

Organizational Trust – Taking a Pulse of Your Organization

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Abstract

Successful organizations rely not only on strong leadership but the ability of leaders to cultivate a working environment that builds trust within the organization. In order to build trust, you have to earn trust. In order to earn trust you have to be able to determine whether it is existent at all. Campus Planning and Facilities (CP&F) at the University of West Georgia not only has accomplished this through measurement but most importantly, through its action plans for improvement.

Measuring trust involved research, employee input, discussions with senior leaders, analysis of measurement tools, and determining the method of application. Questionnaires were administered for the second consecutive year to measure Organizational Trust in such areas as Empowerment, Commitment, Contentment, Caring, Expectation, Communication, and Training Needs.

The results from the questionnaires were communicated by the Assistant Vice-President, Mike Renfrow at departmental meetings that were conducted during the succeeding semesters. The meetings included a PowerPoint presentation of the results, action plans for improvement, and a review of future goals for CP&F as well as the UWG community. Those assessment areas that are considered as challenges are incorporated into future CP&F annual goals and objectives.

Introduction of the Organization

The Department of Campus Planning and Facilities (CP&F) of the University of West Georgia (UWG) provides facility, grounds, logistics, maintenance, construction planning, risk management, and environmental health and safety support to the fifth largest campus within the University System of Georgia (USG). Located in Carrollton, Georgia, UWG is committed to the pursuit of “educational excellence in a learning environment.” This commitment is supported through the diligent efforts of CP&F using cost-effectiveness, continuous improvement, employee input, customer input, safety, and environmentally responsible methodology.

Serving within UWG’s Business and Finance Division, CP&F is comprised of three departments: Campus Planning and Development (CP&D), Facilities and Grounds (F&G), and Risk Management/ Environmental Health and Safety (RM/EHS). With a full-time staff of 135, CP&F is charged with the responsibility of operating, maintaining, and supporting a 394 acre campus with 70 facilities (2,060,484 gsf), while ensuring a safe, well maintained and aesthetically pleasing environment for over 10,300 students, 1,000 faculty and staff, and the surrounding university community.

Statement of the Problem/Initiative

Keeping continuous improvement as its compass, CP&F at UWG initiated a program to assess Strategic, Organizational, and Personal Trust as one of its 2003 annual goals. Although there was no sign of a problem, Assistant Vice-President of CP&F, Mike Renfrow felt that for the organization to advance in this concept, not only did leadership have to champion the effort, but the organization had to believe in it.

The Goal and Objectives that challenged senior leaders in Organizational

Development and Effectiveness were as follows:

Organizational Development and Effectiveness - Outline and implement a program in Campus Planning and Facilities to strengthen communication and trust by designing and implementing programs in strategic trust, personal trust and organizational trust.	
1.	Define and provide examples of strategic trust, personal trust, and organizational trust.
a.	Review research literature to outline the links between trust and organizational performance.
b.	Conduct interviews, group sessions, and communication instruments to review managerial effectiveness regarding trust.
c.	Based on an "evaluation of the organization: develop materials that can be presented to explore opportunities to share information as well as insight into behavior of the organization---deal with the culture!
d.	Present information based on research and data about the organizational climate.
2.	Develop and implement a series of programs to enhance or rebuild trust.
a.	Improve managerial and leadership skills by presenting a program on emotional intelligence.
b.	Follow-up on previous session on "Determine the Focus and Direction" program and present to senior management.
c.	Implement a program to improve and enhance communication.
d.	Implement an organizational assessment "creating a culture in which strategies, values, and day-to-day behaviors are consistent and compatible.
3.	Design, and develop "instruments" that can be implemented on an annual basis to assess behavior as well as organizational effectiveness regarding trust.
4.	Implement first analysis during the Fall Semester, 2004

It should go without saying that this goal was not achieved overnight, in a month or even in a quarter. In fact, it wasn't achieved in a year! However, many of the objectives in the research portion of the goal were realized to the point that progress was being made in obtaining an assessment or "pulse of the organization."

