

Perspectives from the inside: different organizational level employee's speak their minds

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper aims to explain organizational change in a cross-cultural environment through the prospective of forty-one employees. Lucent Technologies in Mexico provided access to various employees (many positions and departments) within the organization in order to understand how organizational changes affect employees of different levels. The forty-one structured in-depth interviews conducted lasted anywhere from thirty minutes to hour per interview. The study found that employees in Mexico give their organizational loyalty primarily to their immediate manager, then identify with their in-house management, and finally give their loyalty and obtain a sense of pride in a corporate name (Lucent Technologies). Also investigated in this study are issues of turnover, what the organization can improve, efforts to gain competitive advantage the organizations strengths and weaknesses in the past and future are the underlying tenets in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Lucent Technologies recently sold its assets relating to its consumer telephone manufacturing and repair business to a global leader in the business named Vtech. Vtech invested approximately 200 million in the venture and will double its influence in the industry with the deal. In addition, Vtech will greatly improve its presence in the United States and Canadian markets (will use the AT&T brand name for the next 10 years), along with obtaining its first manufacturing and repair plants outside of China along with being able to take advantage of Mexico's trade agreements with Latin America's emerging consumer markets.

In the past 10 years, the organization under study has changed organizational names approximately 5 times. A brief history of this organization in Reynosa is as follows. First, the plant was a shelter operation in the industrial park – Parque Del Norte with AT&T and Presavir searching to see whether the venture would be profitable, and created ATEL, a pilot operation. The next few years brought about growth, which at one point, had two plants operating in Mexico. In 1995, AT&T announced its plans to establish its communications equipment as a separate company. The next year, Lucent Technologies (Bell Laboratories Innovations) obtained control of the Reynosa plant. A few years after the move, Lucent opted to use its Mexican operation in a joint venture with Philips (Consumer Communications). Once again, the employees at the Reynosa plant obtained a new name. After about one year, the two companies opted to forego their ambitious plans for meshing cultures. Lucent once again gained sole control of the Reynosa plant with the certainty of selling the business as soon as a good buyer presented

a fair offer. For about one-and-a-half years, employees at Lucent have been working under this uncertainty. Finally, last year Vtech presented itself as a viable candidate to buy and operate the telephone equipment business founded by Alexander Graham Bell.

At this point, it is interesting to note that employees have remained with the Reynosa plant throughout all of its organizational name changes. One employee comments that it has been great to see the business double, then quadruple, to now being 12 times larger than during its start in the pilot plant. This view of someone with the long experience (tenure) is much different than the one of newer employees that view the Reynosa plant as under-used or running at minimum capacity. In addition, I must comment about the changes in history of the Reynosa plant. One may easily understand that AT&T needs to spin off Lucent as its equipment division. Apparently, Lucent like AT&T, has grown into many other profitable businesses, namely public and private networks, communications systems and software, data networking systems, business telephone systems and microelectronic components, and Bell Labs as the research and development arm of the company losing sight of its original telephone equipment business.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have studied maquiladoras from a variety of angles, including, but not limited to expatriate issues, NAFTA implications, organizational commitment, and of course, cultural differences. Hofstede's (1980) seminal research identified three critical areas that benefit this research. The United States and Mexico were found to differ in the areas of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism-individualism. Power distance identifies the amount of unequal distributions of power tolerated or assumed

proper by a society. Uncertainty avoidance refers to how people in a society deal with unstructured situations or risks, individualism concerns itself with one's immediate group, and collectivism concerns itself more with the well-being of the society. Individualism-collectivism basically relates to how someone values the group versus the individual (Triandis, 1989). Individualist societies (e.g., U.S. and U.K.) emphasize values such as self-achievement and recognition, while collectivist societies (e.g., Mexico and Colombia) value societal norms and family.

It has often been cited that Mexicans have high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, and are a collectivist society. Americans have been classified in the literature as low in power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Also, Americans are highly individualistic. While these relations hold true in countless studies, little, if any attention has been given to Mexican professional workers.

One can logically ponder whether educated Mexican professional employees may have many of the same desires that American managerial professionals have. It is important to understand whether Mexican managerial professionals show any signs of being highly individualistic, embrace uncertainty (managerial risks), and eliminate power distance between themselves and any higher-level authority. Research on Mexicans seems to always offer the basic stereotypical view of Mexican employees. This one sided view in the literature may exist because the unit of analysis is typically the lower level employee. Stephens and Greer (1995) mention that Mexicans must not fear being punished and should speak up to their managers. In addition, De Forest (1994) states that Mexicans seek to develop harmony in the workplace and an attitude that "all is well".

Mexican labor can be divided into unionized, administrative (non-union), and exempt employees. Due to the lack of research in the administrative level, it must be mentioned that Mexican and minority American managers in this research stated that “speaking up” and an “all is well” mentality is not a problem in their work group. In fact, most managers that are not warned of upcoming managerial problems (by not speaking up) are usually managers who would not change their minds or procedures to correct the upcoming managerial concerns. No literature yet exists which demonstrates these types of counter explanations in regards to Mexican managerial professionals.

