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# Integration through communication : a look at the development discussion and integration of employee with the organization

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San Jose State University, 1993

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INTEGRATION THROUGH COMMUNICATION: A LOOK AT THE  
DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION AND INTEGRATION  
OF EMPLOYEE WITH THE ORGANIZATION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies  
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by

Jane Tutko

May, 1993

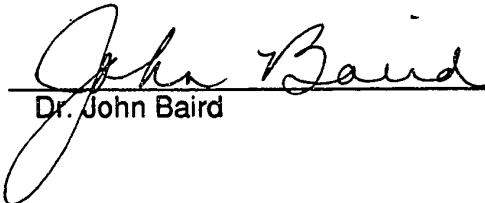
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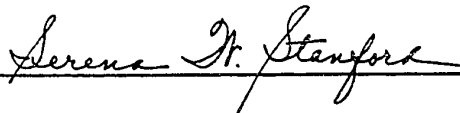


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## ABSTRACT

### INTEGRATION THROUGH COMMUNICATION: A LOOK AT THE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION AND INTEGRATION OF EMPLOYEE WITH THE ORGANIZATION

by Jane Tutko

This thesis addressed the topics of training in communication, specifically development discussions, and integration. It examined the notion of integrating employee needs and values with organizational needs and values based on past research showing trends toward participative management. Subjects were 184 employees from an energy and research facility who have or will have attended a personal growth workshop. Questionnaires and focus group interviews were used to collect data.

Data suggested strong support for the training. There was a correlation between completeness of the development discussion and goal achievement and between goal achievement and integration. Discussion completion appeared to impact integration. This implies that trainers should emphasize discussion completion and goal setting. Integration levels did not differ as a result of the training; therefore, trainers might want to incorporate a systemic approach to training design. Data suggested that development discussions tend to be more useful in supportive rather than defensive environments.



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## **CHAPTER I**

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

#### **Introduction**

Dyadic communication in an organization is the most basic level at which human interaction takes place. Scholars have devoted most of their attention to one particular type, superior-subordinate communication. It is believed that the most important episodes of organizational communication occur in superior-subordinate relationships (Eisenberg, Monge, & Farace, 1984). Training in communication and other areas has shown a tremendous increase in today's workplace. Training is an activity made necessary because of the dynamic nature of the environment in which organizations exist. This study investigated superior-subordinate communication and training, in an effort to explore the notion of integration. Integration refers to the blending of an employee's needs and values with the organization's needs and values. To an employee, the supervisor represents the needs and values of an organization. One of the vehicles used to facilitate integration in this study was the development discussion. A development discussion can be defined as a conversation between a supervisor and subordinate about the subordinate's professional growth and development. Training in personal development was conducted to prepare employees for the type of communication required in a development discussion with their supervisor. The study sought to determine if training in communication, specifically a structured format called the development

discussion, could move people toward an integrative partnership. Hegstrom (1990) points out that "most of the work in organizational communication has sought to instruct managers and organizations in the problems and solutions of organizational integration, the blending of organizational needs and values with individual needs and values in harmonious combination" (p. 143). The uniqueness of this study was that one of the components examined instructing *subordinates* in the problems and solutions of integration by teaching and having the employees communicate with their supervisor in an effort to blend their own needs and values with the needs and values of the supervisor. The intent of this study was not to see how much more efficient and productive employees can be but to see if communication training that ultimately leads to a development discussion can foster integration of the employee with the supervisor. Improved performance may be a natural result of an integrative relationship but it does not drive this study. Examining the effects of training and the development discussion, initiated by a subordinate, as a means to understanding integration, was the focus of this research.

Employees from a large energy and research laboratory were selected as subjects in this study. The laboratory, founded in 1952, is made up of roughly 8,000 professional scientists, engineers, technicians and administrators. The majority of the population have undergraduate degrees. A very high percentage of the scientists and engineers have advanced degrees. The organization is funded by the Department of Energy and managed by the UC system. Until recently, the laboratory's primary mission was to help design, build and maintain a strong nuclear deterrent force. With the changing global situation, the mission of the facility remains uncertain. National defense, nuclear

weapons, and arms control make up about 30% of the budget. Programs in energy research, laser technology, environmental science, health and biotechnology, applied science, computations, educational outreach, and economic competitiveness make up the rest of the budget.

The personal development workshop used in this study was a skills assessment seminar offered to all laboratory employees through the employee development division. Over 340 employees selected for this thesis have or will have attended the workshop. One hundred and eighty four respondents completed questionnaires dealing with integration and, for the majority, the workshop, development discussion, and follow-on discussions. Further interviews involving 16 employees were conducted to validate and explore the main research question.

This study examined how training in the development discussion between a subordinate and his/her supervisor might be used as a mechanism for integrating the subordinate's needs and values with the organization's needs and values. The study examined three main areas of research: integration, the development discussion, and training. The central focus of the research sought to understand and examine integration. One of the ways to examine integration is through communication between the supervisor and employee. The development discussion was a tool used to facilitate this structured conversation between the supervisor and employee. The training prepared the employee for the development discussion.

This study investigated the long-term effects of training in the development discussion. Many training programs collect a post-test evaluation immediately after the workshop. This gives the instructor an idea of the



participants' immediate reaction to the workshop. This study focused beyond immediate reactions and examined longer-term effects of training. It investigated what has happened since the training to determine if there was a transfer of skill and knowledge as well as to see if there was a difference in integration as a result of the training.

### **Problem Statement**

The research question to be examined was " Will training in the development discussion integrate the individual with the organization by advancing his/her own needs and values?" Looking at the effects of training and the development discussion can help us understand what role communication (between supervisor and employee) plays in successfully matching individual needs to organizational needs. The following three sections provide a rationale for this research and introduce several sub-questions related to the main research question.

### **Review of the Literature on Integration**

In order to understand the rationale for examining integration, it is important to look at how organizations have evolved in their approach to the relationship between superiors (management) and subordinates (workers). Early classical theories of organizational communication used the metaphor *machines* to describe the organization. Employees were "cogs in a machine" and must be told what to do by employers. The assumption that these cogs, or workers, hated work and must be coerced, was prevalent in those earlier days (Herzberg, 1961). Contrasted with this theory are others that can be described

in two movements, human relations and human resources. These approaches give credit to employees for wanting to make meaningful contributions and being involved in their work as a way of reaching their own individual potential.

Follett (1924) was instrumental in bridging classical theory and human relations theory. She introduced ideas that moved people from thinking an autocratic style of management was *the only way* to manage to thinking about a participative style of management. She stressed the importance of employees working together, not subordinates working *for* the supervisor but working *with* the supervisor. She was also an advocate of dealing with conflict as a process by which socially valued differences register themselves for the enrichment of all concerned. Follett (1924) stated, "A fresh conflict between employers and employees is often not so much an upsetting of equilibrium, really, as an opportunity for stabilizing" (p. 309). Provision for disagreement is a necessary part of the development discussion.

Barnard (1938) shed some light on the role communication plays in the organization. As an author and New Jersey Bell executive, Barnard (1938) stated that in order for organizations to occur, members must be willing to cooperate. This cooperation must be directed toward some sort of goal. Communication is a means by which the organization accomplishes its goal. The elements in an organization are (1) communication, (2) willingness to serve (cooperation), and (3) common purpose. Barnard (1938) emphasized there can be no organization without persons; willingness of people is indispensable; and the purpose of the organization is determined largely by organizational knowledge, but it is personally interpreted. His message was one of the first marks of the human relations movement.

Barnard (1938) acknowledged individuals as having a dual personality: an organizational personality and an individual personality. Strictly speaking, an organizational purpose has directly no meaning for the individual. What has meaning for the individual is the organization's relations to him/her – what burdens it imposes, what benefits it confers. What is significant is the distinction he/she makes between organizational purpose and individual motive. The motive of the individual is necessarily internal, personal, and subjective; on the other hand, a common purpose is necessarily an external, impersonal, and objective thing. It is assumed that the common purpose of the organization and individual motive are or should be identical. This is not usually, if ever, the case. Barnard (1938) pointed out that even the individual interpretation of the organization's purpose is subjective.

How individuals interpret the organization's purpose was a concept that moved toward a human relations theory. McGregor (1961) portrayed the distinction between classical theory and human relations theory in his work on Theory X and Theory Y. McGregor's (1961) Theory X is described as "the average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, wants security above all" (p. 34). Efforts toward integration would be fruitless with this assumption because the supervisor merely directs and controls the employee and the employee prefers it that way. Theory Y, on the other hand, assumes that the individual will work hard the more satisfying the work is. Employees want to contribute in meaningful ways because they personally get something out of it. McGregor (1961) states, "Commitment to objectives is a function of such rewards associated with their achievement. The most significant of such rewards, satisfaction of ego and self-

actualization needs, can be direct products of efforts directed towards organizational objectives" (pp. 47-48). He discussed responsibility and how employees, under proper conditions, will seek responsibility. If they will seek responsibility, they may also seek opportunities to be heard and fit into the organization by having their own individual needs and values met.

Employees may find it easier to contribute in meaningful ways if there is supportive communication. Likert (1961) was an advocate of subordinate involvement in decision making through supportive communication, where subordinates would be heard by upper ranks. He described how different organizational styles can either alienate workers or promote workers' involvement and identification with the organization. The critical element for initiating participation is supportive communication between the supervisor and employee. The manager becomes a "linchpin" between the employee and the leadership within the organization. As a linchpin, the manager plays a key role in promoting participative management by listening to employees, sending those messages up the ladder, and bringing messages from his/her management to the employees.

The four systems of organizational design described by Likert (1961) are the exploitative authoritative, benevolent authoritative, consultative, and participative styles. Largely based on McGregor's (1961) work of Theory X and Y, the exploitative authoritative style is characterized by tight control and authority and pits managers and workers against one another. The benevolent authoritative style allows workers to voice their complaints and opinions but workers still contribute little to the decision making. A consultative style moves toward encouraging communication and cooperation but the manager lacks

confidence in the employees' abilities to make decisions. The last style is ideal, according to Likert. Employees can fully participate in organizational goal setting and decision making. There is support for workers from managers that together they are able to identify with one another and with the organization. This participative style is integrative because the approach acknowledges employee voice and the supervisor is open to change.

A manager with a participative style tends to exhibit supportive communication behavior. Gibb (1961) advocated improving communication between a superior and subordinate. He made a direct link between superior's communication and subordinate satisfaction by distinguishing between climates of supportive and defensive interpersonal communication. He suggested that certain communication behaviors lead to supportive climates and other communication behaviors lead to defensive climates. Some of the supportive communication behaviors include: (a) description - focus on observable events vs. subjective evaluations or passing judgments on another; (b) problem orientation - focus on solving problems cooperatively vs. attempting to change another; (c) spontaneity - focus on communicating honestly in response to current situations vs. manipulating another; (d) empathy - focus on showing genuine concern and understanding for others vs. expressing lack of concern for the other; (e) equality - focus on treating one another as peers without stressing rank or superiority vs. arousing feelings of inadequacy; and (f) provisionalism - focus on being flexible and adaptable to the constraints of different communication situations vs. being dogmatic. Gibb (1961) maintained that a supportive climate leads to subordinate satisfaction and accuracy in communication, while a defensive climate leads to dissatisfaction and distortion

of communication. He acknowledged, however, that it is unlikely that supportive communication can be used in every organizational situation. Leaders should provide their workers with praise for work that is well done, rather than focusing only on deficient worker behaviors (Alexander & Camden, 1980; Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Previous theorists provide a historical background of organizational communication that contribute to our understanding of integration. Early theorists argued that employees prefer being directed and secure (Fayol, 1949; Taylor, 1919; Weber, 1947). Follett (1924) stressed the need for supervisors and employees to work with each other. Barnard (1938) described the "dual personality" of organizational members and the importance of individual members' interpretation of the organization's purpose. McGregor (1961) examined theory Y and the result of employee commitment to objectives. Likert (1961) described a participative style where employees engage in goal setting and decision making. Gibb (1961) emphasized the need for supportive supervisor behavior as a way to improve subordinate satisfaction and the accuracy of the communication. Many of these theories are describing characteristics of integration where supervisors form a partnership with employees by working together. Participation has evolved as a dominant theme in the literature. Working together toward integration can lead to employee's needs and values being met and the organization's needs and values being met.

