working the Street Pg. 87

labor and management, yet Saturn espouses organizational values aimed to produce markedly different, closer management-labor behaviors.

Second, Saturn has constructed a team-based system which aims to support its organizational values of elimination management-labor barriers by emphasizing employee input at all levels of the planning process, and contains a variety of reward mechanisms to reinforce its corporate values of management-labor cooperation and information exchange at all levels of the organization.

The purpose of the case study was to address the following questions:

1. Does Saturn have a strong organizational culture?
2. Does the process of socialization at Saturn appear to follow Van Maanen's model?
3. Are the employee behaviors exhibited at Saturn consistent with the organization's goals?

In seeking to evaluate Saturn's strength of culture and socialization process, the case focuses on the equipment specification planning process for the following reasons:

First, union operators in auto companies have great objective incentive to improve their overall work environment by providing ergonomics and assembly input into the equipment planning process, as early consideration of such issues in design of equipment should result in more comfortable and safe operating conditions on the floor.

Second, in traditional factories which have rigid distinctions between management and union labor, labor has no formal input role in equipment planning, and furthermore, has little incentive to suggest improvements, as better equipment poses a risk of replacing union labor with machinery. This suggests that the culture of traditional factories creates fear of suggestions, as well as structural impediments to employee input. At Saturn, management and union members have designed a system to "do away" with such risks.

Employees have guaranteed jobs and profit-sharing incentives for system improvements, and have established positions on equipment planning teams. If in fact Saturn's culture and socialization process are strong enough, employees should overcome traditional barriers and exhibit the desired behavior of providing input.

The theory described above predicts that operators participating in equipment development at Saturn should provide a great deal of input about ergonomics and assembly issues, as well as utilizing their opportunity to withhold approval for equipment sourcing decisions which appeared sub-optimal, as defined by assembly and ergonomics requirements.

### **Research Method**

These observations are based on a month-long visit to Saturn by the first author, which included working on the line with the body assembly equipment as well as extensive interviews within the factory and engineering organizations. In order to study Saturn's decision-making process for equipment development and sourcing, the research focused on the 1995, 1996 and 1997 planned model changes for the Saturn sedan, coupe and wagon, and the corresponding new equipment requirements for Body Systems lines. The interviews spanned 44 people involved in various stages of the planning process, from design at the GM technical center to Saturn Detroit product development, product engineering and manufacturing engineering to body systems equipment sourcing and installation. The fieldwork also included attendance at ongoing model change planning meetings and visits to several Saturn equipment suppliers.

The interview process was two-pronged, first covering line "co-workers" as to their suggestions for how to improve existing equipment, as well as their views on the planning process. In planning meetings, all suggestions (or lack thereof) from workers were recorded, as well as their discussion over final

approvals. After planning meetings, workers were interviewed further as to why they did or did not speak and why they did or did not approve decisions.

### **III. APPLYING THE THEORY AT SATURN**

#### ***Strength of Culture***

Chatman and Barsade define a strong culture as one in which everyone construes the situation similarly and the situation induces uniform expectancies and response.<sup>9</sup> By Chatman and Barsade's measure, Saturn is a strong culture. During the research process, all interviewed Saturn employees, who are former General Motors management and labor, professed profound belief in the organization's mission, and were able to explain how their roles philosophically supported this mission. In addition, all interviewed employees expressed a strong commitment to furthering Saturn's development as a management-labor partnering model for General Motors. This finding indicates that Saturn has successfully created a consistent culture which has been strong enough to overcome the extreme hostility which marked relations between management and labor in traditional factories.

Saturn Corporation was formed in a deliberate attempt to liberate auto manufacture from the rigid top-down hierarchy of General Motors. In its unique contract, or "memorandum of agreement" co-authored by management and United Auto Workers representatives, the company philosophy states:

"We believe that all people want to be involved in decisions that affect them, care about their job and each other, take pride in themselves and in their contributions and want to share in the success of their efforts. By creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, recognizing and utilizing individual expertise and knowledge in innovative ways, providing technologies and education for each individual we will enjoy a successful relationship and a sense

---

<sup>9</sup>Jennifer Chatman and Sigal Barsade  
Mixing and Matching Dispositions and Organizational Culture, Pg. 5

of belonging to an integrated business system capable of achieving our common goals which ensure success for our people and success for our business and communities.”