Design

The aforementioned goal was not the kind of tangible goal that the areas of Facilities and Grounds, Campus Planning and Development, and Risk Management/Environmental Health and Safety were accustomed to. It required

researching the three areas of trust, obtaining formal and informal input from the organization, investigating program availability, exploring methods on measurement, developing action plans for measurement, determining methods of feedback, and ensuring that follow-up was taken where there were opportunities for improvement. We had to abide by the guiding principle that “We do what we say” and “Say what we do.”

The three areas of trust were researched. Sessions were conducted with senior leaders on the differences between each term with the common denominator of trusted leaders being self-orientation.

$$T = \frac{C + R + I}{S}$$

Where: T = trustworthiness
C = credibility
R = reliability
I = intimacy
S = self-orientation

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“Self-orientation is a reflection of motivation. If the work doesn’t interest you ... chances are that you’re going to focus more on yourself when you’re interacting with other people.”²

Formal and informal input from the organization was obtained through daily staff meetings, bi-weekly individual meetings between senior leaders and the Assistant Vice-President (1-on-1’s), monthly employee meetings, conversations with employees, and on the culture of the organization and which of the three trust areas needed the most

^{1,2} Galford, R., Seibold –Drapeau, A. (2002). “The Trusted Leader,” *The Characteristics and Competencies of the Trusted Leader*, 34-35

emphasis. Organizational Trust was determined as the area that was most controllable and most beneficial.

Programs on Organizational Trust were explored and a developmental consultant was engaged to conduct further interviews and assist leadership and employees in determining the areas to measure. These areas were identified as Department Respect, Empowerment, Commitment, Contentment, Caring, Expectations, Communications, and Training.

Measurement tools such as focus groups, questionnaires, and surveys were evaluated in determining the most effective method of measuring Organizational Trust. The overwhelming consensus amongst senior leaders was conducting a straightforward questionnaire that employees were comfortable with. Additional research uncovered a 1999 paper entitled “Guidelines for Measuring Relations in Public Relations” that was written by Dr. James Grunig, University of Maryland, and Dr. Linda Childers Hon, University of Florida. Following is a link to that paper:

<http://www.measuresofsuccess.com/HTML/EDIT/Uploads/Grunig%20relations%20paper1.pdf>

Senior leaders of the organization evaluated the style of the assessment and patterned the statements on a five-point rating scale measuring from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

Due to the variety of jobs within CP&F, senior leaders concluded that an organizational profile may help in deciding the administration of the questionnaire. Employee files were researched and a breakdown of the organization revealed the following makeup:

EMPLOYEE PROFILE								
Education Level	Not HS Grad	78	Tenure (years)	0-1	24	Job Types	Management	9
	HS or GED	69		2-9	98		Administrative	7
	Some College	10		10-19	29		Technical	9
	4 yr. Degree	5		20 plus	13		Facilities/Grounds	70
	More	2	Race	White	99		Custodial	69
Age	Under 30	22		Black	62	Work-Force Status	Full Time	135
	30-50	83		Hispanic	3		Part Time	28
	Over 50	59		Asian	0		Seasonal	
Gender	Female	62	Bargaining Units	None			Direct	
	Male	102		Contract	1			

Administration issues such as electronic versus manual distribution arose as well as individual versus group application. Would employees feel intimidated using a computerized questionnaire? Would employees be intimidated completing a questionnaire in a large work group setting? Would all employees understand the meaning of the statements? How would senior leaders ensure confidentiality? After careful consideration, senior leaders decided on a manual administration of the questionnaire within their work group setting with one person assigned to review and tabulate the results.

Senior leaders also concluded that it was important to communicate the results of the questionnaire as quickly as possible so that action plans could be formulated and implemented. The questionnaire was implemented in May 2005 so that action plans could be incorporated into the 2006 annual goals and objectives. A departmental presentation was made by Mike Renfrow during the fall semester based on theme “Where We Are, Where We Are Going, How Do We Get There.” It was also determined that to monitor the progress of the action plans, the questionnaire would be administered annually.