The trends in organizational theory toward participative management provide a backdrop for the study of organizational integration. According to Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), integration can be defined as "the quality of the

state of collaboration that exists among departments that are required to achieve unity of effort by the demands of the environment " (p. 11). They studied earlier writers, Fayol, Gulick, Mooney, and Urwick, who were concerned with the need for integration in the organization. Integration using this terminology does not concern itself with the needs and values of the individual. They were more concerned with getting the "sub-systems" to work together within the larger organizational system. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) argued that early writers did not recognize the systemic properties of organizations and failed to see that segmenting the organization into departments would influence the behavior of organizational members in several ways. People within each unit would become specialists in dealing with their particular tasks. These early theorists believed the process of achieving integration to be mechanical and entirely rational; thus, they ignored the feelings and emotions connected with the achievement of organizational collaboration. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) argue that integration is not achieved by such a mechanical, rational process. Differing points of view often lead to conflicts about which way to go. To achieve effective integration, they say, conflicts resulting from different points of view held by various functional specialists must be resolved. They see the managerial hierarchy as one of many means through which resolution can occur. In addition, they emphasized a need to concern ourselves with the interpersonal skills needed to achieve integration. Effective collaboration must ensure that parties dealing with one another learn to be open and frank about their positions as they work together. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) suggested that "this openness leads to a climate of trust among the parties, which results in more effective problem solving" (p. 13). In the development discussion,

employees have an opportunity to resolve conflicting perceptions in two ways. They are able to surface differing views about the importance of certain skills to their job. They are also able to uncover disagreements about skill level or ability.

Johnson (1977) described integration as a learned process that is simply "a condition or process of people doing things together" (p. 87). It is a process of people relating their actions to the actions of others. She examined how structures (synonymous with the term integration) are accomplished. She asked the questions, "But how is integration possible? If I am doing my thing and you are doing yours, how can we do a thing together?" In part, it is "shared meaning" that permits coordination. She stated that integration is created when individuals develop shared expectations. Through the exchange of messages, sensed by visual or auditory stimuli to represent or symbolize meaning, people create expectations. She saw human integration as the connection of action to action. Like organizational intelligence, Johnson (1977) explained, integration is a learned process. Organizational members are able to share expectations when they have participated in this learning process together. The learning process is the process of meaning construction. Johnson (1977) claimed, "to understand human integration we must understand how meanings are related to coordinated actions" (p. 88).

Sharing expectations may be valued by managers or supervisors if they perceive a positive impact on productivity and effectiveness. In the work of Blake and Mouton (1978), they attempted to "integrate" organizational productivity and individual effectiveness. They developed a "managerial grid" to describe a manager's orientation toward concern for production and concern for



people. Two axes, concern for people and concern for production, with ranges from low to high make up a grid. In the 10-space grid, five quadrants emerge (four corners plus one in the middle). The 5,5 mark on the grid is referred to as *organization man management*. According to Blake and Mouton (1978), the 5,5-oriented managers believe that "adequate organizational performance is possible through balancing the necessity to get work out with maintaining morale of people at a satisfactory level" (p. 11). This style is a *middle of the road* approach where managers try to compromise and balance task and people concerns. In some cases, they may feel concern for task and people to be in competition and, in order to deal with this, settle for moderately harmonious group relationships and adequate performance.

Blake and Mouton (1978) claim there are some situations where the middle situation is the best solution, but a 5,5 orientation is not aimed at this position because it is the best one. Rather, the middle ground is sought to split the difference in order to get an acceptable solution. Reservations and doubts that led to the initial difference are likely to remain. According to the authors, the ideal style for leadership effectiveness is a 9,9 orientation, where there is a high degree of concern for production combined with a high degree of concern for people. In the 5,5, the leader sees task and people as competing but a 9,9 leader believes that group effectiveness depends on integration of people needs with task objectives. This style is known as *team management*. The effectiveness of the group is presumed to depend on the extent to which individual members are able and willing to develop, assume responsibility, and function as a team. Blake and Mouton (1978) maintain that "work is

accomplished from committed people; interdependence through a 'common stake' in organizational purpose leads to relationships of trust and respect" (p. 11).

To summarize, integration can be looked at from many angles. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) pointed out that past theorists have focused on segmenting people into departmental specialization without acknowledging the need for effective collaboration and communication. Johnson (1977) emphasized integration as a learned process created when members develop shared expectations. Blake and Mouton (1978) suggested looking at organizational productivity balanced with individual effectiveness and aiming for a *team management* style. This style is characterized by a manager with a high degree of concern for production and a high degree of concern for people. Balancing concerns for people and production is one theme of integration. One of the difficulties in understanding the literature on integration has been the variety of definitions. Maybe part of the problem is the fact that some researchers have described the term so broadly that they have neglected investigating integration at the most fundamental level: between individuals. Observing how department A collaborates with department B may be only part of the picture. Because integration has such a broad, complex variety of definitions, one of the research questions in this study was devoted to clarifying and testing a multi-operational definition of integration. The definition included four areas that are defined in Chapter II; job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration. One of the research questions, "How are the four integration measures related?", was examined in order to clarify the definition.

### Review of the Literature on the Development Discussion

The literature in the previous section provides ample support for integration as a desirable goal for organizations and their members. One of the ways to integrate employees with organizations is through the development discussion, a structured communication format between a supervisor and employee. Designed by training specialists, the development discussion has grown in popularity in many of today's organizations. In this study, the components and format of the development discussion were critical to measuring integration; thus, this section of the chapter defines the development discussion and explores eight bodies of literature that form its rationale. The development discussion as a mechanism capable of integrating the employee to the organization is at the heart of this study. A development discussion is a conversation between an employee and his/her supervisor centered around the employee's personal growth within the career scope. Many training providers in the business sector have developed variations on the concept of the development discussion. Among them, Blessing and White (1988) describe the development discussion as a conversation "designed to improve rapport, to open communications and to create a developmental partnership between employees and their managers" (p. 1). There are specific characteristics in the development discussion that differ from a performance appraisal interview. In the development discussion, the responsibility of the discussion typically falls with the employees in an effort to take charge of their own development. Employees usually run the meeting or discussion and dictate the agenda according to their concerns. In an appraisal interview, the supervisor typically conducts the interview and dictates the agenda. Prior to the development

discussion, the employee usually evaluates him/herself and compares that data with feedback from his/her supervisor. Differing perceptions of those skills are usually identified. Linking skills to requirements of a particular job provides the employee with insight as to what he/she needs to pursue for future success. Based on having received feedback from his/her superior, the discussion then focuses on the feedback in an attempt to gain clarity, know where current strengths and weaknesses are, and move forward with emphasis on individual development. In most development discussions, the emphasis is on how to increase the satisfaction level for the employee, how to excel in performance, and plan for the future (e.g., exploring various career options). Appraisal interviews tend to focus on past accomplishments and needed areas of improvement. Emphasis on increasing job satisfaction becomes secondary to reviewing past performance. Unlike the development discussion, the appraisal interview is usually linked to performance ranking or salary increases, which adds a different tone to the discussion.

Another training provider known as the Novations Group (1991) focuses on four key outcomes in the development discussion. They recommend structuring the discussion so the end result includes discussing where the individual is in terms of his/her career, determining what contributions the individual wants to make (long- and short-term target stages), deciding how the individual is going to accomplish these goals, and getting the manager's support for the individual's plan. These outcomes result from a clarifying process. Novations' (1991) advocates state, "when both the coach (manager) and the individual have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, development discussions become much more productive and effective" (p. 7.2).

Although the development discussion has not been studied from a scholarly perspective, there is a clear basis for its investigation. The foregoing literature review addresses eight central elements or bodies of literature relating to the development discussion. These bodies of literature include feedback, decision making, performance priorities and goals, conflict, voice, climate, and motivation. First, the development discussion is one kind of feedback. Feedback has been examined in relation to systems theory. In this context, responses act as feedback to system actions that provide information for use in adjusting system conditions. Open systems are described by two basic processes, maintenance and adaptation. Both are dependent on feedback. Feedback is used as a means of checking performance. Negative feedback indicates deviation from desired conditions and positive feedback reinforces deviations rather than signaling for correction. With feedback, communicators can adjust their messages to communicate more effectively. Feedback can be a powerful tool for change because it guides people in adjusting their messages they send to one another. Based on the feedback from the supervisor, an employee can get a clearer sense of how he or she is doing and what is important in the job. This can maintain the current behavior or alter it based on new feedback.

A number of researchers have studied the form feedback takes in organizations. In the development discussion, written feedback from the supervisor is examined during the workshop and conversation around that feedback occurs during the development discussion. Numerous studies have examined feedback, particularly the effect of feedback on performance (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979). Feedback has long been recognized for its ability to increase motivation and its corrective impacts (Annett, 1969; Ilgen et al., 1979;

Locke et al., 1968). Although positively recognized, there has been little effort expended to study feedback empirically. Ilgen et al. (1979) explain that feedback can be categorized by content, frequency, function, or source, and observe that most theories "fail to explicate the specific characteristics of feedback and, thus, to consider the ramifications of different types of feedback on behavior" (p. 3). Feedback has been related to subordinates' satisfaction and performance. Jablin (1979) reports that subordinate feedback responsiveness is greater when subordinates are told what needs to be done with completed assignments, when the superior makes the assignment to the subordinate, and when the subordinate feels that he or she can secure clarification about assignments from the immediate superior. He also found that feedback from a superior that shows a lack of trust results in subordinate dissatisfaction and aggressive feelings. O'Reilly and Anderson (1980) investigated the effects of trust on subordinate perceptions of feedback from superiors. The researchers found that quantity of feedback is related to satisfaction when there is trust between the subordinate and superior. In a trusting relationship, more feedback leads to more satisfaction. When subordinates do not trust their superiors, their satisfaction is related less to quantity of feedback and more tied to their perception of the relevance and accuracy of the feedback. Along similar lines, Kelly (1982) suggests feelings of trust and distrust have a significant impact on the nature of the superior-subordinate communicative relationship. Subordinates are more satisfied with supervisors whom they trust.

The second body of literature related to the development discussion is decision making. In Tompkins and Cheney's (1983) work describing

identification and decision making, they claim that from the supervisor's perspective, member identification is extremely beneficial to the organization because it ensures that decisions made will be in line with the objectives of the organization even in the absence of external forces. They go on to discuss how individuals give up a degree of decisional autonomy when they join an organization. Tompkins and Cheney (1983) say people "literally decide to accept organizational premises and approach work-related decisions from the organization's perspective; that is, they assume the role of the organization" (p. 125).

According to the authors, the key to effective decision making is the identification process. Tompkins and Cheney (1983) talk about an employee who is surrounded by many values and goals tied to various organizational targets. Targets may be certain people, a work group, or level of the hierarchy. The process of identifying with the organization focuses the attention of the decision on the particular values and goals associated with the organization. The authors argue that "identification becomes a necessary cognitive coping mechanism for the individual making decisions in a complex organizational setting; it is a means by which the member constructs the 'environment of decision' and effectively contends with the problem of rational choice" (p. 125). Through identification, an individual makes decisions based on a limited view where certain values, knowledge and behavioral alternatives are chosen for consideration to the exclusion of other values, knowledge and alternatives. The organizational member considers that with which he or she identifies.

Decision making is often centered around determining performance priorities and goals. The third theme of the literature relating to the development

discussion is priorities and goals. Argyris (1957) saw a lack of congruence between management and workers in many industrial organizations. His findings indicated that the goals of workers are often different from that of their supervisors and this can create psychological distance and competition. Workers may resent their management and the organization. He emphasized the need for cooperation among the employees and management. Argyris (1964) suggested that in order to combat the incongruence of goals between supervisors and employees, supervisors should actively involve their subordinates in operations and attempt to let workers accomplish their own tasks. The author stressed the importance of participation in decision making. He explained that workers are often alienated from the organization because they are not involved in the decisions that affect them in their work.

Argyris (1964) argued that the more actively involved employees are in determining organizational operations, the more likely they are to identify with the organization and adopt the organization's goals as their own. The more they internalize these goals as their own, the more likely they are to keep the organization's best interests in mind. As a whole, if the organization is doing well, employees feel part of that and see their efforts positively. Achieving goals for the organization becomes a way by which employees achieve their goals, increasing their potential for reaching self-actualization. One of the research questions targeted the area of goal achievement. The question, "How is goal achievement related with other training elements and integration measures?", tried to determine if goal achievement was related with other training elements like workshop satisfaction, completeness of the development discussion,



satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process, and integration measures. Further explanation of this research question will be covered in Chapter II.