An article that offers a different view of Mexicans is as follows. Gowan, Ibarreche, and Lackey (1996), in their interview with Lee Crawford, managing director of General Motors’ Delphi Division, boldly point out that management of human resources is the same anywhere in the world because people are after all, simply people who want to be treated the same. Issues such as organizational justice and equity issues are important to investigate in a Mexican context. It is this idea of cross-cultural investigation that impels this research.

Adler (1997) states that culture influences behavior by impacting our values, which lead to our attitudes, and subsequently, results in our behavior. Loden and Rosener (1991) conceptualize culture into a primary and secondary dimension. The primary dimension includes unchangeable characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities, and sexual orientation. One can make a case that convergence between the American and Mexican professional has occurred in the second dimension of culture. The second dimension of culture includes characteristics that are changeable and molded through time and experience. The second dimension of culture includes

characteristics such as work background, income, educational levels, geographic location, religious beliefs, and marital status, to name a few. It is at this point of departure that this paper investigates twelve Mexican and twelve American managerial professionals in order to obtain a clear understanding as to the convergence or divergence of American and Mexican perspectives on day-to-day cultural issues.

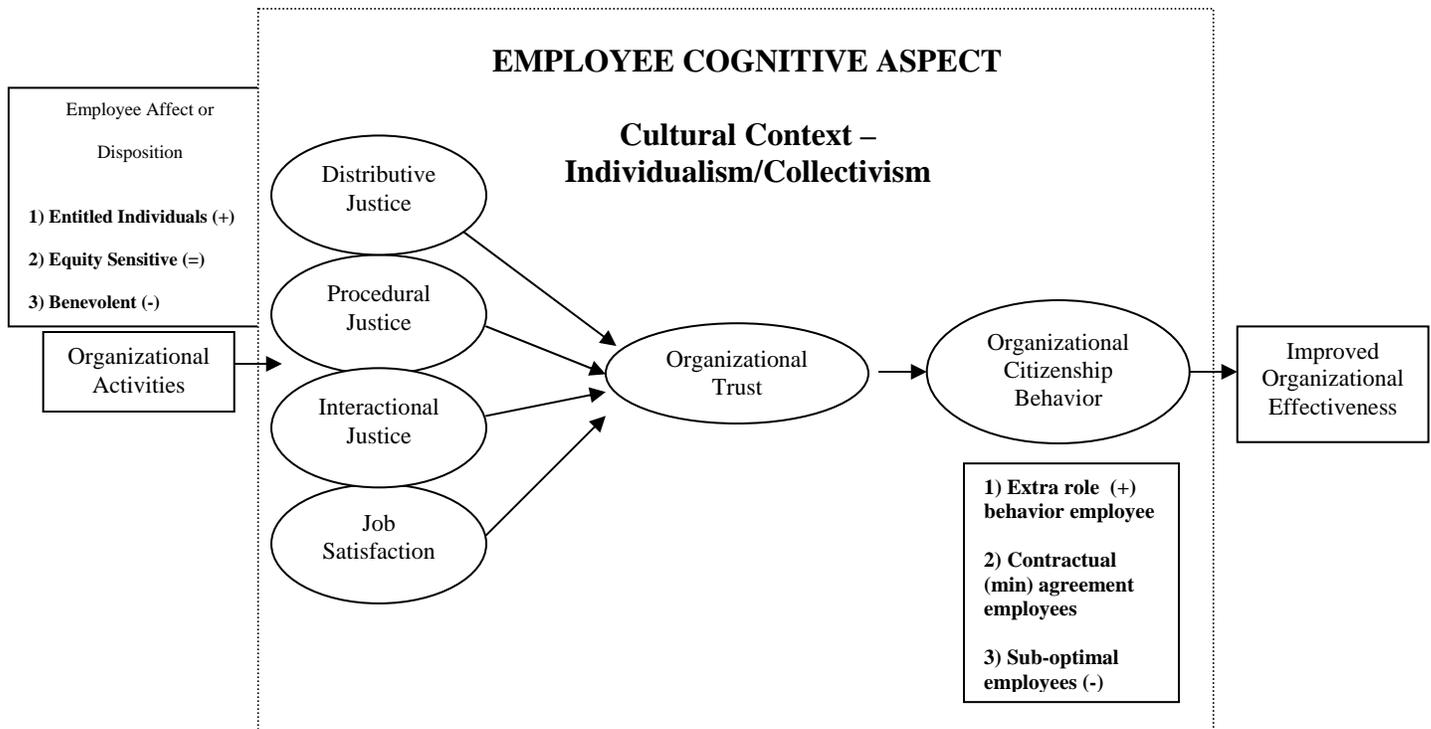
Employee's conceptual framework of OCBs

Isabelle Maignan & O.C. Ferrell (1999) mentioned that organizational activities are an effective instrument in generating a sense of pride and belonging among the organization's employees. The model below suggests that certain positive organizational activities foster work environments that help the employee in perceiving fairness at work, high job satisfaction, and organizational trust. These variables will be shown to be related to acts of OCBs. In a domestic context, the variables distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, trust, and job satisfaction have been shown to be positively related and predict OCB in LISREL studies (Leung, et al., 1996; Moorman & Blakely, 1995; Niehoff & Moorman, 1993; Williams & Anderson, 1991; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996). In a Mexican environment, little if any research on these variables exists. Furthermore, how they relate in a collectivist society also lacks attention.