Following Schein’s definition of the conical structure of the organization, Saturn has created training, planning and reward systems which attempt to create consistency with corporate values and has taken explicit steps to make the boundaries between hierarchical levels and functional levels as flexible as possible through its teaming system:

### **Overall Structure**

All Saturn employees are organized in teams, from factory floor line-level work units to non-union and union partners at each position. The teaming concept, a consensus-based arrangement allowing even factory-floor workers input into all areas of planning and operations - was designed to empower employees and to provide total participation and ownership in the decision-making process.

### **Team Structure in the Body Shop**

Unlike traditional body shops, where management is physically (as well as conceptually) distanced from the factory floor, manufacturing engineers at Saturn are located in offices on the floor of the plant, in order to diminish the barriers, both real and imagined, between labor and management.

### **Job Security**

Jobs are guaranteed by contract, so as to both encourage employees to see themselves as part of the Saturn “family” as well as to reduce the fear of punishment that might discourage employees from suggesting changes.<sup>10</sup>

### **Training and Compensation**

---

<sup>10</sup>A typical fear expressed by line workers in traditional auto plants is that suggesting system improvements might lead to elimination of their own positions due to increased efficiency. As a result, workers are unlikely to recommend changes, even if they have good ideas for system improvements.



Saturn's overall pay system is "risk and reward" based, with employee pay tied to performance improvements in the company, so that employees who are no longer motivated to improve by fear of job loss, will still have financial incentive to achieve higher levels of performance. The risk element of the pay system is team-based pressure to perform. For example, all Saturn employees are required to complete at least 92 hours of training, with 7% of all base pay contingent on total completion of training hours by the entire company. Failure of one person to complete training will result in reduced paychecks for all. Saturn also records all training time as hours worked on the job, in order to further emphasize the central role of training to company performance.

Promotions at the shop floor level are based on skills evaluations, subject to final approval by production teams, as opposed to traditional seniority-based promotions. The goal of this system is to encourage all team members to improve their skills, as well as to attain the respect of their peers, without the rigid time-based promotion requirements of the old union structure. All operator team members serve on planning and training committees throughout the plant, with each member taking turns in a position for a set amount of time, in order to avoid granting disproportionate shares of special privileges, such as coveted equipment specification trips to Detroit, to any team member.

### **Equipment Specification in the Body Shop**

Equipment specification in the body shop is planned by a project management team, consisting of a manufacturing engineering team leader, line-specific manufacturing engineers ( body sides, underbody, hood & roof, doors) and 1 maintenance team member and 1 representative operator technician.<sup>11</sup> The goal of such project management planning is to give both maintenance and operators an early opportunity to shape equipment design in terms of both

---

<sup>11</sup>All Saturn descriptions are from personal interviews and experience during July-August, 1994.

assembly and ergonomics issues (for operators) and short and long-term maintenance implications for different pieces of equipment. Where the project leader is ultimately responsible for conveying final specifications to procurement and to equipment suppliers, finalization of specifications requires complete “buyoff” from the entire team. That is, approval is designed to empower operators to resist equipment designs which will be uncomfortable to operate.

The cultural values Saturn wishes to promote are management-labor cooperation and teamwork. Behaviors consistent with these values in the equipment planning process, therefore, would be a high level of operator input.

### ***Socialization***

Van Maanen classifies the strongest organizational cultures as selective, collective and intensive. Saturn Corporation fits all three measures of cultural strength.

In the choice stage, Van Maanen examines whether or not certain types of individuals gravitate toward the organizational role. In Saturn’s example, the organization selects from a population of General Motors employees who volunteered for consideration and undergo a rigorous review process to test whether are truly “open” to Saturn’s values. This process creates much the same effect as the “stretched-out screening factor” described by Van Maanen in that Saturn team members feel they are chosen for their commitment to Saturn values, and are very proud of their inclusion in “a different kind of car company” much the same as Van Maanen’s police feel that they belong to a core elite group or employees at Disneyland share the view that they have gained admittance to a privileged organization.<sup>12</sup>

In the introduction phase, training takes place which reinforces core organizational values. All training of Saturn employees takes place in large groups formed of members from all areas of Saturn, focusing on teamwork

---

<sup>12</sup>Van Maanen, John and Gideon Kunda, “Real Feelings: Emotional Expression and Organizational Culture” Pg. 45

exercises and leadership programs. Regardless of the specific area of training, management and labor work together on problem-solving teams, as well as on common goals for the organization.