Argyris (1964) further suggested that together employees and employers can redesign individual jobs to involve employees in the organization's processes, give them added responsibility and decision-making opportunities, and assist them in developing more pride in their work. Employees have an opportunity to give input into selection of work goals. If an employee and employer can together define operational goals and redesign jobs, this may be a vital step toward an integrative partnership.

In the development discussion, employees attempt to reach this sort of agreement on priorities and goals. Sometimes there may be disagreement or conflict around the job. The fourth body of literature is conflict. The literature on conflict is vast. Most research from an organizational perspective looks at conflict as inevitable and in many cases, beneficial to the health of a group or organization. No one would deny, however, that uncontrolled conflict can lead to harmful consequences within groups and organizations. Conflict can bring to the surface issues that require resolution, relieve tension, and lead to the development of new channels of communication, according to Koehler, Anatol, and Applbaum (1981). Many agree that conflict should not be suppressed and avoided but confronted, managed, and resolved if possible.

Three sources of conflict that may surface in the development discussion are role, values and goal differences, and structural ambiguity (Spiker & Daniels, 1987). The role conflict is of three types: (a) intrarole conflict - which occurs when there are competing expectations for a role; (b) interrole - which happens when a person is in the position of making a choice between two or

more competing roles that demand simultaneous performance; and (c) interpersonal role conflict - which involves competition between two or more individuals for the same role within a group.

The next source of conflict occurs when different individuals within the same group (supervisor and employee in this case) have contradictory values and goals. These types of conflicts can be very deep and extremely difficult to resolve. Because problems and solutions are value-laden, the solutions work only to the extent that they satisfy valued conditions.

Another source of conflict is structural ambiguity. Conflict may occur if the authority, responsibility and procedures are not clear. Daniels and Spiker (1987) state, "this form of conflict may take on the appearance of territorial dispute, with two or more groups claiming jurisdiction over the same organizational function or, conversely, denying responsibility for some problem or area of organizational operations" (p. 193). This may be rare in a development discussion but unclear procedures or responsibility, for example, could be a source of conflict for an employee.

In addition to understanding the sources of conflict, it is also important to understand how people deal with conflict. Some employees tend to speak up and attempt to resolve issues while others remain silent. This difference can be attributed to organizational dynamics and power dimensions. A fifth area of literature relating to the development discussion is the notion of voice. Redding (1977) maintains that organizations do not want people who make waves or "rock the boat." He argues that an over-riding objective within companies is to find people who will "fit in" and be a loyal employee. Redding (1977) clarifies, "And what was meant by a loyal employee? One who would internalize the

corporate goals and values" (p. 245). This is mentally characterized by "going along in order to get along." In their study on boat-rocking in high-technology culture, Sprague and Ruud (1988) note that "a number of observers have commented that individuals have considerably less freedom of expression than they do as citizens" (p. 171). What happens to the expression of freedom for an employee? Some theorists give us an unsettling answer. Scott and Hart (1990) talk about the organizational imperative. They caution that society has come to a point where the American organization is so powerful that "whatever is good for the individual can only come from the modern organization; therefore, all behavior must enhance the health of such organizations" (p. 30). They make a case that individuals within any organization are suppressed and forced to sacrifice their own values and accept the values of their organization. The development discussion allows for talk about disagreement. Employees have an opportunity to voice concerns that relate to the employee's work.

Voice is most likely to occur in supportive climates. The sixth area of literature is communication climate. Research by Redding (1972), Dennis (1974), and others indicates that communication climate consists mostly of perceptions employees have of the quality of relationships and communication at work and the degree of involvement and influence. Redding (1972) defines the term, communication climate, as "the over-all degree of satisfaction an employee perceives in his total communication environment" (p. 429). Redding (1972) proposed that an ideal communication climate is made up of five factors: (1) supportiveness, (2) participative decision making, (3) trust, confidence and credibility, (4) openness and candor, and (5) high performance goals. A basic tenet of communication climate is that an individual's cognitive and affective

perceptions of an organization influence that person's behavior in the organization. Dennis (1974) defined communication climate as a subjectively experienced quality of the internal environment of an organization. This quality embraces members' perceptions of messages and message-related activities occurring in the organization.

Communication climate has been linked to job satisfaction. The data of Dennis (1974), Richetto (1977), and Weiner and Vardi (1990) suggest a strong, positive correlation between communication satisfaction and climate and organizational effectiveness. DeWine and Barone (1984) report that as satisfaction with communication increased, positive perceptions of general organizational climate increased. One characteristic of a positive communication climate is perceived openness of the supervisor. Jablin (1979) describes two basic dimensions of openness in superior-subordinate relationships: openness in message sending and openness in message receiving. Much of the thrust for looking at openness lies in the fact that it is key to an effective organizational climate. He found that subordinates are more satisfied with their jobs when openness of communication exists between superiors and subordinates. Openness of communication appears to be related to organizational performance. Jablin (1979) examined a study by Baird (1974) where "willingness of superiors and subordinates to talk as well as the actual talk about a topic is a function of each interactant's perception of the other's willingness to listen" (p. 1204). Also, superiors and subordinates prefer supervisory responses that are accepting and reciprocating rather than neutral-negative (unfeeling, cold or non-accepting). Five results are concluded from Jablin's (1979) attempts to determine the types of responses that characterize

open and closed communicative responses between supervisor and employee. Some of these tie into previous research on feedback. The first two conclude that disconfirming responses are not acceptable in superior-subordinate communication and subordinates dislike disconfirming responses from a superior. They prefer responses that provide positive relational feedback. The third conclusion states that regardless of perceived openness or closedness of the communication relationship with their superior, subordinates expected the same types of responses from a superior but evaluated the appropriateness of these responses differently. Next, Jablin (1979) found a substantial degree of reciprocity existing for confirming messages, regardless of the openness or closedness of the superior-subordinate relationship. Jablin's (1979) fifth finding shows that "subordinates who perceive a closed relationship with their superior are prepared to respond to a superior's message of negative relational feedback with a response transmitting negative relational feedback toward the superior; however, this is not true for subordinates who perceive an open relationship with their superior" (p. 1204).

Goldhaber (1990) discussed the implication of communication climate for career pathing. Career pathing is referred to as identifying where the areas of advancement are and how to get to an area of advancement. If advancement is where the subordinate's interests lie, the effects of a supervisor sharing that information with the employee can have a positive effect. This idea ties into the underlying theme of the development discussion, growth. One of the provisions in the development discussion allows for talk about future career options. Employees may seek information on career alternatives. Goldhaber (1990) stated, "to progress in an organization, however, they need to know more about

the total system and how they fit into broader system objectives" (p. 74). He emphasized that for career pathing to succeed, there must be a willingness to share information. Information includes how the company is run and what the objectives are. In order for this to work, the supervisor representing the organization must know the organization and its objectives and the skills needed to meet those objectives. The argument is made that if employees discuss these topics with their supervisor and information is shared, employees satisfaction may increase.

Just as climate can have a positive effect on employees, understanding employee motivation can also have positive effects. Recognizing the higher motivational needs of employees is important, particularly for the kinds of employees in this study. The eighth and final body of literature is motivation. Herzberg (1966) investigated employee motivation and related it to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Briefly, Maslow (1943) developed a hierarchy of needs that build upon each other. The lower order needs, survival needs, safety needs, and affiliation needs, come first. They are followed by higher order needs: self-esteem needs and self-actualization needs. For example, once people have food and shelter, feel safe, have a sense of belonging, they then move to esteem and self-actualization where they focus on the use of their potential as a human being. Herzberg (1966) suggested a distinction between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction but the absence of satisfaction. His findings indicate that the factors that satisfy an employee on the job are *different* from those that dissatisfy. He asserts that factors that motivate or "motivators" are achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and possibility for personal growth. According to Herzberg

(1966), individuals are motivated by intrinsic rewards, which tend to be more difficult to develop than extrinsic rewards. Factors that dissatisfy are referred to as "hygiene" factors. Examples of these factors include pay, benefits, administrative policies and procedures, technical supervision, relationship with supervisor, relationship with co-workers, relationship with subordinates, working conditions, status, and job security. He claims that if these factors are not satisfied, employees will be dissatisfied and may perform poorly but, once satisfied, it does not mean employees will be high performers. Herzberg's (1966) factors correspond to Maslow (1943) in that the lower-order needs deal with the hygiene factors (paycheck to feed family) and higher-order needs deal with motivators (achieving one's potential).

According to Herzberg's (1966) theory, one might say that the relationship with the supervisor is a hygiene factor and leads to dissatisfaction if not met but it does not motivate employees when the relationship is good. On the other hand, motivators, based on his research, include achievement, recognition and possibility for personal growth. These are three strong elements in the development discussion. In one section, the supervisor recognizes the employee's talents or strengths. The entire discussion is centered around the possibility for personal growth and emphasizes the need to work together to achieve goals agreed upon by both parties.

To summarize, the development discussion is a conversation with the supervisor about the employee's professional growth. The development discussion differs from an appraisal interview in that the development discussion is initiated by the employee, focuses on future growth, and is not tied to ranking or salary. Because the development discussion has not been

previously studied under this title, the preceding literature first identified communication and reviewed several bodies of literature. Four research questions in this study examined the development discussion and integration. One of the research questions asked, "What are the effects of completeness of the development discussion?" The question attempted to examine if a relationship existed between covering all areas of the development discussion and integration level of employees. Other research questions, "What are the effects of the development discussion?" and "What are the effects of follow-on discussions?", tried to determine if there were differences on employee integration levels depending on whether employees had the development discussion or not or if there was a relationship between integration levels and the extent of follow-on discussions. The fourth question dealt specifically with satisfaction with the boss and the development discussion process. The research questions was, "What are the effects of satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process?" Satisfaction with the supervisor referred to the supervisor's behavior before and during the development discussion. Satisfaction with the discussion process referred to elements of agenda recommended for the development discussion. The research question focused on whether the employee's level of integration changes based on his/her satisfaction level with the supervisor/discussion process.

The eight major areas discussed in the development discussion were feedback, decision making, motivation, performance priorities and goals, conflict, voice, and climate. There has been extensive research on feedback and its importance is widely accepted; however, little effort has been expended to study it empirically. This study empirically investigated the effects of feedback



as part of the development discussion. In addition to feedback, Tompkins and Cheney (1983) argued that the identification process is important in employee decision making. Agreeing on performance priorities and goals are also components in the development discussion. Argyris (1964) advocated the active involvement of employees in establishing goals and making decisions. The development discussion is at the core of this. The discussion includes talking about priorities. Sometimes conflict occurs in establishing priorities. The source of conflict may stem from incongruent of roles, goals, values, or structural ambiguity (Daniels & Spiker, 1985). Redding (1977), Scott and Hart (1990), and others have warned us of the dangers of voicing a minority view or disagreeing with the supervisor in today's organizations. The seventh area of the development discussion review was climate. Dennis (1974) defined communication climate as a subjective quality of the internal organizational environment experienced by the individual. Factors that contribute are supportiveness, participative decision making, trust, confidence, openness, and goals. Herzberg (1966) emphasized motivators as an important way to increase satisfaction. In the development discussion, three motivators are achievement, recognition, and possibility for personal growth.

### **Review of the Literature on Training**

The development discussion was a tool used to facilitate a structured conversation between the supervisor and employee. The training prepared the employee for the development discussion. Training, defined most basically, is simply an activity to facilitate learning in organizations. In order to facilitate the learning process of anything new or different, training is required. Learning, as

defined by Bass and Vaughan (1966) is a process whereby "a relatively permanent change in behavior occurs as a result of practice or experience" (p. 8). Training occurs in many situations. If training is essentially learning, we can assume they take on the same basic objectives: to teach or transmit information, to build skills and abilities, and/or to change behavior. We can also assume that even the most informal learning processes are essentially training. Friedman and Yarbrough (1985) state, "training is not a uniform process to which a single formula applies. Its function and form vary enormously from situation to situation" (p. 1). This section covers the reasons for training, adult learning, training evaluation, and change.

In the past decade, there has been tremendous growth in the amount of money and number of hours being spent on training and development in U.S. organizations. One reason is that many advances in technology have greatly influenced the work people do in organizations. Because more and more jobs have become automated and specialized, employees must possess very specific knowledge and abilities to perform their jobs. Rapid changes in technology cause current skills to be outdated. Also, as organizations become more complex, the specialization of jobs occurs at all organizational levels. In addition, there is an increased interest in providing career orientation for employees to enable them to assume higher positions as their careers advance. Wolvin (1987) sees the growth in the training and development field as important to communication educators because "the corporate classroom has become a natural extension of our own workplace, and adult learners are now a major population for communication education" (p. 2).