An extension of this research would be that international managers want to obtain performance beyond the basic contractual agreement because OCB promotes higher levels of organizational effectiveness and consequently, makes managers more successful. Managers want employees who exceed the basic employment contract and prefer to have subordinates that are "full organizational members" versus "suboptimal"

employees (cf. Tomer, 1998). The subsequent employee conceptual framework presented below is what research infers is a functional description of an American employee, yet, in Mexico this model may be different because little is know about what constitutes Mexican OCB (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Employee cognitive aspect – a conceptual model



METHODOLOGY

Design/procedure

The method utilized to obtain the interviews consisted of providing the researchers a private conference room in which to receive the employees one at a time. Due to the fact that managers are busy all day, the researchers went to their private, personal offices and conducted the interview. The interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes. The respondents were assured that their answers would remain anonymous and that in no way would their responses affect their jobs.

The researchers began by first greeting the employee and exchanging names. The researchers explained to the interviewees that they were from an external consulting firm (IBCTR – Intracultural business consulting training and research) and in no way part of Lucent or Vtech. Then the researchers assured the employees that they simply wanted to obtain an unbiased evaluation of the organization. Furthermore, the researchers asked the employees to simply provide honest answers to six open-ended questions. Before beginning the qualitative questions, the researchers asked the interviewees if they had any questions. It is important to note that two researchers diligently took notes of the employees' responses. After the six open-ended questions were answered, the researchers administered a one-page demographic and quantitative questionnaire, which contained eight non-demographic questions and twelve demographic questions. The one-page questionnaire took about five minutes to answer.

Sample/participants

The respondents in the study are from various departments and positions within the organization. A stratified random sample was used to obtain six managers, five coordinators, seven supervisors, five técnico/jefe de grupo, and eighteen union employees. The groups surveyed represented various income levels, educational levels, and tenures. It is important to note that only two employees seemed a bit hesitant to speak their mind and simply answered the questions as briefly as possible.

Measures

The six qualitative open-ended questions dealt with the organization and its employees (Appendix 6). The first question dealt with the changes in the organization and how employees have dealt with those changes. The second question addressed the

strengths of the organization. The third question looked for weaknesses and problematic issues in the organization. The final open-ended question asked employees to provide their thoughts on improvements that the organization that the organization could implement in the future.

RESULTS

While the 41 employee interviews were each unique in their own respect, definite patterns and trends did emerge in the responses of the employees surveyed. The demographic information on the 41 managerial professionals is summarized below (Exhibit 1; 1a). The following exhibits offer a summarized view of the respondents' answers to some of the questions in the interview (Exhibits 2-7). Content analysis of the researcher's notes, formal and informal conversations, and re-verification via telephone callbacks or office revisits established the following interesting results. The following are the statements made by the organization's employees. The responses are divided into five categories (union employees, Técnico / Jefe de grupo, supervisors, coordinators, and managers).

Exhibit 1 – Demographic results

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
AGE	40	18	40	27.50	5.41
GENDER	39	0	1	0.49	0.51
RELIGION	39	0	3	0.51	0.94
Education level	40	0	8	3.00	2.31
Marital Status	40	0	3	0.68	0.66
POSITION	40	0	4	1.45	1.50
SALARY	39	0	15	5.21	5.85
TENURE (months)	39	5	112	54.15	33.08
Turnover Intent	39	1	10	6.56	3.69
Nationality	40	1	2	1.03	0.16
NATMGMT	40	1	2	1.38	0.49
HOURDAY	40	8	12.5	10.76	1.20
HOURWEEK	40	30	77	46.81	7.48
PERFORMA	40	1	10	8.35	2.01
PERFCOMP	38	4	10	8.55	1.72
EXPERFOR	39	4	10	8.97	1.29
SATISFAC	39	2	10	7.90	2.10
JUCTICE	39	1	10	5.79	2.27
TRUSTMGT	39	1	10	6.85	2.84
TRUSTUNI	36	1	10	5.11	2.85
UNINONUN	40	0	1	0.55	0.50

Exhibit 1a - Frequencies on Employee Sample N=41	
Gender	
Male	19
Female	20
Marital Status	
Single	16
Married	22
Widow	1
Divorced	1
Religion	
Catholic	28
Protestant	5
None	3
Other	3
Employment Type	
Union employee	18
Técnico / Jefe de grupo	5
Supervisor	7
Coordinator	5
Manager	6