The Saturn environment is filled with visual cues of the management-labor partnership. The main road to the plant is named after a Vice President and Director of United Auto Workers, Don Ephlin, who participated in Saturn's formation, and most Saturn t-shirts contain both the UAW and Saturn logos. Throughout the factory floor signs are posted extolling the virtues of the union-management partnership, and employees are instructed to refer to their counterparts as "partners" not co-workers.

Both formal training and visual images assert the importance of teamwork, and informally, Saturn employees also reinforce Saturn values. An employee who attempts to direct planning decisions is often described as "not Saturn-like" and avoided by his or her coworkers, and a highly directed plant manager was derided as "too GM-like." Newcomers to Saturn are constantly reminded of the need to be perceived as a team player, much as Van Maanen's police learn to act "police-like" by imitation of experienced policemen.

In the encounter phase, where Van Maanen's rookie is trained by his field training officer on the realities of life on the squad, an operator at Saturn becomes immersed in his work team and its particular character, learning to suit the requirements of his team while on the job. Each work team at Saturn has its own character, for example, group members vote whether or not to adopt all recommended Saturn rules, such as rules on wearing of safety gloves, and all teams set their own group goals. Some groups are more cohesive than others, but regardless of the character of the specific work team, the newcomer is inundated with rules and goals specific to his or her team, both formal and informal, during on-line activity. Tests of a team member's group identity occur frequently, groups are called on to represent their interests to their shift leader,

and as different shift productivities are compared, to defend their relative performance . Shift comparisons greatly enforce an operator's self-identification as a member of his or her team.

Finally, in the metamorphosis phase, Saturn employees assume their full operator/team member roles. Where many operators openly discussed the difficulties of working to meet consensus on issues which were formerly dictated under the General Motors system, all agreed that the teaming concept was central to what they viewed as a vastly improved work environment. In interviews, almost every worker stated that life at Saturn was far-preferable to life under General Motors, and that he or she greatly valued the opportunity to contribute to and improve the Saturn environment and product.

A strong culture facilitates the socialization process, therefore, it is unsurprising that Saturn appears to successfully follow Van Maanen's model of transformation of worker identity. Furthermore, the fact that the pay system, teaming arrangement, physical co-location of management and labor in the factory and group-incentives for training and system improvements reinforce the overall organizational values of removal of barriers between management and labor indicates that Saturn Corporation should be able to successfully socialize its new members.

### **III. EXPLAINING APPARENT INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN OPERATOR BEHAVIOR AND ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES**

Saturn appeared to fit both the definition of a strong culture and Van Maanen's model of the socialization process. Furthermore, union members interviewed on the line in an informal setting with no organizational consequences offered a great many suggestions for improvement of equipment. However, in 18 out of 18 planning meetings in which a union operator was present during a planning session, the union member did not offer input but did

approve the resulting decision without question, appearing to have both relinquished the opportunity to provide input as well as the authority to question decisions. This seeming inconsistency, between the culture and the behavior is what we now proceed to explore.

Management planning team members in the body shop explained that they had instituted the rotation of union operators on planning teams because operators who were on planning teams for “too long” were seen as differentiated from the operator group, and were resented when they finally returned to their teams. Managers complained that where set rotations seemed to address the problem of separating operators from their teams, it created a new problem in that planning teams had no way to select for operators who were better at giving equipment input than others. Furthermore, as the equipment development process was much longer than the operator rotation of a few weeks, it was difficult to transfer experience from operator to operator in order to build the required sense of equipment requirements. The combined result appeared to be the limited or non-existent input from operators.

In interviews with the union members who were involved in planning teams, operators explained that they were often unsure as to how to interpret planning designs, which required considerable drafting and Computer-Aided design (CAD) training. As their main avenue for promotion was peer review, and their peers might become resentful if they appeared to be taking too much time from line work to be trained in the planning process, rather than requesting additional training, they chose not to speak at all. Additionally, team members were under incredible pressure to ensure the timeliness of the planning procedure, and many felt that they “had to approve” decisions whether or not they were assured of their results, as none wanted to be “the guy holding up the process” as they bore responsibility for the entire team as well as for all of Saturn.