The adult learners trained in this study were professionals in a research and development facility. Adults bring with them a different set of needs and expectations to the classroom than those of traditional school students. What is known about training adults? In recent years, the paradigm of how we teach adults has undergone a change. Using the same techniques utilized in academic environments does not lend itself to success in the workplace. Knowles (1970) claims that adult learners need a different approach to learning than the traditional patterns of teaching and states, "Skillful adult educators have known for a long time that they cannot teach adults as children have traditionally been taught. For adults are almost always voluntary learners, and they simply disappear from learning experiences that don't satisfy them" (p. 38).

To truly engage an adult learner in the learning process one must use the adult's prior experiences as a valuable source. Beder and Darkenwald (1982) support this notion and encourage adult teachers to "emphasize responsive, learner-centered behaviors and de-emphasize controlling and structuring behaviors" (p. 142). One of the ways to create learner-centered environments is to acknowledge the large amount of experience adults bring to the classroom. By incorporating the experience of the learner, the adult educator moves from a directive teacher to the role of a learning facilitator. In this study's workshop, the instructor was not a directive teacher but a facilitator of learning who acknowledged the trainees' years of education and experience and drew upon that throughout the workshop.

Cross (1978) suggests four techniques for adapting instruction to the adult learner. Cross (1978) believes the first technique deals with the presentation of new information. It should be meaningful, and it should include

aids that help the learner organize it and relate it to previously stored information. Another technique focuses on training that is presented at a pace that permits mastery. Next, the presentation of one idea at a time and minimization of competing intellectual demands should aid comprehension. The last technique emphasizes frequent summarization as a way of facilitating retention and recall.

Understanding adult motivation for learning is key to successful training. Zemke and Zemke (1981) discuss three basic areas of adult learning: things known about adult learners and their motivation, things known about designing curriculum for adults, and things known about working with adults in the classroom. In terms of motivation, adults tend to seek out learning experiences in order to combat specific situations or events they are facing, according to these researchers. Zemke and Zemke (1981) claim that the more "life-change events" an adult encounters the more likely he or she is to seek out learning opportunities. Learning experiences sought after will have direct relevance to these events. Adults seek knowledge and skills they have a use for.

Zemke and Zemke (1981) identify curriculum design as the second basic area of adult learning. Some of the research concludes the necessity of adult learners needing to be able to integrate new ideas with those they already know. If new information conflicts with their old ideas, integration is slower. Curriculum designers need to know whether the concepts or ideas are in conflict with the learner and organizational values or not. Adult learners tend to prefer single-concept, single-theory courses to survey courses. Things that interfere with learning are fast-paced, complex or unusual learning tasks. A

straightforward, how-to approach is the preferred content orientation. Too much theory can hinder comprehension.

The third basic division Zemke and Zemke (1981) discuss of adult learning involves what goes on in the classroom. For adults, the environment must be physically and psychologically comfortable. It can be very risky for an adult to try a new behavior in front of his/her peers. Many factors influence the in-class experience, and being aware of them is vital. Adult learners have expectations that need to be acknowledged and clarified before getting into the course content. The instructor's role is one of juggling. There must be a balance between presentation of new material, debate and discussion, sharing of relevant trainee experience, and the clock. Zemke and Zemke (1981) emphasize, "adults want the learning to be problem-centered, personalized and accepting of their need for self-direction and personal responsibility" (p. 117).

Based on the literature, there is agreement that adult learners respond best when the training design is empowering. Knowles (1970) emphasizes a learning approach where the adult learner is viewed as a volunteer whose prior experience needs to be acknowledged. Beder and Darkenwald (1982) stress the importance of the instructor creating a learner-centered environment by being less directive and more facilitative. Cross (1978) proposes techniques that adapt instruction to the adult learner. Zemke and Zemke (1981) present a summary of points about adult motivation, designing curriculum, and working with adults in the classroom. The training in this study incorporates these approaches and concepts in the design. For example, expectations for the workshop are clarified at the beginning of the training. One of the questions presented in the research focuses on workshop satisfaction. The question is,

"What are the short-term and long-term effects of workshop satisfaction?" Based on the literature above, incorporating adult learning concepts and techniques should contribute positively to overall workshop satisfaction. Determining the effects of workshop satisfaction is accomplished by one of the most important areas of training – evaluation.

Evaluation comes in the form of feedback, or the knowledge of results of one's effort. With evaluation being a main component of this study, it is imperative to understand the degrees of evaluation one can incorporate. Watson (1979) reveals four areas of a training program deserving evaluation. They include reaction, learning, job behavior, and organizational impact. The first level of evaluation involves reaction of the trainees to all facets of the learning experience itself. This is the most common approach to evaluating a training program. The sponsoring organization and the instructor typically assess the participant's initial reaction to the program itself. Information on the program's content (what was covered) and process (how it was conveyed) is usually gathered from written evaluation questionnaires. They can be formative evaluations (checking during the middle of the workshop to see how things are going) or summative evaluations (assessing at the conclusion of the workshop or later how well training objectives were met).

The next level of evaluation is learning. Determining what was learned and trying to measure that depend on what the learning objectives were. Assessment of trainees' competence in the target area is the focus. Evaluators want to see what changes in attitudes, skills, and knowledge of the trainees occurred. Friedman and Yarbrough (1985) explain criteria for determining this, "First, it must validly measure the identified competencies. Second, it should

reveal the degree to which it actually was the training experience that affected those competencies" (p. 228).

Along those same lines, evaluators want to know how and to what extent participants behave differently because of the training as well as how they have applied what was taught on the job. There are many ways to get valid, comprehensive information about how trainees are performing. Readily observable outcomes (e.g., reduced number of grievances) are one way. A second method involves learning about the trainees' environment and asking people whom they work with (superior, peers, subordinates) to report their observations of the trainees' behavior. Mager (1992) believes the manager's role is to provide an opportunity for the trained people to perform. One of the keys for job behavior change is the existence of a supportive environment.

Last and most complex is organizational impact. This form of evaluation examines how participant changes affect the functioning of the organization. This is challenging because of its difficulty to measure. Looking at the behavior of specific individuals is easier to examine than the impact of that training on the entire organization. The impact of training depends on the organization's purpose. One step to evaluation at this level is examination of short-term indicators. Donaldson and Scannell (1978) give us a list of specific indicators. Indicators most likely to apply to the organization in this study are grievance reductions, productivity after versus before training, work quality, quantitative results, absenteeism, accident rates, customer complaints, turnover rates, and worker efficiency. Even these indicators would be incredibly difficult to encapsulate in such a large organization. This study did not include

measurement of specific indicators because of the difficulty of feasibly examining those indicators prior to the workshop 26 months ago.

An additional outcome of training worth evaluating has to do with the effect on the organization. Watson (1979) emphasizes, "The mere act of engaging in training goes a long way in conveying the message to members of the organization that on-going improvement and self-development are important matters and that the organization values good management" (p. 310). He adds that this can have a positive effect on the reinforcement of desirable organizational norms.

What this study did was use evaluation to find out what effects the training had on individual integration levels. The research question proposed was, "What are the short-term and long-term effects of training?" The evaluation in this study looked at more than just initial reactions to the training. The study also included evaluation on learning to see if there were changes in skill or knowledge in job behavior, emphasizing how and to what extent the participants behaved differently as a result of the training. The study also examined organizational impact where deeper concerns involving organizational members and their integration levels were addressed. Evaluation provided information about the affects of change as a result of the training.

Organizational impact ties into another area of training important to trainers – change. It is believed that change is a process that is always occurring for one of two main purposes: maintaining the stability of a system or transforming it for movement into new directions (Lippitt, 1973; Palazzoli et al., 1978). For the trainer, one of the implications of the change process is the



opportunity for the trainer to influence the direction and rate of change. Watzlawick (1974) makes a distinction between two types of change and states, "First-order change is one that occurs within a given system which itself remains unchanged, and second-order change is a change of the system itself" (p.10). The two types of change can be applied to training programs. A training program can teach individuals skills and temporarily have a major impact on the organization (first-order change); however, the effects of the training may be wiped out later because other factors in the culture affect employee performance and satisfaction. Second-order change alters the structure of the system. According to Friedman and Yarbrough (1985), "trainers need to assess which order of change is needed or wanted by a group, decide whether training can accomplish that change, and/or determine whether first- and second-order changes can be compatible" (p.79).

One might assume that second-order change is always preferable to first-order change. According to Friedman and Yarbrough (1985), second-order change as the preferred choice is not consistently true. A series of first-order changes often leads to second-order change. Beginning with second-order change might be met with resistance since it often involves altering the power structures in relationships. Training is designed differently depending on what the training is attempting to accomplish. In this study, the workshop itself appears to be an example of first-order change. Employees gained the skills needed to conduct a development discussion. The training may lead to second-order change but for that to happen, the design would need to be different. The design would need to focus on awareness of the structure itself in order to begin to change it.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### 1) Development Discussion

As previously mentioned, a development discussion is a conversation between an employee and his/her supervisor centered around the employee's personal growth within the career scope. Ideally, the tone of the conversation is positive, focusing on talk about skill strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve. Perceptions and misperceptions of those skills get identified. Linking skills to requirements of a particular job provides employees with insight as to what they needs to pursue for future success. In this study, a workshop was conducted to help employees structure an upcoming discussion with their supervisors. A complete description of the development discussion components can be found in Appendix A. The employees bring to the meeting their development discussion plan derived from the workshop.

For the purposes of this study, the development discussion is defined as a structured, 1.5 to 2+ hour meeting arranged by the trainee. This meeting was recommended to be scheduled and completed by the employee and his/her supervisor within two weeks after the workshop. Participants were encouraged to follow the development discussion agenda outlined in Appendix A.

#### 2. Training

Training can be operationally defined as the workshop itself, a 12-hour seminar focusing on the development discussion and preparing trainees for their discussion. In the workshop, participants assessed their skills and determined how they fit the needs of their current jobs. Their supervisor also assessed their skills. A course outline describing the flow of the course can be found in Appendix B. Trainees analyzed the assessment data and prepared for

the development discussion. In addition to being introduced to the format of the development discussion, employees talked about personal growth and their own personal values. They also completed a values inventory made up of a series of exercises designed to assist employees in clarifying their personal values. This tied into the class theme of knowing what the employees' strengths and weaknesses are (assessment) in an effort to help them take steps to enhance their job satisfaction and performance.

### 3. Integration

This concept has to do with combining elements to form a whole, establishing a coordinated entity that is harmonious to the parties involved. In this study, organizational integration refers to a fit between what the individual wants and what the organization wants. Integration occurs when an individual's needs and values are met and the organization's needs and values are met. In other words, the employee has not stripped his/her values and needs to mold into the organization but a blending occurs. In an integrative partnership between supervisor and employee, employees are able to disagree and voice concerns in an effort to advance their own needs and interests. They assert what is important to them in their jobs through communication. The development discussion is a mechanism for this assertion. The environment is such that the supervisor is receptive to the employee and listens with the intent to join forces for a mutually agreed-upon solution. For this environment to be possible, the organizational members must have a level of trust and respect for one another, a desire work together, and an openness in the communication. These are characteristics of a positive communication climate.

To conceptualize integration is one thing but to operationalize it is another. Operationalizing integration is a complicated task that lends itself to clearly the biggest challenge in this study. What does integration look like? How do integrated people act? Behaviors are observable and integration as a whole may be difficult to see, let alone quantify; however, for the purposes of this study, integration was defined using multiple operations. These include employee's level of (1) job satisfaction, (2) organizational involvement, and (3) organizational influence. As a fourth operation, an "integration" index was created that assessed how integrated employees feel with their boss.

Employees who are integrated with the organization are highly satisfied on the job, strongly involved in the organization, influential in decision making about their own work activities and how decisions are made, and able to blend their needs and values with those of the organization.

Job satisfaction has been defined as an individual's perceptual/emotional reaction to important facets of work (Vroom, 1967). Similarly, Locke (1976) describes job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state from the appraisal of one's jobs or experiences" (p. 1297). Although there are many factors that contribute to job satisfaction, it is my contention that if an employee's needs and values are met through an integrative partnership with the supervisor, he/she will be satisfied with the job.