Exhibit 2
The following are the responses to the question: Considering the organizational name changes here at your organization what are the first thoughts that come to mind (e.g. no identification with a name, some changes and some things remain the same, or nothing changes in terms of my job)? Does your job change? If so, how?
Union employees
We come to work and it doesn't matter who takes over. We just want to work. It does matter to us what happens because we are concerned whether we will be "liquidados" or if we're going to continue with the same tenure that we had before, or do we start at zero?
We do not know why the changes are occurring. We hear rumors, but nothing definite. Is Lucent going to keep us or change us? The union does not inform us and do not seem to be on the same page with management.
It doesn't matter whether the company changes names. Our supervisor continues to be the same. Perhaps changes only occur in top management.
We don't know why the company changes names so many times.
We simply want to hear and know the truth.
When changes are going to happen, they should be directly communicated to us because it is hard for us to believe them (supervisors) because they have often miscommunicated with us. The union does not hear us or have our best interest in mind. We need to know if our holidays and vacation times will remain the same.
The non-union employees on the floor get everything and the union employees are often times shafted. The union and management seem to contradict each other on the issue of "liquidados" or not. The company does not motivate us anymore. They used to give mugs, jackets, or backpacks. We would not complain about pay if we were motivated. TRW seems to be doing a good job of motivating its employees by giving color TVs, refrigerators, or small bikes for their children. Other organizations offer an in-company daycare for the employees' small children.
(Many mention this.) Things seem to remain the same.
We do not know whether we will be in a partnership or in a complete buy-out and we do not understand the issue of being "liquidados" or not.
Nobody (not management or the union) answers our doubts or explains to us what is happening.
My job continues being the same with the same bosses.
(Many mention this.) Will we be "liquidados" ?
The employees here seem to adjust quickly to change. We are never asked anything about our thoughts. This is the first time we have ever been asked what our feelings are. We try to do a good job "le hechamos ganas" (We put a lot of effort into our job.)
New bosses create a bit of uncertainty. We never seem to be correctly communicated to about the changes. We imagine that the changes are for some reason. We are not quite sure why. In general, the employees are comfortable and do their work the way it should be done. Perhaps the reason that we continue well under organizational name changes is because our loyalty is to our supervisor.
Técnicos / Jefe de grupos
Through the name changes, things seem to remain the same. Supervisors are very strict

and do not know how to treat people. They yell, rant and rave, and treat us as slaves.
I often wonder if my future is in doubt because of the lack of stability. Yet, until now I continue with the same boss, working on the same models.
Being that we are from the night crew, we oftentimes have to obtain resources from wherever possible. For example, they may not have paper or pencils to write with, so we obtain them wherever possible. We feel a bit forgotten in the night crew.
Personally, I like when we used to work with cellular phones in addition to the 900 mhz phones and answering machines.
We often hear the rumors of the plant being sold and wonder if we will be “liquidados” layed off and obtain the financial benefits of our tenure. Many people are waiting for this to happen. There is not much loyalty to the organization because of lack of motivation. Before, supervisors were able to motivate people. For example, if a group had zero defects, they might all get a cake and cokes with the bosses.
Supervisors
It does upset us that there is a lack of stability. We often think that it’s because of our performance that companies keep selling us. Before, we used to have better resources to give prizes for motivation. Now, we only ask for higher quality and production without too much recognition.
We often wonder what the motives behind the organizational name changes are.
We feel a certain amount of fear due to the uncertainty, what will happen, and where we are headed as an organization. Yet, to this point, my job remains the same.
We are not completely aware of what is happening upstairs, which creates some instability.
We always take a wait and see approach to the changes and hope that the new procedures and responsibilities will be manageable.
I do not feel any lack of identity with a corporate name because the changes do not affect my boss or subordinates.
I feel that this is a disaster. We are losing control of our people who are not happy because we can’t motivate them. The constant comparison on the floor between the union and non-union employees should be addressed.
Coordinators
The first thought that comes to mind is that we are not doing well financially. While we continue with the same personnel and doing the same thing with the same people, it does create some nervousness and uncertainty.
When we change organizational names, the new organization requires different papers and documents.
I feel a lack of security and lack of control because of the lack of stability. While my job continues to be the same with the same subordinates and bosses, I feel a lack of identification with the corporate name.
I feel a lot of uncertainty, which produces a loss in organizational trust. You do not know what will happen.
It seems that none of the organizations have been able to take full advantage of the capabilities of the organization. The amount of organizational change does bother me because it makes me wonder if we perhaps are bad employees or in a bad type of business. Should we perhaps be manufacturing instead of simply repairing?