Lack of worker input in planning meetings despite clearly expressed ideas when interviewed on-line appears inconsistent with the value of Saturn culture. Saturn's experience suggests a paradox: that strong, congruent organizational beliefs have produced incongruent individual behaviors. How can this outcome be understood, particularly in terms of Van Maanen's model?

One might argue that an auto company like Saturn could not undo the management-labor barriers because of the "natural" skills and attitudinal differences between the types of people who become managers and the types of people who join unions. In this view, labor may be unable to participate in the planning process because the types of people who join unions are not able to assume the leadership and planning roles required of team members at Saturn. This view is dismissable for several reasons: First, the idea that management and union are different types of people is inconsistent with Saturn's selection process. Second, this type of argument does not reflect the extent to which line workers were able to offer suggestions for improving the equipment planning process when interviewed outside of the planning team meetings. This type of explanation is unable to capture the difference between operators ideas for equipment improvement expressed in line work and reticence during planning meetings.

A behaviorist explanation of the lack of operator input in planning may be that throughout most of their careers, all of the employees of Saturn Corporation have been rewarded for their ability to succeed in the United Auto Workers representative hierarchy. As a result, all Saturn team members experienced operant conditioning which has shaped their preferences for rewards tied to UAW requirements. In this view, an individual operator technician is unwilling to break the rewards of fitting in at his representative level in order to improve overall team specification of equipment. Despite the financial rewards for system improvement, past learning has created greater

incentive to fit operator roles. In order to successfully undo operator avoidance, Saturn needs to rethink its requirement of team approval for promotion, as this system rewards operators for excellence in operator roles, not for excellence in giving input. This argument assumes that when the reward structure is realigned to provide greater incentives for planning improvements relative to the rewards of performance in the operator group then operators will provide better input into planning procedures. A behaviorist understanding however, is insufficient to explain the very marked commitment and profound belief in Saturn's values, particularly in management-labor cooperation, which has developed in its employees despite their early conditioning in the union structure.

Van Maanen's work offers a more comprehensive understanding of the apparent biased influence of work teams on operators. In Van Maanen's terms, "closer to the core of the emotional life of organizational members is the immediate work group to which they are assigned. Here is where emotional control is probably the most effective, for it is the stage managed by those with whom members must spend most of their time."<sup>13</sup> In this view it is entirely consistent for an operator to be totally committed to Saturn's values while behaving in a way which is consistent with work-group identity. Where this implies that the operator will experience some dissonance between work team and organizational goals, we argue that the very dominance of the work team identity viewed in the context of the stated belief of the operators that they are committed to management-labor partnership implies that the operators have "solved" this dissonance by choosing not to interpret the specific act of remaining silent in a planning meeting as contrary to Saturn values. After all, the operators "participate" in meetings by being present. The critical point is that work-group values are causing operators to behave in a way which is

---

<sup>13</sup>Real Feelings, Pg. 57

inconsistent with broad organizational desired behaviors, but they do not perceive this inconsistency.

A close examination of Van Maanen's police work suggests that socialization takes place in a two wave process: first in indoctrination of organizational values and second in immediate work-group values, which are not necessarily consistent.<sup>14</sup> Just as the squad is the relevant reference group for the rookie cop, and can cause police to either support or violate broad organizational values depending on their consistency with core squad values, so can the factory-floor work group influence worker behavior.

This idea of a two-phase process suggests that, in Chatman and Barsade's terminology, Saturn may still be a strong environment, where the behavior the organization is producing is the ability to recite the corporate mission, and to broadly share the corporate ideals. However, there is a mismatch between corporate values and departmental boundaries, in that the shop floor structure rewards for conforming to operator teams and the work group rewards outweigh system rewards, and the reward system needs to be reorganized to more fully synthesize the goals of the work group identity with the collective company identity.