Like job satisfaction, it is also predicted that employee involvement in the organization will be high if an employee has an integrative relationship with the supervisor. Organizational involvement is simply the degree to which an employee feels engaged in an organization. If there is a high level of organizational involvement, employees have a strongly vested interest in what

happens to the organization; thus, they are highly involved in organizational operations. It seems logical that if employees are able to blend their needs and values with those of the supervisor, a high level of organizational involvement would exist.

In order for employees to advance their own needs and values, they must feel able to influence. Influence has to do with the perception of personal power employees feel they have in relation to decision making in their job.

Tompkins and Cheney (1983) claim that "the examination of the decision-making process provides a means of tapping the mutual influences of people and expectations" (p. 124). For an employee to blend his/her wants with the wants of the organization, they must feel influential. If they do not feel like they have any influence or ability to modify decisions, they may fail to be integrated.

The questions used for each of the indices named above can be found in Appendix C.

### **Basic Research Orientation**

This study provided an opportunity to combine practical organizational interventions with academic literature of organizational communication theory. As an organizational trainer and as a student of organizational communication research, this project allowed me to make a contribution to the field in the following ways:

- 1) This study was designed to advance our understanding of the most important organizational dyad: the superior-subordinate relationship.

Even early writers like Follett (1924) knew the importance of face to face contact with workers. The development discussion is one face to face contact

that can help us understand the effects of communication with a supervisor on an employee. There is a lot of backing for supportive, open communication but rarely do studies examine the actual effects of communication between supervisors and employees. This study did just that.

2) This study examined the notion of integration.

Many theorists (Redding, 1977; O'Day, 1974) have warned us of dangers in organizations where employees have little or no voice, which appear to be most organizations. They argue that many organizations today have powerful underlying philosophies of employee suppression and workers should stay in line and never go against the grain. An employee's needs and values are put second to the organization's for the sake of that entity (Scott & Hart, 1990). This study addressed this topic and attempted to measure changes in the level of integration as a result of training and a development discussion. Furthering our understanding of communication as one way to promote the individual within the organization is tremendously beneficial and highly needed.

3) This study investigated the development discussion which has not been the subject of academic research.

Although the development discussion is becoming a more widely used tool, there has never been a formal study done on it. Training program developers, Blessing and White (1988), purport that "many people have reported their development discussion was the most useful discussion ever with a manager about anything, particularly about their own development" (p. 1). This study explored a useful tool, the development discussion.

4) This study was conducted in a real work setting.

The subjects in this study were not college sophomores. Surveying college sophomores vs. surveying organizational employees has a tremendous impact on the data. The experience and knowledge base of employees and supervisors reflect real life situations and add to the richness of the data.

5) This study dealt with an actual communication experience.

As mentioned earlier, this study took place in a real work setting, dealing with an actual communication event. Participants in the training were surveyed after the workshop. Although still a step removed from actually observing communication, this study got closer to actual communication.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

#### Participants

Participants were 184 employees (74 male, 106 female, 4 unknown) at a large energy research and development laboratory. These employees participated in a Managing Personal Growth (MPG) workshop within the past 26 months or will participate in a future workshop. They have signed up for the workshop voluntarily or have been asked by their department leaders to attend. Following the workshop, participants were strongly urged to schedule and conduct a development discussion with their supervisor. It was up to the employee to follow through and have the discussion or not.

In addition to the demographics on gender mentioned above, data were collected on years of service, job classification and age. For years worked at the Lab, the mean was 10.90. There were 55 separate job classifications (some varied in level, i.e., 112.1 and 112.2). Most prominent were administrators, supervisors, and engineers. The average age of the participants was 42, the youngest being 23 and the oldest being 61.

Questionnaires were distributed to all trainees including those who have attended the workshop and those who will attend the workshop. The questionnaires differed depending on whether they have been to the workshop or not (see Instrument section). Participation in completing the questionnaire was voluntary. Subjects were assured of confidentiality. The response rate for the questionnaires was 54%.



### **Procedures**

The procedure for this study was fairly straightforward. Questionnaires were distributed to 340 employees who have or will have attended the personal growth workshop. Respondents had five weeks to complete and turn in their questionnaire. Data was analyzed using the statistical processing program, SPSS. Statistical procedures were run and analyzed according to the specific test questions outlined in the Design section.

It would have been ideal to watch the actual development discussion and follow-on behavior; however, this is impractical and difficult to do. Self-report data was used as the best alternative to this limitation.

### **Instrument**

There were two separate questionnaires. One questionnaire was designed for people who had taken the MPG workshop and dealt with the course, development discussion and integration. The other questionnaire was designed for participants who had not yet taken the course but were signed up for a future session. This survey included only the integration questions. Both questionnaires can be found in Appendix D. All responses to the questionnaires were completely confidential. The surveys were color coded by class. The questionnaires required approval for use by the University Human Subjects Committee as well as formal approval from the organization. Approval was granted from the committee and organization. Additional items distributed to the subjects (cover letters and course description) can be found in Appendix E.

The instrument used in the study was derived from a combination of indices from the Michigan Assessment Packet and other researcher-created

measures. The Michigan Assessment packet, made up of organizational assessment questionnaires, is a tool designed to aid the assessment of organizations with information representing the perspectives of members of the organization. Based on the Michigan Assessment packet, the internal reliabilities for job satisfaction was .77 and organizational involvement was .68. No coefficient for organizational influence was reported. The next section describes how the questionnaire was broken down for analysis.

Out of the research question, "Will training in the development discussion integrate the individual with the organization by advancing his/her own needs and values?", come the following sub-areas:

- Job satisfaction
- Organizational involvement
- Organizational influence
- Integration
- Occurrence of follow-on discussions
- Occurrence of the development discussion
- Completeness of the development discussion
- Workshop satisfaction
- Satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process
- Goal achievement

For an itemized list of the sub-areas and survey questions pertaining to each sub-area, see Appendix C.

Questions to measure job satisfaction, organizational involvement, and organizational influence were derived from three indices in the Michigan Assessment Packet. Other items were created to measure integration, occurrence of follow-on discussions, completeness of the development discussion, workshop satisfaction, satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process, and goal achievement. These indices were tested for reliability. It is important to note that a separate integration measure, using the same name as the overall measure, was created to supplement the other three measures: job

satisfaction, organizational involvement, and organizational influence. The definition is multi-operational so each of the four indices for integration remain separate. Internal consistency reliabilities obtained in this study for each index can be found below.

**Table 1**  
**Internal Consistency Reliabilities**

Scale Name (# of items)	Alpha
*Job satisfaction(3)	.80
*Organizational Involvement(2)	.65
*Organizational Influence(3)	.75
Integration(5)	.79
Occurrence of follow-on discussion(3)	.79
Completeness of development discussion(4)	.72
Workshop satisfaction(4)	.84
Satisfaction with boss/process(7)	.90
Goal achievement(2)	.65

\* taken from "Michigan Organizational Assessment: Progress Report II," Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

### **Design**

The research question has been divided into sub-areas with specific questions to help guide the analysis:

1) *What are the short-term and long-term effects of training?*

This question was analyzed using a oneway ANOVA (analysis of variance) procedure to see if there were significant differences among the five training groups (see Table 2) on job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration. The dependent variables were job

satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration. The independent variable was the groups (five levels).

**Table 2**  
**Training Groups Defined**

Training Group	Months Since Class	Total classes per group
1	0	1*
2	2 - 7	4
3	8 - 13	4
4	14 - 20	5
5	21 - 26	7

\* This group includes participants who are signed up for the class but have not yet attended.

2) *What are the short-term and long-term effects of workshop satisfaction?*

This question was also analyzed using a oneway ANOVA procedure to see if there were significant differences in workshop satisfaction ratings among four of the five training groups. The dependent variable was workshop satisfaction. The independent variable was the training groups (four levels). Note that group one has not yet attended the workshop so would not be included.

3) *What are the effects of the development discussion?*

This question was analyzed using an independent t-test procedure to see if there were significant differences between groups who had the development discussion and those who have not, on job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration. The dependent variables were job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration. The independent variable was the

occurrence of the development discussion. Specifically, the third question on the survey dealt with whether or not they had the development discussion.

*4) What are the effects of follow-on discussions?*

This question was analyzed using a Pearson  $r$  correlation procedure to see if there was a correlation between the extent of follow-on discussions and levels of job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration.

*5) What are the effects of completeness of the development discussion?*

This question was analyzed using a Pearson  $r$  correlation procedure to see if there was a relationship between employees who had complete development discussions and job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration. A complete development discussion was defined as one lasting 1.5 to 2+ hours, following the agenda presented in class, getting agreement upon an action plan, and setting goals.

*6) What are the effects of satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process?*

This question was analyzed using a Pearson  $r$  correlation procedure to see if employees who were more satisfied with the supervisor/discussion process had higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration.

*7) How is goal achievement related with other training elements and integration measures?*

This question was analyzed using a Pearson  $r$  correlation matrix procedure to see how goal achievement, workshop satisfaction, completeness of the development discussion, and satisfaction with supervisor/discussion process relate.

The integration measures were also analyzed using a Pearson  $r$  correlation procedure to see how goal achievement, job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration relate.

*8) How are the four integration measures related?*

This question was analyzed using a Pearson  $r$  correlation matrix procedure to see how job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration relate. This test also helped determine the construct validity for these four measures.

### **Focus Group Procedures**

In addition to the questionnaires, participants who were interested in volunteering for a further interview had the opportunity to sign up for a focus group interview. Focus groups were another instrument or technique used in this study to add to the richness of the data. As opposed to individual interviews, focus groups provide an efficient way to gather information. Eighteen respondents were willing to be interviewed. They were divided into three groups of six people each. Two volunteers had to cancel so 16 respondents were actually interviewed. A technique we will call Affinity Clustering was used to gather information. Questions were presented one at a time to the group. Each group member was asked to answer the question using pieces of paper with adhesive that would stick to the flip chart, one per comment. Once they completed their answers, they put them up on a flip chart where they were able to move them around into categories. The group would then discuss each question separately. Comments were clustered as a result of group discussion. Once the data was categorized into common themes, the group then moved to

the next question and repeated the process. This data was examined for common themes and added to the analysis.

The four questions were derived after data was collected from the questionnaires to enhance the research questions (see Appendix F). The first question dealt with reasons why someone would not have the discussion. The purpose of the question was to get at the obstacles that may be getting in the way of having the discussion with one's supervisor. The second question was devoted to the discussion itself in terms of specific aspects that worked and didn't work during the discussion. The third question targeted the integration issue in an effort to find out what gets in the way of unifying the employee and the supervisor. The last question focused on follow-on discussions. Finding out what prevents people from following up is important so trainers can be more effective in helping to increase the odds of follow-on discussions.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The overall response to the MPG workshop itself was positive. The index average overall for workshop satisfaction was 12.95 out of a possible score of 15.0. A rating scale of five meant strongly agree, a one meant strongly disagree. Specifically, this index indicated strong support that the workshop was valuable (4.24), overall well-liked (4.27), and *not* a waste of time (4.44). Roughly 75% of the participants reported having the development discussion with their supervisor. Results will be reported according to the research questions previously identified in Chapter II.

#### 1) *What are the short-term and long-term effects of training?*

The first method of analysis, a oneway ANOVA on job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration, yielded no significant main effects for the five training groups. Results were: Job satisfaction,  $F(4,172) = .5178$ ,  $p = .7227$ ; Organizational involvement,  $F(4,175) = .8684$ ,  $p = .4841$ ; Organizational influence,  $F(4,170) = 1.1637$ ,  $p = .3287$ ; and Integration,  $F(4,172) = .9529$ ,  $p = .4349$  (See Tables 3-6).