Managers
Organizational changes have typically been very smooth, except for when becoming part of Philips Consumer Communications. I feel it went much too fast and the European culture was very ethnocentric. They seemed to have the feeling of superiority personally, I believe that they seemed jealous and thus, hindered our efforts as much as possible and basically, they treated Reynosa like trash. The superior tendencies of the Philips culture seemed to undermine our efforts here in Mexico. Then once we were undermined, they would tell the whole world.
The first words that come to mind are instability and lack of direction. I have seen both positive and negative experiences in times of organizational change. Being around since the beginning pilot plant, I have seen this business double, quadruple, and now be more than twelve times its original size. The negative experience was when we joined forces with PCC. There was definitely a sense of jealousy by the partner and simply not a good organizational fit. "Te hacian la vida bien pesada (They would make life extremely difficult for you)." Communication was a big issue during this change. Not in terms of language, rather the retaining of information by the partner. Basically, the joint venture happened too fast. I feel that we are being well prepared this time for the new Chinese ownership. Being pro-active is a very positive thing.
I feel that employees want to take pride in the company that they are part of. Yet, because things are always undergoing change, employees seem to be more loyal to their managers.
In general, I view organizational change as a positive step. Yet, I must mention that while I will not pre-judge Vtech, the joint venture with Philips left a very sour taste in our mouth.
My work continues to be the same. I might be dealing with a different product, so change for me is very limited. I also believe that change is for the betterment of the company.
Things change in our position and we are not able to quickly respond in the appropriate manner to the new requirements of a new organization. I believe this time we are being very pro-active, which hopefully will benefit us in the future.
Instability and confusion are two words that come to mind. Also, not knowing who you are in terms of an organization. The change from AT&T to Lucent was practically transparent, while the joint venture with Philips was very difficult. Not only were you dealing with another culture, country, and language, but certain levels would simply not listen to your concerns. Thus, we had more work that would take away from paying attention to our employees. We felt that Philips would simply give half-hearted direction and then simply dump a lot of work on us. While we learned a lot during this experience that should benefit our new ownership,

Exhibit 3
The following are the responses to the question: Why do you like this organization and then what do you think that others like about this organization?
Union employees
I like to work here because the job is not difficult. I like the environment and the other employees are cordial. The job is easy to learn.
This is the best company I have worked for because there is a lot of pressure for production in other companies and here it is not like that. It is “tranquilo” (tranquil and peaceful with low conflict and pressure in terms of the job itself).
I like the work environment because it is not difficult and I like the friends “companerismo”. I also like the job because I have a long tenure and other maquilas require higher levels of education than what I have.
I stay because I’m waiting to receive money owed to us. We should have meetings about what is going on and we should not hear about it in the paper.
I like the way the vacations are set up in this organization.
I need to work. I have been here a long time and my job is interesting.
I am waiting to see if we are going to be “liquidados”. I am the only bread winner in a family of six. “De todos modos, yo le hecho las ganas al trabajo” (I work very hard for the company).
I was “liquidado” (laid off) and I have returned here because I like this work. It is interesting to me and everyone else likes being here as well.
It is a good job because you don’t lift and carry heavy things, the work environment is good, and there are no problems.
I like being part of and working in a team. I like the fact that if someone is absent, I can do that job also.
(Many mentioned) that the work is not difficult and that a friendly environment exists.
We are putting up with this job because we want to be “liquidados”.
I stay because I am accustomed and comfortable in this work environment.
I have a good job and good work area.
Some older workers are waiting to be laid off “liquidados”. This is a good work environment and the supervisors do not interfere in our jobs.
I need to work. I am accustomed to working at night. I like the friends that I have made at night and I am waiting to be “liquidado” (laid off).
(Many mentioned) that they hope to be “liquidados” (laid off for cash benefits).
Many employees give their loyalties to the supervisors, not the organization’s name.
I am happy working in the second shift. There is more harmony, although some supervisors threaten to send you to the night shift, I see it as a favor.
Técnicos / Jefe de grupos
I have an important responsibility. I need to work to live and provide food and clothing for my family.
I’m very familiar with my job and like what I do.
I do not have to be standing all day like in other maquiladoras. The work environment is not noisy and the job is not too difficult. I am not from this area, but I like the friendly environment at my job.

I like the type of work I do. I also like the hours that we work (four days a week) because it allows me to devote my energies to other important issues.
I believe many of us are waiting to see whether we will be laid off and re-hired by the new company.
Supervisors
It is a smooth, quiet, friendly work environment. The work is easy and is not hard. There are no bad intentions in the workforce.
While there is a basic need to work, I have enjoyed learning a lot through my time here at this organization. I like what I have learned and the advancements and promotions that I have obtained.
The work environment is very good for me. The company has what I like. We like that we work very hard for two or three months, and then for two or three weeks there is not that much work. Then, for two or three more months the work is hard and two or three weeks there is not that much work. We like that. It is challenging.
I like what I am doing. I like the benefits of this company. You acquire a base salary, vacation, food coupons. You can grow and develop your skills in this company.
They pay 100% of your outside schooling and they don't mind if you study locally or in Monterrey. They provide very strong training and employee development. "No se detienen" (They provide a lot of help for the development of the employee.
While the benefits of training are good, I believe that they are under used. I like the area that I am working in. In fact, it is what I am studying in college. I can develop myself professionally and help people around me.
A good work environment in which I have good friends. I believe it is because of this tranquil and peaceful work environment that we tend to have good hope for the new ownership of this firm.
Coordinators
It seems to me that employees are comfortable here, there is a good sense of personal friendship among the personnel, and the work environment is very harmonious and a bit like a family "como casa" (like our home).
I like the type of work that I do and have had good opportunities and promotions over the years here to do many types of jobs.
This organizations provides good privileges for its employees – telephone, computer, "Prestaciones" (benefits), and there is a low amount of pressure.
I truly enjoy working in my department because we have a very good family type of work atmosphere. Our manager collaborates with us well in conferences and meetings. We manage a lot of information and make decisions in a group and all that will be affected by the decisions are always well-informed. We have "demasiado o mucha comunicacion" (We have an enormous amount of communication). This truly helps.
Our manager sometimes takes us out to eat. I like the salary and benefits that this company offers, along with the work environment. The management seems to care for its people and is always concerned about their needs. The reason people stay is because the job is not difficult, dirty, noisy, and we are not dealing with dangerous chemicals as other maquilas do.
Managers
People and I like the job environment and the work itself. There is not a lot of political conflicts that others deal with in their organizations. In this organization, there is low