Implementation

After months of research and review, the questionnaire was formulated in March 2005 with plans to implement between the end of the spring semester and the start of the summer. Due the variety of work schedules, the questionnaires were distributed to the senior leaders in each area to administer to their work groups over a two-day period.

Of 125 surveys were administered, 120 were completed and 72 (62%) were endorsed.

The results were cross-tabulated by one individual within the organization categorizing the response breakdown to work groups, years of service, and the department as a whole.

The results of the 2005 questionnaire have been included in **Exhibit A** at the end of this application. A sample of a statement breakdown is as follows:

Respect

Statement 1	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization is supportive of one another.	20	17	59	50	21	18	16	14	2	2

- Following, is a breakdown of how the individual areas responded to this statement:

Dept	Gen. Maint.	HVAC	In-Plant	Out-Plant	Elect. S.E.	Motor Pool	Custodial Services	Move Crew	RM / EHS	CP&D	CP&F	L&G	WIC
SA	2	1	0	0	0	1	11	0	1	0	2	2	0
A	4	6	3	3	3	1	18	2	0	4	3	11	1
U	1	0	2	0	4	0	13	0	0	1	0	0	0
D	2	1	1	0	1	1	8	0	0	0	1	0	1
SD	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Years	Responses in Agreement	Ratio
0-5	36	68%
6-10	19	73%
11-15	8	45%
Over 15 years	16	73%

- A total of 79 (67%) of all employees agreed that co-workers were supportive of each other in their respective areas.
- In terms of years of service, this percentage remained representative with the exception of those employees with 11-15 years, which dropped to 45%. Although that segment is only 15% of the workforce, it has representation in most CP&F areas.

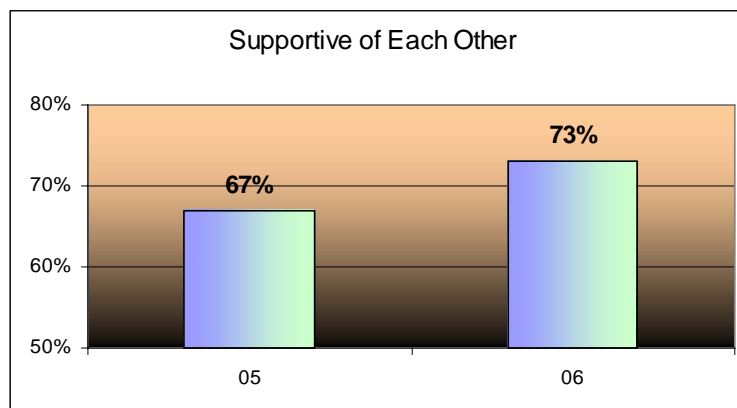
Action plans were formulated in June 2005 for the 2006 annual goals and objectives. Following, is the goal that addresses this area in our 2006 Annual Report:

Organizational Development and Effectiveness – Outline and implement a program to strengthen communications as well as implement an organizational assessment that creates a culture in which strategies, values, and day-to-day behaviors are consistent and compatible. (Target date 6/30/06)

- Perform SWOT Analysis to define the department’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. (Target: 9/30/2005)
- Continue to design, develop and review current “instruments” that can be implemented on an annual basis to assess behavior as well as organizational effectiveness regarding trust. (Target: 11/30/2005)

A presentation was made by Mike Renfrow at departmental meetings in the fall semester. In addition to reviewing the questionnaire results, Mr. Renfrow outlined the department strategies for follow-up along with plans for future development of the campus.

Senior leaders met in the spring of 2006 to review the 2005 questionnaire and evaluate those statements that were considered ambiguous. The questionnaire was modified and was re-administered in June. Following, is a trend analysis of one statement responses that measured departmental respect:



The questionnaire results for 2006 have been included in **Exhibit B** at the end of this application. A follow-up presentation with the CP&F department is scheduled in September

Benefits

The benefits of this organizational assessment are as follows:

1. An accurate measurement or “pulse” of the organization’s perception in the areas Department Respect, Empowerment, Commitment, Contentment, Caring, Expectations, Communications, and Training Needs
2. The opportunity to develop annual goals and objectives for developmental purposes based on data rather than assumptions.
3. The opportunities to track the results of those goals through the data collected and make adjustments in a timelier manner.
4. The importance of an Organizational Profile and how it can illustrate the developmental needs of an organization along with future challenges. (e.g. 44% of the workforce is over age 50).
5. More organized two-way communication methods such as individual meetings (1-on-1’s), monthly meetings, staff meetings, and organizational assessments.
6. A closer relationship between senior leaders by working as a team to “work through” the goal and develop the reasoning that led to the administration of a questionnaire.
7. The book, *The Trusted Leader*, was purchased for \$25.00. There was no additional dollar investment in developing the measurement.

Retrospect

Improving trust within your organization is achieved through motivated leadership, effective two-way communication, consistency in the application of policy and procedures, and following-up on items before they become issues. The process that was involved in the development of the measurement was as much of a learning process as the measurement itself. In its quest to determine a means to measure Organizational

Trust, CP&F at UWG now has a template in place to “monitor its pulse” and ensure that its compass continues to point towards improvement.

Exhibit A

2005 Results

I. Survey

Surveys Administered: 125

Survey Completion: 120

Surveys Signed: 74 (62%)

Note: 6 out of 11 surveys submitted by Out-Plant and WIC personnel did not have page two printed. As a result, some of responses to questions 5 thru 7 were unanswered.

II. Respondent Classification

Classification	Responses	Ratio of Workforce
Custodial Services	52	44%
Landscaping & Grounds	13	11%
HVAC	9	8%
General Maintenance	9	8%
Electrical Shop/Special Events	8	7%
In-Plant	6	5%
CP&F Administration	6	5%
Planning & Development	5	4%
Out-Plant	3	3%
Motor Pool	3	3%
Move Crew	2	2%
WIC	2	2%
RM/EHS	1	1%

III. University Service

Years	Responses	Ratio
0-5	53	45%
6-10	26	22%
11-15	18	15%
Over 15 years	22	18%

A cross tabulation of these two questions reveal the following breakdown:

Dept. Years	Gen. Maint.	HVAC	In-Plant	Out-Plant	Elect. S.E.	Motor Pool	Custodial Services	Move Crew	RM / EHS	CP&D	CP&F	L&G	WIC
0-5	3	4	3	0	0	0	27	0	1	4	3	7	1
6-10	3	1	1	1	3	1	9	0	0	1	2	4	0
11-15	1	2	2	0	2	1	7	1	0	0	0	2	0
Over 15	2	2	0	2	3	1	9	1	0	0	1	0	1
Total	9	9	6	3	8	3	52	2	1	5	6	13	2

IV. Respect

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization is supportive of one another.	20	17	59	50	21	18	16	14	2	2
This organization really appreciates my job performance.	15	13	67	56	19	16	14	12	4	3
This organization doesn't appreciate my efforts.	8	7	24	21	27	24	43	38	10	9
This organization values my opinions on work-related matters.	13	12	64	57	22	19	11	10	3	3

V. Empowerment

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization allows me to be creative in my job responsibilities.	26	22	65	55	20	17	7	5	1	1
This organization really listens to what I have to say.	13	11	50	42	34	28	20	17	2	2
This organization is very detailed in it's work procedures	11	9	67	57	26	22	10	9	3	3
This organization supports me in my work decisions - even if I sometimes fail.	11	9	67	57	26	22	10	9	3	3

VI. Commitment

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization strives to maintain a safe and productive work environment for its coworkers.	30	28	69	63	8	7	2	2	0	0
This organization really appreciates my efforts.	9	8	63	60	23	22	10	9	1	1
I feel a sense of loyalty to this organization.	23	22	61	59	14	13	4	4	2	2
I am only working here until I find a better job.	4	4	3	3	16	15	48	47	32	31
This organization seeks opportunities to keep me working when times are slow.	24	23	65	63	11	11	3	3	0	0

VII. Contentment

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
I am happy with this organization.	20	19	64	60	15	14	5	5	2	2
Most people enjoy working with this organization.	9	8	68	64	20	19	8	8	1	1
The organization fails to satisfy the needs of its coworkers.	2	2	21	20	31	29	41	39	11	10
I feel that my work is important to this organization.	35	33	58	55	12	10	1	1	0	0