**Table 3**  
Analysis of Variance among Training  
Groups on Job Satisfaction

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	4	7.99	1.99	.51	.72
Within Groups	172	664.30	3.86		
Total	176	672.30			



**Table 3 (cont.)**  
**Analysis of Variance among Training**  
**Groups on Job Satisfaction**

Group	Count	M	SD	SE
Group 1	5	13.80	1.30	.58
Group 2	24	12.87	2.07	.42
Group 3	39	12.76	2.04	.32
Group 4	42	12.57	1.75	.27
Group 5	67	12.62	2.03	.24

**Table 4**  
**Analysis of Variance among Training**  
**Groups on Organizational Involvement**

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	4	3.86	.96	.86	.48
Within Groups	175	194.86	1.11		
Total	179	198.72			

Group	Count	M	SD	SE
Group 1	5	8.80	1.09	.48
Group 2	25	9.00	1.04	.20
Group 3	40	9.17	.84	.13
Group 4	42	8.80	1.21	.18
Group 5	68	9.13	1.06	.12

**Table 5**  
**Analysis of Variance among Training**  
**Groups on Organizational Influence**

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	4	25.85	6.46	1.16	.32
Within Groups	170	994.18	5.55		
Total	174	970.03			

Group	Count	M	SD	SE
Group 1	5	11.60	1.81	.81
Group 2	25	9.56	2.46	.49
Group 3	38	10.18	2.42	.39
Group 4	40	9.75	2.20	.34
Group 5	67	10.28	2.39	.29

**Table 6**  
**Analysis of Variance among Training**  
**Groups on Integration**

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	4	45.29	11.32	.95	.43
Within Groups	172	2043.96	11.88		
Total	176	2089.26			

Group	Count	M	SD	SE
Group 1	5	21.00	2.91	1.30
Group 2	23	18.69	4.40	.91
Group 3	40	18.80	3.03	.47
Group 4	42	18.16	3.37	.52
Group 5	67	19.04	3.38	.41

2) *What are the short-term and long-term effects of workshop satisfaction?*

The same was true for the quantitative results of workshop satisfaction on job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration,  $F(3,132) = 1.1334$ ,  $p = .3381$  (See Table 7).

**Table 7**  
**Analysis of Variance among Training**  
**Groups on Workshop Satisfaction**

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	3	13.82	4.60	1.13	.33
Within Groups	132	536.58	4.06		
Total	135	550.40			

Group	Count	M	SD	SE
Group 2	17	17.0	2.50	.60
Group 3	32	17.65	1.97	.34
Group 4	31	16.74	2.03	.36
Group 5	56	17.21	1.86	.24

3) *What are the effects of the development discussion?*

When it comes to effects of the development discussion, there were no significant differences between groups who had the development discussion and groups who have not, on job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration. Results were: Job satisfaction,  $t(2,168) = .37, p = .71$ ; Organizational involvement,  $t(2,171) = .62, p = .54$ ; Organizational influence,  $t(2,166) = .77, p = .40$ ; and Integration,  $t(2,169) = .30, p = .77$  (see Table 8).

**Table 8**  
T-Test Comparison of  
Groups who had Discussion and  
those who have not on  
Integration Measures

		Discussion	No Discussion
Job Satisfaction	mean	12.60	12.73
	S.D.	2.08	1.52
	S.E.	.18	.24
	N	130	40
Organizational Involvement	mean	9.07	8.95
	S.D.	1.06	1.06
	S.E.	.09	.16
	N	131	42
Organizational Influence	mean	10.14	9.81
	S.D.	2.34	2.41
	S.E.	.21	.38
	N	126	42
Integration	mean	18.82	18.64
	S.D.	3.47	3.18
	S.E.	.31	.49
	N	129	42

4) *What are the effects of follow-on discussions?*

The follow-on discussion results of integration measures ranged from .06 to .11, indicating no significant correlations (see Table 9).

**Table 9**  
Pearson Correlation of Integration Measures  
with Occurrence of Follow-on Discussions

---

Job Satisfaction	.12
Organizational Involvement	.06
Organizational Influence	.09
Integration	.13

---

Number of Cases = 117

1-tailed significance : \* .05 \*\* .01 \*\*\* .001

5) *What are the effects of completeness of the development discussion?*

There were low, significant correlations between the four measures of integration and the degree of completeness of the development discussion (see Table 10).

**Table 10**  
Pearson Correlation of Integration Measures  
with Completeness of the Development Discussion

---

Job Satisfaction	.19*
Organizational Involvement	.18*
Organizational Influence	.27**
Integration	.24**

---

Number of Cases = 121

1-tailed significance : \* .05 \*\* .01 \*\*\* .001

6) *What are the effects of satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process?*

The correlations were very low between two of the four measures of integration and satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process (see Table 11). There was a low, positive correlation between organizational influence and satisfaction with supervisor/discussion process (.38) and integration and satisfaction with supervisor/discussion process (.42). Both of these indicated significance.

**Table 11**  
**Pearson Correlation of Integration Measures**  
**with Satisfaction with Supervisor/Discussion Process**

Job Satisfaction	.26*
Organizational Involvement	.29***
Organizational Influence	.38***
Integration	.42***

Number of Cases = 121

1-tailed significance : \* .05    \*\* .01    \*\*\* .001

7) *How is goal achievement related with other training elements and integration measures?*

There were moderate, positive correlations between completeness of the development discussion and satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process (.63), workshop satisfaction and satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process (.58), and completeness of the development discussion and workshop satisfaction (.54). The correlation for goal achievement and completeness of the development discussion was .44 (see Table 12).

**Table 12**  
**Pearson Correlation Matrix of**  
**Goal Achievement, Workshop Satisfaction,**  
**Completeness of Discussion, and**  
**Satisfaction with Supervisor/Discussion Process**

Correlation	Goal Ach	Wkp Sat	Comp Dis	Sat Proc
Goal Achievement				
Workshop Satisfaction	.38**			
Completeness of Discussion	.44**	.54**		
Satisfaction with supervisor/ discussion process	.31**	.58**	.63**	

Number of Cases = 126

1-tailed significance : \* .05    \*\* .01    \*\*\* .001

There was also a moderate, positive correlation between goal achievement and three of the integration measures (see Table 13), job satisfaction (.51), organizational influence (.52), and integration (.50). There was a low, positive correlation between organizational involvement and goal achievement (.34).

**Table 13**  
**Pearson Correlation of Integration**  
**Measures with Goal Achievement**

Job Satisfaction	.51**
Organizational Involvement	.34**
Organizational Influence	.52**
Integration	.50**

Number of Cases = 126

1-tailed significance : \* .05    \*\* .01    \*\*\* .001

8) *How are the four integration measures related?*

Data shows low, moderate, and high correlations among the four integration measures. There were low, positive correlations between organizational involvement and job satisfaction (.35) and organizational involvement and integration (.45). Of the four integration measures, data indicated moderate, positive correlation between job satisfaction and integration (.64) and job satisfaction and organizational influence (.56). There was a high (.71) positive correlation between integration and organizational influence (see Table 14).

**Table 14**  
**Pearson Correlation Matrix**  
**Job Satisfaction, Organizational Involvement,**  
**Organizational influence, and Integration**

Correlation	Job Sat	Org Inv	Org Inf	Integ
Job Satisfaction				
Organizational Involvement	.35**			
Organizational Influence	.55**	.32**		
Integration	.64**	.45**	.71**	

Number of Cases = 167

1-tailed significance : \* .05    \*\* .01    \*\*\* .001

### Focus Group Results

Results of the focus group interviews will be reported according to the four questions. Tables 15 through 18 show summaries of the focus group comments. In each table, there are two columns. The first column indicates which groups (three possible) mentioned the particular response on the left side of the table. A "1,2,3" means each group recorded and discussed that comment.

The second column headed Frequency reports the number of times that comment was listed among the groups.

The first question asked for reasons why someone would not have the development discussion. The top three reasons included "fear," "poor relationship with the boss," and "no time" (see Table 15). One area of "fear" discussed was the fear of exposing weaknesses. Respondents claimed that it was uncomfortable for people to show their weaknesses to the supervisor for fear that there would be "backlash." Another area of "fear" was intimidation by the style or personality of the supervisor. Some styles were defined as the "Napoleon Syndrome" or "Tyranny" type. Others reported "fear" around the possibility of conflict, unsatisfying outcomes, or a lack of a cooperative working relationship. In any event, the discussion was perceived as a "risk." Interestingly enough, two people from different groups reported that when they confronted their fear by getting difficult issues on the table, everything was fine.

**Table 15**  
Focus Group Responses to  
Reasons for Why Someone would not  
have the Development Discussion

	<i>Groups who mentioned</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Fear of boss/process	1,2,3	14
Poor relationship with the supervisor	1,2,3	13
No time	1,2,3	10
Lack of preparation	1,2,3	4
Perception that it's unnecessary	1,3	3
Personnel changes/transfers	1,2	2
Lack of management support	2,3	2
Too painful for employee	2	1
May not be viewed as growth vehicle	3	1

Number of cases = 16



Along similar lines, "poor relationship with supervisor" was reported as another reason why someone would not have the discussion. If there was past conflict or if previous discussions had ended in a deadlock, there was "fear" about the relationship with the supervisor. Another reason had to do with the possibility that the supervisor would listen but wouldn't take any action or become indifferent.

Finally, "no time" was brought up as the third highest reason for not having the discussion. Responses claiming the employee and the supervisor were overloaded surfaced. "Other priorities" seemed to get in the way and there was "no time" in their schedules. Comments like "too busy" or "didn't want to bother overloaded supervisor" were stated. In one group it was argued that time is an excuse and the real issue is commitment to the process. As shown below, "lack of commitment" surfaces again as the top item preventing follow-on discussions.

The second question asked the group for specific aspects during the development discussion that worked (see Table 16) and didn't work (see Table 17). "Positive climate" was listed as a key element in a development discussion that worked. For some, "there was a sense that this was important" or "an open dialogue" set the tone for a positive discussion. "Clarification of the job, roles and responsibilities, and needs" was another item key to the discussion. Respondents felt satisfied in "clearing up expectations." The "discussion format" was another specific thing that worked. Comments like "it was a good tool" and "it guided the discussion" seemed to indicate that this was a helpful part of the process. "Supportive boss behavior" was important during the discussion, according to the group members. Phrases like "my supervisor listened" and the

"boss acted like he really cared" seemed to raise the level of satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process.

**Table 16**  
Focus Group Responses to  
Specific Aspects that Worked during  
the Development Discussion

	<i>Groups who mentioned</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Positive climate	1,2,3	10
Clarification of job/role/needs	1,2,3	8
Discussion format	2,3	6
Supportive boss behavior	1,2	6
Reached agreement	1,2,3	4
Good communication	1,2	3
Led to increased support/trust	1,3	2
Opportunity for personal growth (was more assertive, took control)	2	2
Led to performance enhancement	1	1
Increased commitment to goals	1	1

Number of cases = 16

**Table 17**  
Focus Group Responses to  
Specific Aspects that Didn't Work during  
the Development Discussion

	<i>Groups who mentioned</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Didn't stick to process	1,2	3
Unclear on follow-up/evaluation	1,3	3
Interruptions	1,2	2
Didn't get to main points	1	1
Got locked by format mechanics	1	1
Didn't allow enough time	1	1
Hard to approach difficult topics	2	1
Unrealistic goals	3	1
Supervisor was uncomfortable	3	1
Style conflicts	3	1

Number of cases = 16

The few aspects of the discussion that didn't work for some respondents included "not sticking to the agenda" and "vague follow-up or evaluation procedures." Although some interviewees said they didn't mind digressing from the agenda (in fact, one thought it helped build the relationship), others felt the tangents were unproductive. They wanted to "stick closer to the discussion agenda." As far as vague procedures, a few commented on their "disappointment" in leaving the discussion with unclear ideas as to follow up with the supervisor. They said they weren't sure how they were going to be evaluated on some of the things discussed.

The third question asked what gets in the way of integration (see Table 18). Highest on the list of obstacles to integration was "change." Respondents discussed all types of changes including job transfers, job changes, supervisor changes, department changes, organizational mission changes, and world changes. There was strong agreement that the unknown, unstable, and uncertain environment makes it difficult for employees to feel integrated because they don't know what they are "being integrated into."

**Table 18**  
**Focus Group Responses to**  
**Obstacles to Integration**

	<i>Groups who mentioned</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Changing goals at every level	1,2,3	14
Unrealistic or unclear goals	1,2,3	8
Inflexible /unsupportive boss	1,2	7
Lack of communication	1,2,3	6
Resources shrinking	1,2	4
Inflexible/unsupportive employee	2	3
Lack of management skills	2,3	2
Limitations of matrix system	1,2	2
Goals priority over concern for people	2	2
Difficulty balancing goals	1	1
Integrating ideas and plans with the rest of the team who's uninvolved	1	1
Don't enjoy job but needs to be done	2	1
Lack of employee assertiveness	2	1
Unable to reconcile differences	3	1
Lack of commitment on both sides	3	1

Number of cases = 16

Lower on the list of obstacles mentioned were "unrealistic or unclear goals," "inflexible and/or unsupportive boss," and "lack of communication." Overall, group members believed that not knowing what the goals were created road blocks for integration. The supervisor played another role in determining whether integration would be successful. Perceptions of the supervisor as "inflexible and unsupportive" seem to hinder the employee in becoming an integrated part of the organization. "Lack of communication" was indicated as the final obstacle. Whether the supervisor or employee was unskilled or simply chose not to communicate, this lack of communication was reported as a hindrance to integration.

