

## Letter from Jay Carter:

MAY 1991

In the few months I have been here in Omaha, I have spoken with many of you. Not only have you shared your concerns with me personally, but some of you have participated in employee focus group sessions sharing your thoughts and suggestions on various employee issues. I have learned we have not reached the level of employee involvement and satisfaction that we must achieve in order to be true leaders in the marketplace.

We need to create a working environment which encourages and motivates all of us to take ownership and become involved in improving our jobs. Our goal is to make money and grow our business through customer satisfaction and quality.

We are evaluating how we can address your concerns. We have numerous options available to us and we must assess each item's potential for improvement and resource requirements. Consequently, I will need your continued cooperation and patience in addressing these issues. While some things may change quickly, others will take more time and realistically, some suggestions will not be possible at all. Every recommendation is currently under review and will be prioritized to determine which areas will be addressed first.

In the next few months, I will meet with all of you to provide you with our goals and to talk about the projects we are working on as a result of your input.

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. I am determined to make the Omaha Works a world class manufacturing facility with a very bright future.

*Jay*

Employee  
Involvement

  
*Today*

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Works



The Interaction logo will be used to identify the progress of the employee involvement and leadership project.

## Background

Focus group feedback indicates improvements are needed in the following areas:

- Quality
- Communications
- Customer Focus
- Leadership
- Supervision
- Performance Appraisals.

Ann Hindman and Kay Bartek are working with management on these issues. They are talking with employees and gathering information on employee involvement and leadership issues which include the six areas mentioned above.

Eighteen employee focus groups were held during the first two weeks of April. The intent of the meetings was to identify areas of improvement for the Omaha Works in the employee involvement and leadership sections of the Employee Input Survey. Participants answered a short questionnaire and then shared their thoughts and suggestions in an informal discussion.

This edition of *EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT TODAY* is designed to summarize the comments, suggestions and observations these focus group participants shared in the areas of quality, communications, customer focus, leadership, supervision and performance appraisals.

Focus group participants included 157 employees representing all departments. 101 were non-management employees and 56 were management employees. Each focus group contained from eight to 13 employees, each from the same job category. Non-management job categories included: hourly, trades and salary-graded. Management employees participating in the focus groups included professional administrative employees, supervisors and engineers.

The focus group results have been compiled and examined. Based on that information, the committee has made recommendations for implementation to the Quality Council.

Middle and upper managers from the various SBUs and support organizations sit on the Quality Council and are charged with leading quality improvement at the Omaha Works. The Quality Council is reviewing the input from the employee focus groups and will be prioritizing recommendations in the near future. In the next few months, you will begin to see some changes which will be made as a result of your comments and suggestions. Please keep in mind, some things will take time to change but we have listened to you and intend to work on the greatest problem areas first.

The Omaha Works is analyzing the way we talk with each other and how well we work together and communicate. The objective is to improve that process and strive for a more open, cooperative environment which will help us to better serve our customers.

## RESULTS:

Sixty percent of all focus group participants feel the Employee Input Survey is beneficial. Only 16 percent of all participants feel the Omaha Works has done a good job of communicating the results of the survey. Twenty-eight percent of all participants feel Omaha Works management will take action as a result of the focus group sessions.

Employees in both the management and non-management categories see eye to eye when it comes to recognizing several problem areas.

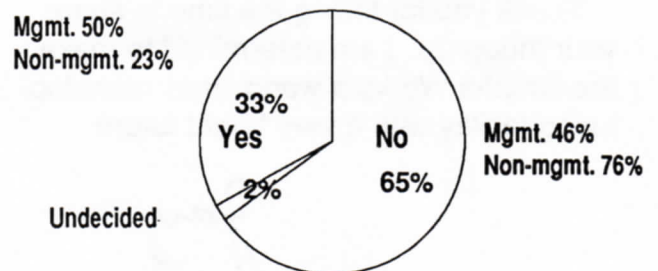
Approximately 71 percent of all participants feel quality and customer focus have improved during the past two years and 41 percent feel communication has improved. However, the majority of participants see little or no improvement in the areas of supervision, leadership and performance appraisals.

Here are the highlights of what focus group participants had to say:

## QUALITY

- Forty-three percent of the focus group participants feel management provides the tools and resources needed to promote quality improvement.
- Employees are very positive about the certification program.

Do you participate on a team focused on improving quality?



1989 Survey Results 46% favorable  
1991 NCS Commitment 55% favorable

Thirty-three percent of all participants (50% management and 23% non-management) responded as having participated on a team focused on improving quality.

Based on employee comments in the focus group sessions, it became apparent that if "quality" was not part of the team name, employees did not associate the team's efforts with Omaha Works quality initiatives. In fact, all the teams (JIT teams, QWL, Omaha Team Works and process certification) work on improving product and process quality and therefore are quality teams by definition.

## COMMUNICATION

- When asked about the issue of communication, many employees responded on both the questionnaire and in group discussions by saying communication is lacking between all levels of management and between employees on different shifts.
- This question was asked: Do you feel we have improved in the area of communication in the past two years?  
Thirty-seven percent see no improvement; Forty-one percent feel some improvement has been achieved. Twenty-two percent are not sure.
- Do you regularly receive information on career opportunities?  
Seventeen percent of focus group members say they regularly receive information on career opportunities. Employees say they would like to receive more information on jobs inside and outside the Omaha Works.