VIII. Caring

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization is concerned about its coworkers.	10	9	65	61	21	20	7	6	4	4
This organization is very concerned about my welfare.	13	12.5	57	55	21	20	13	12.5	0	0

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
I feel that this organization takes advantage of people.	5	5	11	10	27	26	51	49	11	10
This organization is concerned about my safety.	28	26	66	62	9	8	4	4	0	0

IX. Expectations

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization demands the same level of performance from all coworkers.	8	7	46	41	19	17	27	24	12	11
This organization takes care of people who do what the organization wants.	10	9	66	57	27	23	12	10	1	1

X. Communications

Statement	D	%	W	%	M	%	A	%	AO	%	NO	%
Changes to policy/procedures.	32	29	9	8	11	10	1	1	43	39	15	13
Training opportunities	7	6	4	4	47	43	1	1	39	36	11	10
Organizational progress/results/achievements.	11	10.5	12	11	21	20	12	11	39	38	10	9.5

XI. Training

Statement	Yes	%	No	%
Are you satisfied with the training provided in your work area?	91	83	19	17

XII. Conclusions

- Of the 120 surveys completed, 74 (62%) were endorsed.
- Over 77% of the workforce has 10 or less years of experience with CP&F – 45% is in Custodial Services.
- 67% of the administrative areas of CP&F (i.e. RM/EHS, CP&D, CP&F) have less than 5 years of service. Administrative responses were very supportive of the statements listed in the survey.
- Based on the responses classified as Agree or Strongly Agree, CP&F personnel have a very positive perception of the organization in the following areas:

Statement	Responses	%
Maintaining a safe and productive work environment.	99	91
I feel that my work is important to this organization.	93	88
This organization is concerned about my safety.	94	88
This organization seeks opportunities to keep me working when times are slow.	89	86
I feel a sense of loyalty to this organization.	84	81
This organization allows me to be creative in my job responsibilities.	91	77
This organization supports me in my work decisions – even if I sometimes fail.	83	71

- Based on the responses classified as Disagree or Strongly Disagree, areas to improve include:

Statement	Responses	%
This organization demands the same level of performance from all coworkers.	39	35

- Based on the responses classified as Undecided, CP&F's growing edge is in the following areas:

Statement	Responses	%
This organization really listens to what I have to say.	34	29
This organization fails to satisfy the needs of it's coworkers.	31	29
I feel that this organization takes advantage of people.	27	26
This organization doesn't appreciate my efforts.	27	24
This organization really appreciates my efforts.	23	22

Exhibit B

2006 Results

I. Survey

Surveys Administered: 118
 Survey Completion: 117
 Surveys Signed: 58 (50%)

II. Respondent Classification

Classification	Responses	Ratio of Workforce
Custodial Services	45	38.4%
Landscaping & Grounds	17	14.6%
General Maintenance	11	9.4%
HVAC	9	7.7%
In-Plant	8	6.8%
Electrical Shop/Special Events	7	6.0%
CP&F Administration	5	4.3%
Out-Plant	4	3.4%
Move Crew	3	2.6%
CP&D	2	1.7%
RM/EHS	2	1.7%
WIC	2	1.7%
Motor Pool	2	1.7%

III. University Service

Years	Responses	'06 Results	'05 Results
0-5	52	44%	45%
6-10	27	23%	22%
11-15	18	15%	15%
Over 15 years	20	17%	18%

A cross tabulation of these two questions reveal the following breakdown:

Dept. Years	Gen. Maint.	HVAC	In-Plant	Out-Plant	Elect. S.E.	Motor Pool	Custodial Services	Move Crew	RM / EHS	CP&D	CP&F	L&G	WIC
0-5	2	3	5	1	0	0	23	0	2	1	2	11	2
6-10	4	2	2	0	2	1	8	0	0	1	2	5	0
11-15	3	2	1	1	2	1	6	1	0	0	0	1	0
15 +	2	2	0	2	3	1	8	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total	11	9	8	4	7	3	45	2	2	2	5	17	2