The last question asked of the groups was, "What prevents people from following up?" (see Table 19). First, "lack of commitment," was agreed upon as the key reason people do not follow up. One group came to the conclusion that if people are committed to the process, they will follow up. Second, "job/supervisor/organizational changes" seemed to determine whether there would be a follow-on discussion or not. Some had a new assignment, a new supervisor, or the organization had changed. This made it difficult to follow up or start over with the new supervisor. Third, some were "disillusioned with the boss and/or the system." One respondent felt the "supervisor didn't want to." Another talked about the importance of the environment supporting continual follow-up. Fourth and last, another reason had to do with "need." Some reported they "didn't feel the need." This meant that the relationship was good, goals were achieved, they felt satisfied in their accomplishments and thought it would be a "waste of time" to follow up.

**Table 19**  
**Focus Group Responses to**  
**What Prevents People from**  
**Following up**

	<i>Groups who mentioned</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Lack of commitment	1,2,3	6
Job/supervisor/organization changes	2,3	5
Disillusioned with the boss and/or system	1,2,3	5
Didn't see the need	1,2,3	5*
Forgot	2,3	3
First discussion negative	1,2	3
Misunderstood expectations	1	2
Fear/avoidance	1,3	2
Laziness	1	1
Oversimplification of what's involved	1	1
Loss of focus	1	1
Need external follow-up help	2	1
Looking for job somewhere else	2	1
Environment doesn't support	3	1
Follow-up needs to be monthly	3	1

Number of cases = 16

\*3 of these 5 didn't see the need because goals were accomplished, supervisor relationship was good, and employee felt satisfied

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Discussion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the results. First, results indicate that people found the training valuable. The overall ratings for workshop satisfaction provide evidence of strong support for the program. The 54% response rate and 16 interviewee volunteers were other signs of support. There was a link between workshop satisfaction and two variables. Satisfaction with the workshop appeared to have accounted for roughly 25% of the variance of completeness of the development discussion and satisfaction with the supervisor/ discussion process. From this we know that workshop satisfaction has some relationship to completeness of the development discussion and satisfaction with the supervisor/discussion process. Satisfaction with the workshop may have had a motivating effect on participants, prompting them to carry out a complete discussion. As far as the discussion process, it would make sense for satisfaction with the workshop to go hand in hand with satisfaction with the discussion process since a large portion of the workshop is devoted to discussion preparation. When it comes to workshop satisfaction and satisfaction with the supervisor, one possible interpretation has to do with the fact that the supervisor had an active role in the training by completing a pre-work inventory on the employee. This may have contributed to employee satisfaction because of the supervisor's willingness to participate from the onset.

In terms of long-term and short-term effects of workshop satisfaction, there were no significant differences among the four training groups on the integration measures. There seemed to be no deterioration of satisfaction levels in groups who had taken the training a while ago. There was also no sleeper effect in those groups. Whether participants took the course three months ago or 26 months ago, the level of workshop satisfaction didn't seem to change. This is interesting because of the lapse in time. The fact that participants, recent or not recent, rated the workshop high is good news for the program.

Second, conclusions about integration can be drawn based on the results. There were no significant differences in integration among groups who had the development discussion and those who did not. There were also no significant correlations between the extent of follow-on discussions and integration. These findings reinforce the idea that integration is complicated and many factors influence it. There may have been no significant differences in integration because the training only dealt with one part of the environment, the employees. Trainers may be off target to think that employees can be integrated without involvement of the rest of the system.

The qualitative analysis sheds some light on what factors may influence integration. The employee's environment seems to play an important role. Change was highest on the list of hindrances to integration. Second to change was unclear or unrealistic goals. The two seem closely related. Change can create uncertainty and uncertainty can cloud the individual or organizational focus. This might suggest that change at various levels produces anxiety, making an integrative partnership difficult because of this lack of clear focus and direction. Integration requires a willingness to explore alternatives and agree on



goals. Anxiety from uncertainty may confuse the matter further. Individuals can become stifled and unwilling to explore alternatives during periods of change. Understanding the employee's changing environment and its impact on integration is important.

Another interesting finding has to do with integration as a measure. The fact that the four areas for integration were significantly correlated is an argument for construct validity. The four operational measures for integration were job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational influence, and integration. This last measure, integration, has the same name as the overall integration measure but is actually only one index of the measure. There was a high correlation between organizational influence and integration. This is to say that if employees feel they have influence over decisions and can modify decisions made, they may likely become integrated with the organization. By having a say in decisions, they begin to advance their own needs and goals. This gets at the heart of an integrative partnership. Employees' voices are heard and a genuine collaboration begins to take place. One would expect that integration would also be highly related to organizational involvement and job satisfaction but correlations were low and moderate. Had there been high correlations among all measures, we might have had to conclude that all four were actually the same construct. Because this was not the case, the four measures appear to get at different aspects of integration.

Third, some conclusions about the development discussion and follow-on discussions can be made. The qualitative findings suggest some reasons that some participants don't follow up. It was reported that 25% of the questionnaire respondents who attended the workshop never had the initial

development discussion. Focus group members were asked why someone would not have the discussion. Group responses included "fear," "poor relationship with the boss," and "no time." These responses might suggest that development discussions will likely be most useful in supportive, rather than defensive, organizational environments. "Fear" means different things to different people. For example, one could have fear about the relationship with the supervisor. In fact, one group talked about the fear of approaching a supervisor with the "Napoleon Syndrome." The tyrannical style of this supervisor created uneasiness for the subordinate. Another type of fear, the fear of exposing weaknesses, was a major concern for focus group members. If one avoids the discussion, those weaknesses never have to be exposed. Employees who claim they have "no time" with too many other priorities may be avoiding the discussion due to fear. Taking the fear level into account can have some advantages when looking at occurrence of the development discussion.

In the focus group discussion about specific aspects that worked during the development discussion, some dominant themes emerged. "Positive climate," "clarification of job/roles/needs," "discussion format," and "supportive boss behavior" were the four highest things respondents claimed that worked during the discussion. Past research supports positive communication climate and supportive supervisor behavior as adding to satisfaction. Gibb (1961) would confirm the importance of supportive supervisor behaviors as a way to reduce defensiveness and allow for more accurate, open communication. In addition to these two, "clarification" and "discussion format" were perceived as elements contributing to a successful discussion. Change was mentioned earlier as a reported obstacle yet it appears possible to combat it with

clarification discussions about the job, roles, and needs. Argyris (1964) emphasized cooperative goal agreement as a way to involve the employee and include them in decisions that affect their work. Establishing clear goals was reported as an asset in the discussion. "Clarification" and "discussion format" seem to work well together. For example, job gaps are disagreements about how both people are seeing the job. If the format is followed as recommended in the training, these perceptions would be one of the first items discussed. Clarifying what is important up front can set the stage for goal agreement later.

Follow-on discussion results from focus groups suggest that what prevents people from following up has to do with the fact that they "lack commitment," "things change," they are "disillusioned with the boss and/or the system," or they "don't see the need." People who are not committed would not take the time to follow up, but why are they not committed? Change at all levels may surface in this area as a reason for no follow up. Becoming "disillusioned with the boss and/or the system" is another reason worth pursuing. Why are employees disillusioned? One answer to this question lies in the environment. As mentioned before, discussions seem to be most useful in supportive organizational environments. Discussions like these may have little use in defensive environments. Many factors affect the environment and leaders in the organization can influence the environment for better or for worse. The last reason, "don't see the need," had a few variations. Some group members felt their "relationship with the boss was good" and didn't see the need. Other members felt "they accomplished goals" and "felt satisfied" so they didn't see the need. Others saw no need because "it wouldn't improve things." Getting at the deeper issues within the environment may help the trainer modify the

course process in a way that would facilitate higher probability of follow-on discussions. To get at deeper issues in the organization means taking the time to understand employees at all levels. For example, meeting with employees as well as senior managers can give the trainer different perspectives on the organization.

Finally, conclusions about goal achievement as it relates to completeness of the development discussion can be made. There are two parts to understanding this conclusion. First, results suggest a significant, positive correlation (.44) between goal achievement and completeness of the development discussion. It seems plausible to assume that if employees have complete development discussions, their chances of goal achievement are greater. Keys to a complete discussion are going the full 1.5 to 2+ hours, following the agenda, setting goals and agreeing upon an action plan. With this in mind, it is natural to expect increased odds for goal achievement because the supervisor is involved. Having the supervisor on the employee's side seems to be a helpful component.

In addition to completeness of the development discussion, the second part in the conclusion has to do with goal achievement. Goal achievement has been positively correlated with job satisfaction, organizational influence, and integration. An explanation for this might be likened to the chicken or the egg puzzle. Do employees achieve goals because they are satisfied with their jobs, have influence, and feel integrated or do they become satisfied with their jobs, have influence, or feel integrated as a result of individual goal achievement? Previous researchers (Follett, 1924; Argyris, 1964; Redding 1972) might argue that goals are achieved because of the environment in which one works. If that

atmosphere is conducive to satisfaction, shared decision making, and integration, employees will more likely reach their goals.

Although no direct link was found between completeness of the development discussion and integration, one can conclude, based on the two steps above, that they are related. If employees have complete development discussions, their odds of goal achievement are greater. Goal achievement is directly related to integration; thus, if employees have complete development discussions, they can indirectly affect their level of integration by contributing to goal achievement. This has implications for the trainer.

Three recommendations can be made for the trainer. First, an important alteration to make is additional emphasis on having complete development discussions. Although currently part of the program, continued emphasis on thorough discussions is essential. Because there is a link between completeness of the development discussion and goal achievement, it might behoove the trainer to expand the section on dealing with goal achievement. In the existing course, the section dealing with agreed-upon actions is discussed only briefly. Allowing more time for this piece would enable participants to see some examples of how this section is used, role play as if they were in the discussion, and spend time anticipating what might come out of the conversation. The trainer could also spend a little time on goal setting and present some tips on goal achievement. By spending more energy here, participants will have better understanding of the importance of goal achievement as a key area in the development discussion.

The second thing the trainer might incorporate into the design is a section that acknowledges barriers in the organization and encourages the

group to come up with strategies for dealing with them. The trainer can prepare for this by doing some research to understand the participant's organization. Sometimes bringing difficulties out can reduce anxiety produced by them. Communication trainers can add to their effectiveness and credibility by taking the whole picture into account and knowing where their trainees are coming from.

Third and last has to do with follow up. One of the ways instructors can determine what impact the training has is by following up. This study was an example of follow up. This not only helps the trainer get an idea of what happened as a result of training, it also helps the employee renew interest in the workshop. As a result of the surveys, many past participants have requested a follow-up course. Providing shorter refresher courses can spark enthusiasm for the course and assist employees who find it difficult to follow-up on their own. Because the training was well received, trainers can perpetuate the success of the program by following up with past participants and offering brush-up courses.

### **Summary**

Dyadic communication in an organization is the most basic level at which human interaction takes place. Scholars have devoted most of their attention to one particular type, superior-subordinate communication. Training in communication and other areas has shown tremendous increase in today's workplace. This study examined both elements, superior-subordinate communication and training through a development discussion, in an effort to explore the concept of integration. An attempt was made to determine if training

and actual communication with the supervisor in the development discussion could impact an employee's level of integration. An integrative partnership where the employee's needs and values are advanced was the key focus.

Participants from a large energy and research facility were selected as subjects in this study. One hundred and eighty four respondents completed questionnaires dealing with their level of integration and, for the majority, the MPG workshop. Further interviews involving 16 employees were conducted to validate and explore the research questions. Data suggest that the majority of participants agreed the MPG workshop was a valuable experience.

Results for the main research question indicate some evidence to support the notion that training in the development discussion advances the needs and values of the individual. Although occurrences of the development discussion and follow-on discussions had no significant impact on integration, there was a correlation between completeness of the development discussion and goal achievement. There was also a correlation between goal achievement and integration. Data suggest that development discussions might be more useful in supportive rather than defensive organizational environments. Positive climate, role clarification, use of the format, and supportive supervisor behavior were contributors to successful discussions. The concept and measurement of integration proved to be complex. Some of the obstacles to integration were change, unclear or unrealistic goals, unsupportive supervisor behavior, and lack of communication.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Further research is needed to explore the notion of integration. Refining the operational definition is one suggestion that might lead to a better understanding of how someone becomes integrated with the organization. Along with understanding the measure itself, it is important to examine the environment. By accounting for variables like the amount of change, level of fear, and perception of relationship with the supervisor, researchers may be able to examine integration levels in terms of environment. Although environmental factors are difficult to control, they may be the key to better understanding.