conflict and a lot of organizational harmony. The work environment is like a family environment. We feel comfortable, no hace grilla (no conflict).
One of the main reasons that I stay is because I have seen this organization constantly grow over the years. I am very content in the type of work I do and my subordinates often comment on feeling able to express themselves by agreeing or disagreeing. Within my department, communication is very direct, open, and honest. By no means has this happened overnight. It has taken time to build trust with my subordinates.
The reason that I like to work here is because we have a good work environment and open communication. I also like the benefits such as having a company car because in Mexico, it often takes an employee about two years to save enough to obtain basic transportation.
I like it here because there is a chance for me to grow. The work environment is very cordial. For example, people will receive you without an appointment and listen to your concerns. The benefits are good in this company.
I believe administrative employees are developed and trained as well as promoted within and they have benefits that they value. For example, scholarships to continue learning outside the organization.
I like the way that Mexican people work. They are more productive than Americans. They want to succeed in whatever position they are in.

Exhibit 4
The following are the responses to the question: Why do you think that some people leave this organization (of course layoff) and what are some problems that you see that may contribute to people leaving?
Union employees
Some people obtain their “acciones” (stock options) and leave to start a small business.
Some people leave because of problems with their supervisors. Some supervisors threaten to change you to another shift if you don’t do what they say.
Some women leave for school or to take care of children. Some people leave for more money and later return because the work was much different than here. For example, other maquilas are louder.
People leave because if they come late twice, then they are fired the next time. Bad stories in the newspaper make employees uneasy with management and wonder what is the truth.
Some leave for better opportunities at other jobs or because they cannot obtain the time off that they need. For example, sometimes you need to help with family issues and can’t get the time off, so you must quit.
Many people leave because of lack of childcare for their children.
(Many mentioned) people leave for higher paying jobs.
Many supervisors do not know how to treat people, but I believe that it is based on the way that the supervisors themselves are treated.
Transportation problems because they live far away from the organization. Also, women might not find people to take care of their children. If they come back, it’s because they like this job better than the other one.

Some people want a certain shift and when forced into another, they would rather quit.
Change of shifts forces them to leave. Some seek higher pay.
Some are not from this area and leave to return to their homeland. Others return because they know the supervisor and he or she can help in getting their job back.
Low pay in comparison to other maquiladoras.
Single people seem to leave to study. Some people have sick family members or they themselves are sick. When one is sick, they must obtain an official excuse. This process is extremely hard and there is just too many people at the place that the excuse is obtained. You would think that the doctors could write a note, but I suppose many people believe the doctors may be unethical (said sarcastically).
Low pay and some supervisors are mean and do not treat people well. Sometimes you need to be careful not to talk to the wrong person because you might be let go the next day.
There is no overtime at this plant. Transportation is difficult and our money does not go very far.
Técnicos / Jefe de grupos
Some leave for more money, some need time off, some need to work overtime, some feel that there is no advancement, and some don't feel comfortable in the way that they are treated.
The union employees feel that the non-union employees are treated better and have better work relations with the supervisors.
Some people leave to work in the United States.
Some people feel that there is no getting ahead in this organization and no room for advancement.
There is no overtime at this organization. The pay is low in comparison to other maquiladoras. The ones that return come back because this job was overall better.
Supervisors
There is a better future in other organizations which offer more money. They return because we call them back or because this is better work than they find at other places.
Lack of communication and lack of response to pertinent issues. Maybe some just put off our needs and just have not gotten around to them.
Some leave because they have problems here and they do not see any opportunity for advancement.
(Many mentioned) that employees leave for higher pay and better positions in other companies.
Some search for a better position elsewhere.
Some employees are not loyal.
There is no "apoyo" (support) from human resources. There is no room for advancement. Communication is not good. We do not understand the motives for not getting certain information.
Coordinators
Some people leave because of higher pay or a promotion in another company or because they were "liquidados".
Some people are not from this area and they leave to return to their homeland. Some obtain their stock options and start a small business.
They leave for higher pay in another company.