### **The Paradox Examined**

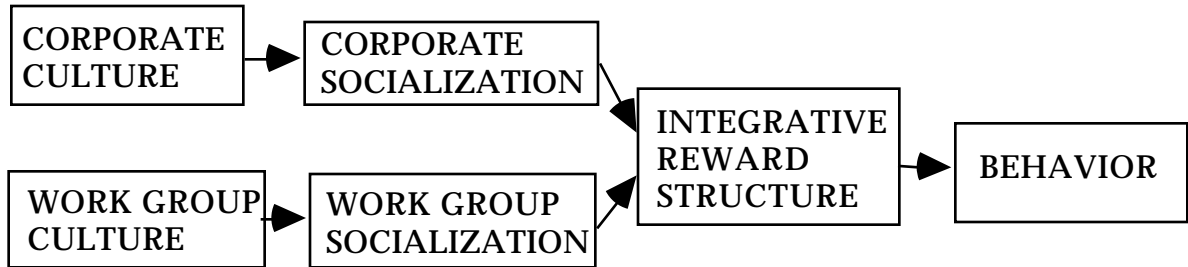
If in fact socialization is a two-wave process, as both Van Maanen and Saturn's examples suggest, a clear distinction should be made between organizational culture and employee behaviors. In order to socialize individuals, an organization must seek to identify ways to produce both consistent values and behaviors, rather than assuming that behaviors consistent with organizational values necessarily follow from successful socialization as measured by adoption of those values. These observations suggest a more complex model (e.g., Figure 2 below) of how socialization and culture influence

---

<sup>14</sup>Thanks to Professor Van Maanen for pointing out this idea of socialization as a two-wave process.



behavior and suggest that explicit and careful consideration of the reward structure is necessary to detect and resolve conflicts that may arise between the corporate and work group level incentives.



**FIGURE 2: Revised model of culture, socialization and behavior**

For Saturn specifically, the organization should seek to identify ways to create congruence between work-team goals and its organizational mission.

Examination of Saturn’s reward system suggests that removing the status of participating on a planning team by instituting set rotations removed the incentive to seek to acquire planning skills, as the true status at the operator level is based on excellence in line work as perceived by other line workers, and thus the risk of ostracism by other workers far outweighs the benefit of participating in planning teams, which is guaranteed regardless of performance.

Although assessing promotions by skills-evaluation, rather than seniority, aims to eliminate the union hierarchical view of advancement, the requirement of team approval for promotion may add further work team- based penalties for deviation from the work team. The operator is likely to feel that he/she will “satisfy” his/her peers for promotions only if he/she is seen have been around long enough as a team member to be viewed as competent, regardless of objective assessment of his skills. The team assessment requirement may provide a disincentive to invest in planning skills that distinguish an operator from his/her peers.

In order to support employee input, Saturn should seek ways to cause shop-floor teams to value worker input on planning teams, as well as planning-based training, as a contribution to the team. However, additional training of work team members requires additional off-line time and funding, and Saturn has a very lean operator base. Further evaluation of the tradeoffs between improved worker skills and on-line requirements needs to be undertaken. It may be that focusing existing training hour requirements on planning skills is sufficient to improve the overall skills of the operators, which could then reduce the rotation penalties to planning teams. Additionally, weekly updates to the team in which the representative planning member elaborates ergonomics and assembly improvements may address the issue of work-group resentment.

Regardless of the specific measures taken to synthesize work group and organizational goals, I believe that the main idea suggested by both Van Maanen's police work and Saturn's experience is that the role and influence of immediate work teams are both critical to understanding behavioral outcomes and very difficult to plan for and to control.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Does Saturn's current experience in operator input mean that Saturn cannot reshape values towards organizational goals? On the contrary, Saturn's experience indicates that individual behaviors can be shaped by strong group-based experiences in an organization, that the division between management and labor is not a "natural" barrier. Saturn has been extremely successful in creating extreme employee loyalty and commitment to corporate values. Regardless of their actual behaviors, the fact that all of the employees, both union and non-representative expressed a strong belief in the importance of Saturn's mission suggests that attitude change has definitely taken place in comparison with the divisive relations in traditional auto plants.

Saturn's experience to date also does not necessarily indicate that the company is incapable of producing the desired effect of management-labor teaming in planning. However, a close examination of Saturn's reward structure reveals the importance of recognizing that even the most explicit and thoughtful attempt to construct broad organizational reward systems which are consistent with corporate values is a very complex task, which requires a great deal of further research aimed at better understanding of the impact of work-group identity on individual behaviors.

These observations lead us to suggest a richer model of culture-influenced behavior that explicitly addresses the existence of distinct subgroup cultures. Interestingly, the workgroup subcultures that generated behaviors at odds with the outcomes desired at the corporate level were encouraged by exactly those reward systems designed by Saturn to reinforce the espoused values of consensus decisionmaking at the workgroup level. Such observations underscore the complexity and subtlety involved in designing coherent organization-wide cultures and reinforcing mechanisms.