Another recommendation for future research involves the development discussion. It is important to get input from the supervisor on how well/not well the development discussion went. This study focused on one side of the discussion, yet getting input from the supervisor could complete the picture. The supervisor has a key role in the process and may have valuable insights to contribute.

On a deeper level, incorporating a systemic approach to the whole design of the workshop is highly recommended. The basis for this comes from the literature on first- and second-order change. In the study, the workshop itself was an example of first-order change. Employees gained the skills required to conduct the development discussion. The training can be seen as an incremental step leading to second-order change. With second-order change, an awareness must take place in order to alter the structure toward integration. One of the ways to move toward second-order change is to alter the design using a systemic approach. For example, bringing the supervisor into the



workshop and having the discussion as part of the workshop design might strengthen the impact of the training. Instead of isolating the trainees and hoping they will have the discussion with their supervisor, the process ensures completion of the discussion as part of the design. Supervisors who are not willing to participate make it impossible for their subordinates to participate. In other words, the workshop design dictates participation from both individuals. With participation from both sides, training may have a more powerful impact because other parts of the system are involved instead of the trainee being the only one involved. As trainers begin working with both sides of the equation, their chances of impacting the organization might increase.

The last recommendation for continued research is to extend the communication training evaluation. This study followed up on those who had attended the workshop within the past 26 months and provided information about some effects of training, but more depth is needed. Future analysis should enlarge the number of focus group interviews. Within each group, a representative sample is recommended. For example, a variety of focus group members, including interviewees who did not have the discussion or who weren't satisfied with the training/discussion experience could be included. This would lead to a more extensive evaluation of training. By doing this, communication trainers can learn from past participants and continue modifying training if necessary, making it more effectively suited to the environment.

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## **APPENDICES**



## **APPENDIX A**

## The Development Discussion Agenda

- 1) **Opening comments** - How you start.

Expected Outcomes: You create a positive climate, clarify the agenda, discuss how the meeting will be conducted and review the results you expect to achieve in the meeting.

- 2) **Performance Priorities** - The most important job results you are to accomplish in the next 6 to 12 months.

Expected Outcomes: Agreement on objectives will be reached. Differences about major goals and/or standards for judging what is acceptable/outstanding performance will be settled.

- 3) **Critical Skills** - Agreement about what skills are essential to the job.

Expected Outcomes: You will get a deeper insight into what skills are absolutely critical in your job and what skills are essential for success in your position.

- 4) **Job Gaps** - Major differences in you and your supervisor's ratings of a skill's importance for the job. For example, one of you may have rated a skill as being "very important." The other rated it as "not very important."

Expected Outcomes: Disagreements and the misappropriation of time/effort that result from them will be eliminated. You will understand each other's viewpoint.

- 5) **Talents** - Agreement about your most outstanding skills and abilities.

Expected Outcomes: You get a deeper insight into the nature of your strengths and agree on specific plans to use them more.

- 6) **Development Needs** - Agreement about the specific skills that must be improved to increase your effectiveness.

### The Development Discussion Agenda (Continued)

Expected Outcomes: You get a deeper insight into the nature of your weak skills and agree on specific plans to strengthen them.

- 7) **Managing Job Satisfaction** - Your analysis of job characteristics that contribute or detract from your motivation and job satisfaction.

Expected Outcomes: Your supervisor will have a much better understanding of what motivates you and what you like most and least about your job. You'll also agree on specific actions to make your job more satisfying.

- 8) **Skill Gaps** - Major differences of opinion between you and your supervisor about your skill level. For example, you may rate yourself "very capable" but your supervisor rates you "not very capable."

Expected Outcomes: Disagreements will be eliminated. Insights into the reasons for disagreements will be gained, as well as an appreciation of each other's viewpoint.

- 9) **Individual Development Plan** - A plan to implement the actions you've discussed in the meeting.

Expected Outcomes: You will agree on a practical development plan which both of you support.

- 10) **Follow-on Plan** - Specific date you and your supervisor will meet to review and update your individual development plan.

Expected Outcomes: Your development plan will be successfully completed, and development planning will become a way of life. You'll also increase your capabilities and use your talents more effectively. Your job performance and satisfaction will increase, and you and your supervisor will have an even better working relationship. You will have established a developmental partnership.

*NOTE: This work taken from the 1988 "Development discussion guidelines," Blessing, B. & White, T., Princeton, New Jersey.*

## **APPENDIX B**

## Workshop Outline

Overview and introductions  
Personal growth definition  
Personal values  
Values and work  
Values affecting decisions  
Clarifying values  
Choosing top five values  
Managing job satisfaction  
Development discussion plan  
Skills feedback and analysis:

- critical skills
- job gaps
- talents
- development needs
- skill gaps

Elements of job satisfaction  
Performance priorities  
Talents selection  
Development needs selection  
Idea generation practice for talents & development needs  
Development discussion preparation  
Wrap up and evaluation

## **APPENDIX C**

## Breakdown of Questionnaire Items

### \*Job Satisfaction (General Job Satisfaction)

- Q21. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.
- Q22. In general, I like working here.
- Q23. In general, I don't like my job.

### \*Organizational Involvement

- Q24. What happens to this organization is really important to me.
- Q25. I don't care what happens to this organization as long as I get my pay check.

### \*Organizational Influence (General Influence)

- Q31. I have a lot of say over how decisions are made.
- Q32. I seldom have decisions forced on me.
- Q33. I can modify decisions made by other people.

### Integration

- Q26. My supervisor and I have a collaborative working relationship.
- Q27. If my boss and I disagree, my boss rarely moves to my position.
- Q28. I compromise my values by working here.
- Q29. There is a harmonious fit between what I want on this job and what management wants.
- Q30. I feel like my personal needs and job needs are well balanced.

### Occurrence of a Follow-on Discussion

- Q15. My boss and I have since had similar discussions.
- Q16. I initiated follow-up discussions with my boss.
- Q17. My boss and I never had a follow-up session.

*\* This work taken from the 1975 "Michigan Organizational Assessment: Progress Report II," Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

**Breakdown of Questionnaire Items  
(Continued)**

Occurrence of a Development Discussion

Q3. After the MPG workshop, I had a development discussion with my boss.

Completeness of Development Discussion

Q4. The development discussion lasted 1.5-2 hours or longer.

Q5. We followed the agenda presented during class (white booklet, "Development Discussion Plan").

Q13. We mutually agreed upon an action plan.

Q14. Goals were set during the discussion.

Workshop Satisfaction

Q1. The MPG workshop was valuable.

Q2. The MPG workshop was a waste of time.

Q20. The MPG process was effective.

Q34. Overall, I liked the MPG workshop.

Satisfaction with the Boss/Discussion Process

Q6. My boss was receptive to the discussion process.

Q7. I felt comfortable during the discussion with my boss.

Q8. I was able to be open and honest with my boss.

Q9. I believe I was listened to during the discussion.

Q10. Participation was balanced between the two of us.

Q11. The discussion was enlightening for me.

Q12. I was satisfied with the development discussion.

Goal Achievement

Q18. I have achieved most of the goals discussed during the development discussion.

Q19. I got closer to my ideal job since the workshop.

*NOTE: The five response dimensions for all of the above are: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree with the exception of Question 3 which required a "yes" or "no" response.*



## APPENDIX D

## MPG FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

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*Please mark the response that best describes your reaction.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The MPG workshop was valuable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The MPG workshop was a waste of time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. After the MPG workshop, I had a development discussion with my boss. (If no, go to question #21)		yes <input type="checkbox"/>		no <input type="checkbox"/>	
4. The development discussion lasted 1½-2 hours or longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We followed the agenda presented during class (white booklet, "Development Discussion Plan").	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My boss was receptive to the discussion process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I felt comfortable during the discussion with my boss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I was able to be open and honest with my boss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I believe I was listened to during the discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Participation was balanced between the two of us.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The discussion was enlightening for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I was satisfied with the development discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. We mutually agreed upon an action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Goals were set during the discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. My boss and I have since had similar discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I initiated follow-up discussions with my boss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. My boss and I never had a follow-up session.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I have achieved most of the goals discussed during the development discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I got closer to my ideal job since the workshop.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. The MPG process was effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22. In general, I like working here.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. In general, I don't like my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. What happens to this organization is really important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. I don't care what happens to this organization as long as I get my paycheck.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. My boss and I have a collaborative working relationship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. If my boss and I disagree, my boss rarely moves to my position.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. I compromise my values by working here.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. There is a harmonious fit between what I want on this job and what management wants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. I feel like my personal needs and job needs are well balanced.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. I have a lot of say over how decisions are made.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. I seldom have decisions forced on me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. I can modify decisions made by other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. Overall, I liked the MPG workshop.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*To help us understand who the program is most effectively reaching, please respond to the following questions:*

Job classification (405.3) \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Years as a Laboratory employee: \_\_\_\_\_

**MPG QUESTIONNAIRE (for future participants)**

*Please mark the response that best describes your reaction.*

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. In general, I like working here.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. What happens to this organization is really important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. In general, I don't like my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I don't care what happens to this organization as long as I get my paycheck.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My boss and I have a collaborative working relationship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. If my boss and I disagree, my boss rarely moves to my position.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I compromise my values by working here.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. There is a harmonious fit between what I want on this job and what management wants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I feel like my personal needs and job needs are well balanced.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I have a lot of say over how decisions are made.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I seldom have decisions forced on me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I can modify decisions made by other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*To help us understand who the program is most effectively reaching, please respond to the following questions:*

Job classification (405.3) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Years as a Laboratory employee: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

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## MEMORANDUM

December 10, 1992

To: Past MPG Participants  
From: Jane Tutko  
Subject: MPG Follow-up Questionnaire

You are one of over 300 people at the Laboratory who has completed the Managing Personal Growth (MPG) Skills Assessment Workshop. See the next page for a brief description of the course.

Attached is a MPG follow-up questionnaire. This is part of a study designed to provide ongoing evaluation for the MPG workshop in addition to completing a thesis project at San Jose State University. I would sincerely appreciate it if you would take the time to complete the attached questionnaire. Your honest feedback is critical and will help us to know how to improve the class. The potential benefit is an increased understanding in training. There are no known risks in completing this survey.

I would like to stress that all responses to the questionnaire will remain completely ANONYMOUS in that no one, not even the researcher, will be able to link responses with individuals. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you still retain the right to withdraw participation in whole or in part. Completion of this survey indicates your consent to participate.

Please return the entire questionnaire in the enclosed envelope on or before **January 14, 1992**. If you have any questions about this study, I will be happy to talk with you. I can be reached at x2-2381. If you have questions or complaints about research subjects' rights, or in the event of a research related injury, please contact Serena Stanford, Ph.D., Associate Academic Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, at (408) 924-2480. Thank you in advance for your support!

## **Managing Personal Growth (MPG) Skills Assessment Course**

It may have been a while since you took the workshop. Below is a description of the course to refresh your memory. The workshop covered many areas dealing with personal growth including:

- clarification of personal values
- exploration of elements of job satisfaction
- examination of performance priorities (expectations in the next 6-12 mos)
- feedback on skills:
  - critical skills (important skills to the job)
  - job gaps (disagreement with your boss on importance of skill)
  - talents (strengths)
  - development needs (weaknesses)
  - job gaps (disagreement on your skills ability)

In the workshop, participants assessed their skills to determine how they fit into the needs of their current job. Their boss also assessed their skills. Following the workshop, each participant was to meet with his or her supervisor for a one-on-one meeting (called the Development Discussion), which was based on information from the skills assessment and values inventory. It was recommended that the discussion occur within 1-2 weeks after the workshop and last 1 1/2 - 2 hours. Each participant was to write an Individual Development Action Plan.

## **APPENDIX F**



### Focus Group Interview Questions

- 1) Name 3-5 reasons why someone would not have the development discussion.
- 2) List 3-5 specific aspects during the discussion that:  
worked                      didn't work
- 3) Name 4 obstacles to integration.
- 4) What prevents people from following up?