Unfair salary ranges often have higher positions with more responsibilities making less than lower positions. Perhaps having different hours for different departments is not in the best interest of a similar culture or team spirit.
At times, we might give wrong information to our subordinates based on corporate information to us. Then, corporate may change its mind on the information given, which makes us look bad and lose trust from our employees. I believe that the supervisors are perhaps the most affected by this issue. Also, yearly pay adjustments are not communicated. Thus, we cannot give employees the date that they want because their bills at home have risen or adjusted for inflation and their pay has not.
There is no overtime at this organization. There is a lot of unnecessary comparison between union and non-union workers on the floor, which worries some supervisors.
Managers
I believe most people leave for more money or to advance in other companies. One concern of mine is how Asians view women in high positions. I hope that I will be respected for the work that I do and that gender will not bias my perception in the new owner's eyes.
Of course, layoffs, but it's interesting that some employees continue to call their managers once they hear of a job opening, regardless if they're working somewhere else. Perhaps the Mexican gives his or her loyalty to the manager rather than an organizational name.
We perhaps lack the positions to allow people to advance in this company.
Some leave for higher pay in new organizations that do not initially respect the wages set by the maquila industry. Yet, many employees find that the job they left to is much more difficult than the type of work we do here.
I believe people leave in search of higher salaries and to seek more opportunities in other maquiladoras.
When new maquiladoras come to the area, they are looking to gain highly trained, experienced, and capable individuals to start up their organization. Thus, they falsely offer more money and less benefits with harder work to lure employees to work for them. I don't believe the employees understand or see this when they leave for more money. I don't believe that money is the best way to motivate people.
Sometimes some of my subordinates leave to become managers elsewhere.

Exhibit 5
The following are the responses to the question: In terms of communication with the organization, what are your thoughts?
Union employees
The suggestion boxes seem to work well. We get feedback.
We need to be communicated to better to as to the changes that are occurring and whether things will remain the same. Communication is a good way to motivate people.
More communication is needed. We should not have to learn things from informal lines such as the newspaper, gossip, or rumors.
Communication should be facilitated through the human resource management department and the union delegates, which should in turn clearly inform us and not give

us their perception of the information.
Courses about communication may help.
The union and HR should work together to inform the employees about changes.
The correct manner for information to flow is from coordinators to supervisors to employees. The lack of communication creates rumor and gossip.
Communication is good within our team, yet little if no explanation is given about larger issues. This information could be posted on the newsboards around the plant.
Técnicos / Jefe de grupos
It is important that everyone's communication be in agreement.
Communication is lacking. I believe it is the job of both management and the union not to contradict each other.
People in production are not well-communicated to.
Supervisors
There is not a lot of communication. Yet, I suppose that they could use the multimedia equipment to give important information once in awhile.
Perhaps more emphasis could be placed on the public relations area.
Communication needs to be honest and direct. Oftentimes, our employees know information before we do. We need the same information through all levels.
Coordinators
There is a lot of communication along informal lines. In fact, people know things that I do not even know.
There is communication, but through improper channels instead of from the managers above.
If you ask any manager what is their most valuable asset, they will say their people. Yet, if you ask them how many hours per week they spend in communicating with their people, the answer may be quite low. I believe this is why rumors and gossip get started.
The fact that management does not know the answers to some questions creates in the minds of employees that we are keeping things secret from them.
The less we communicate with the employees, the more gossip and rumors they seem to conjure up.
Some employees understand that we do not have the answers. At times, I'd rather not say anything in order not to lose the trust of my subordinates.
Managers
I believe that you will always have small amounts of miscommunication in an organization.
The fact that with Philips a lot of miscommunication happened, we can use that bad experience and turn it into a positive one by assuring ourselves that this will not happen under the new ownership.
I believe that you will always get some noise in communication. Yet, I also believe that by gaining a stable organizational name, we'll aid managers in gaining employee trust.
Communication is lacking in my area. Although we have the phone and e-mail, many times this is not sufficient in locating the prompt answers that we may need.
Oftentimes, you will get organizational rumors that seem to be invented out of mid air. Employees ask a lot of questions that sometimes management does not have the answers for. This creates a tense environment that must be guarded against.

Exhibit 6
The following are the responses to the question: In terms of motivation with the organization, what are your thoughts?
Union employees
The employee expects to be motivated and that is why he or she puts forth more effort.
I like the motivation system of the prize, the streetlight, and the pig. At least it's something.
I do not like the motivation system of the prize, the streetlight, and the pig. Surely there is a better way to compete for the best line.
Supervisors must treat employees fairly. Also, the fact that some of the product is not damaged and is in perfect working order is somewhat de-motivating.
Employees could be motivated by being given a small amount of monetary compensation for not missing all month or also the organization could follow some of the things being done at TRW. Perhaps giving things for the home would be motivating, such as a coffee pot or a refrigerator (just a thought).
The recognition for the employee does not need to be expensive, just meaningful to the employee.
Supervisors could be better trained to deal with their subordinates with new management styles.
In order for employees to "hecharle ganas al trabajo" (give full effort), they should be motivated with some small prize (perhaps permission to miss some day when needed).
Eating with the manager, giving a small gift for your birthday, or having an open house seem to work well as motivation techniques.
Técnicos / Jefe de grupos
Some supervisors are using old methods of managing employees.
Having the same uniforms may motivate people and allow them to feel that they are equals.
Motivation is fine.
Helping people to buy eyeglasses and motivating the night crew by awarding zero defects or employee of the month.
The union does not seem to help or have the employee's best interest in mind.
Supervisors
Stability of a new owner will help us to motivate employees. Reviewing employees' salaries and annual raise may help.
Training in the areas of motivation creating a positive work environment would be helpful. Requiring us to develop and further our skills in a positive manner.
Understanding the "why" of certain issues is important. How to treat subordinates is important. Understanding what is happening regardless of whether it's good or bad can help.
Obtaining resources to motivate employees could help us to motivate them. We could make a big celebration as the change of ownership occurs.
We could increase the pride of working at this corporation by obtaining an owner for the long term.