IV. Respect

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization is supportive of one another.	23	20	62	53	16	13	15	14	0	0
This organization really appreciates my job performance.	20	18	60	53	21	18	12	11	1	1
This organization doesn't appreciate my efforts.	3	3	18	17	23	21	47	44	16	15
This organization values my opinions on work-related matters.	10	9	63	56	26	23	12	11	2	2

V. Empowerment

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization allows me to be creative in my job responsibilities.	17	15	71	61	19	16	8	7	1	1
This organization really listens to what I have to say.	10	9	54	47	28	25	21	18	1	1
This organization is very detailed in its work procedures	9	8	61	54	20	18	19	17	5	4
This organization supports me in my work decisions - even if I sometimes fail.	15	13	68	61	21	19	8	7	0	0

VI. Commitment

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization strives to maintain a safe and productive work environment for its coworkers.	30	27	71	64	7	6	2	2	1	1
This organization really appreciates my efforts.	13	12	57	52	28	26	10	9	1	1
I feel a sense of loyalty to this organization.	26	24	63	58	14	13	3	3	2	2
I am only working here until I find a better job.	4	4	6	6	18	17	42	40	36	34
This organization seeks opportunities to keep me working when times are slow.	24	22	63	58	13	12	6	6	2	2

VII. Contentment

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
I am happy with this organization.	20	19	61	59	16	15	7	7	0	0
Most of my co-workers enjoy working with this organization.	9	8	53	50	26	25	18	17	0	0
The organization fails to satisfy the needs of its coworkers.	5	5	16	15	26	24	46	43	14	13
I feel that my work is important to this organization.	37	35	58	54	9	8	0	0	3	3

VIII. Caring

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization is concerned about its coworkers.	14	13	70	64	13	12	12	11	0	0
This organization is very concerned about my welfare.	14	13	55	52	25	24	12	11	0	0
This organization is concerned about my safety.	26	24	67	63	9	8	4	4	1	1

IX. Expectations

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
This organization demands the same level of performance from all coworkers.	14	12	39	34	24	21	29	25	8	7

X. Communications

Statement	VS	%	S	%	U	%	D	%	VD	%
Changes to policy/procedures.	7	6	69	61	23	20	13	11	2	2
Training opportunities	22	20	57	52	19	17	11	10	1	1
Organizational progress/results/achievements	12	11	64	59	26	24	7	6	0	0

XI. Training

Statement	VS	%	S	%	U	%	D	%	VD	%
Are you satisfied with the training provided in your work area?	21	18	66	57	13	11	13	11	2	2
Were you satisfied with the "State of Facilities" presentation by Mike Renfrow in October 2005?	22	20	56	50	31	28	2	4	1	1
With the Customer Service Training by Developmental Strategies in May 2006?	25	21	58	50	24	21	5	4	1	1

XII. Conclusions

- Of the 118 surveys completed, 58 (50%) were endorsed.
- 67% of the workforce has 10 or less years of experience with CP&F – 38% of that total is Custodial Services.
- Based on the responses classified as Agree or Strongly Agree, CP&F personnel have a very positive perception of the organization in the following areas:

Statement	%
Maintaining a safe and productive work environment.	91
I feel that my work is important to this organization.	89
This organization is concerned about my safety.	87
This organization seeks opportunities to keep me working when times are slow.	80
I feel a sense of loyalty to this organization.	82
This organization allows me to be creative in my job responsibilities.	76
This organization supports me in my work decisions – even if I sometimes fail.	74

- Based on the responses classified as Disagree or Strongly Disagree, areas to improve include:

Statement	Responses	%
This organization demands the same level of performance from all coworkers.	39	32

- Based on the responses classified as Undecided, CP&F's growing edge is in the following areas:

Statement	Responses	%
This organization really listens to what I have to say.	28	25
Most of my co-workers enjoy working for this organization.	26	25
This organization is concerned about my well-being.	25	24
This organization really appreciates my efforts.	28	26