- Do you have access to the AT&T Transfer System (ATS)? (Non-management only)

Results show a large percentage of non-management participants are unfamiliar with ATS. Only 12 percent of non-management employees say they have access to ATS and the remaining 88 percent either have never heard of ATS or don't know if they have access to it.

The AT&T Transfer System is a transfer system for non-management employees which allows for movement in AT&T groups, divisions and business units.

To participate in ATS, employees must contact the Employee Resource Center (ERC) and request an information package. Employees, along with their supervisors, must complete specific forms and return them to the ERC staffers for input into ATS. The ERC will notify employees when they meet the transfer requirements. Once eligible for a transfer, employees may call the 800 conversant phone number provided in the information package to inquire on jobs available within AT&T.

Also, the majority of non-management focus group participants are not familiar with the ERC located in the Employee Mall. (Look for more information on the ERC in the next issue of the Westerner.)

Members of the Employee Resource Center are available to assist non-management employees interested in learning more about ATS. For information, contact Barb Gray, x3607; Chere Hunt, x3641; John Schwenck, x3523; or Cid Stinson, x3509. The ERC hours are 7 am to 4 pm or by appointment.

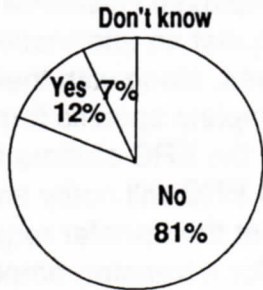
- Do you have access to the Employee Career Opportunities System (ECOS)? (Management only)

Of management participants, 83 percent either say they are not familiar with ECOS or do not know if they have access to it.

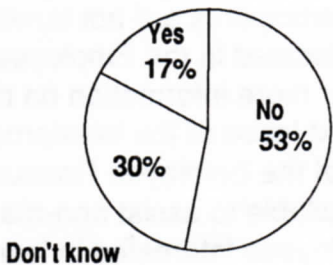
ECOS is a dial-up system which allows management employees to view open management jobs within AT&T. Employees may apply for openings that match their skills, interests, experiences and geographic preferences.

More information on ECOS can be found in an upcoming news article.

**Do you have access to the AT&T Transfer System (ATS)? (Non-mgmt. only)**



**Do you have access to the Employee Career Opportunities System (ECOS)? (Mgmt. only)**



## CUSTOMER FOCUS

- When asked if we have a clear understanding of who our customers are, 82 percent of management participants and 51 percent of non-management participants responded by saying yes. However, disagreement arose between members of the focus

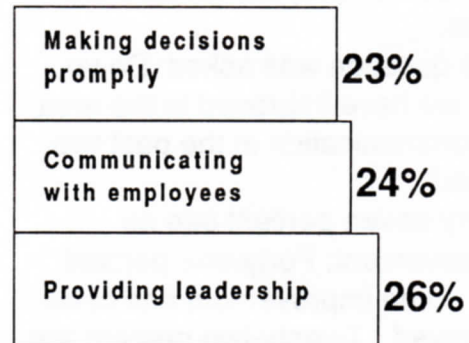
groups over who our customers are. Some employees did not realize that internal customers are indeed true customers.

- Eighty-two percent of the respondents say they do receive feedback on how satisfied customers are with the work performed by their organization. Participants report customer feedback that is received is more frequently of a negative rather than positive nature.

Employees expressed a need for expanded feedback in a variety of areas so that efforts can be targeted to better meet the needs of our customers.

## LEADERSHIP

About one-fourth of all participants feel top management is doing a good job or better in each of these areas:



Discussions among participants reflect that communication problems are common and improvement in this area is needed.

- Fifty-eight percent of non-management respondents feel managers above their supervisor's level, are visible in their organizations. However, only thirty-one percent of management respondents think their managers are visible in the workplace.

## SUPERVISION

- Do you feel your supervisor treats all employees in your department with fairness?  
Of all responses, 54 percent feel their supervisors treat all employees in their department with fairness.
- Do you feel your supervisor manages people well?  
Forty-four percent of all participants feel their supervisors manage people well.

## PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

- Sixty-six percent of non-management employees feel they receive inadequate feedback about their performance. The responses of non-management participants indicate a performance appraisal of some type would be welcomed.

Non-management employees do not want this appraisal placed in the employee's personnel file. If an appraisal is not favorable, employees fear the appraisal may be used against them. Respondents suggested a written appraisal which could be given to the employee to keep or to be taken by the employee from job to job, or a verbal appraisal.

Only 17 percent of non-management participants surveyed feel an annual appraisal would not be an effective tool in recognizing employee strengths and weaknesses.

- Among management respondents, 45 percent feel an annual performance appraisal is not an effective tool in recognizing employee strengths and weaknesses. Of the management participants, 93 percent received performance appraisals within the last year.

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Once again, Ann Hindman, Kay Bartek and members of the Quality Council thank employees for sharing their comments and suggestions in the employee focus group sessions.

The results and the data from the sessions are now under consideration.

Changes and progress resulting from this study will be communicated to all employees through news articles and on the TV news system.

*Interaction*