Asking supervisors for only results, only results, and only results puts strain on the people that we manage. Have we forgotten about the night shift?
Allow us to benefit the employees with things that they value or that can help them, such as a coffee pot. It does not need to be expensive, rather, just consider the worker's needs.
Coordinators
Giving a small gift on their birthday is very appropriate, but it is important not to miss the date. Also, it is important not to send some other person to deliver it without a hug or anything.
Motivation is definitely lacking in this organization at the present time. While there is a company picnic in our department, we also have our own picnic.
I suppose due to the changes, our resources are limited to offer incentives to the employee.
We seem to have cut too many costs, which included programs to motivate employees. In the past, we could offer a weekend at South Padre Island for the winner of some organizational effort.
Managers
I feel very motivated here because I have the freedom to make decisions that I know are correct, giving me this option helps me to respond quickly to daily issues.
We must let our subordinates know that we hear them and are sensitive to their needs. For example, if my subordinates are young and like to exercise by playing sports (soccer), I might figure out a way to help them by getting matching uniforms for their competition. Basically, understanding what they value and responding to that is very helpful. What we do for them does not have to cost a lot of money, but simply show them that they matter.
A concern that I have is how will new ownership regard women in a high post. I hope and expect that they will respect the fact that I have the skills to achieve the challenges and goals that they need met.

Exhibit 7
The following are the responses to the question: In your opinion, what can this organization do in order to gain a competitive advantage in terms of its employees (workforce – process)?
Union employees
We could follow the lead of other maquiladoras and give prizes that help the family. We could all wear the same type of uniform. We could make a special comida for everyone. Rumors could be deflated by having one source for true communication.
On-time delivery of birthday recognition.
Hear and speak with the direct employees and make meetings with both union and non-union employees.
Provide very good food for employees. Pull out the nice placemats and silverware occasionally without a pre-set reason. Do not give plates that tear and do not feed chicken all the time.
Raise salaries and communicate about the issues of “liquidaciones” (lay offs) and newspaper issues.

Higher salaries and bonus opportunities.
Change direct employees' perception that HR is a principal's office where supervisors send bad employees.
Help employees with transportation costs and perhaps help the family in indirect or direct ways.
(Many mentioned this) Train supervisors to treat people well and care about the employee. Also, before changing the shift, the supervisors could ask if it is ok with the employee. Help supervisors be more prepared in dealing with people and production.
Classes to learn English.
Return to the old ways of motivating people with small, yet significant things. It is not so much the recognition, rather, the fact that management cares about you.
Técnicos / Jefe de grupos
Help bridge the communication between the different positions. Either raise employees' salaries or give opportunities for overtime. Train supervisors to work well with employees because if the supervisor only cares about the goals, why will I work harder if they do not help me?
Allow employees to have lunch or go outside for exercise. Some plants start the day with a few exercises. Others allow a family member to come eat with the employee at certain times. There is no bus that runs at night and no way to communicate with HR.
Give bonuses to motivate employees to work harder or allow employees to work overtime.
Supervisors
Gain good stability of a new owner and obtain resources to motivate employees, along with obtaining an annual pay raise because our bills have already adjusted.
More training on how to motivate employees that will help us gain employee trust. Also, help the union and non-union employee to compare with external firms instead of with each other.
Make a celebration for the change of ownership.
Head off rumors by providing a reliable source for communication
Help the employees gain a pride for working in this organization.
Provide training to better deal with human issues and production demands.
Coordinators
Perhaps we could give bonuses for additional work done beyond their basic job description. Perhaps we could obtain the level of our salaries compared to other maquiladoras. Obtain a small percentage of cost savings.
Clearly communicate when organizational changes will happen.
There's a saying here in Mexico – "It is better to be near the head of a mouse than the tail of a lion." It is important for us to understand our resources and also to be able to make this organization into more of a profitable business unit for its owners.
I believe that the human resource department is the heart of any organization and should facilitate communication among the departments.
We could review the employee pay scales and job descriptions of our subordinates.
We could measure whether we are measuring our company's goals in coming in under budget. We could also compare ourselves to external forces. We could continue to offer employee training and advancement as well as obtaining clear lines of communication that respond to all inquiries, whether positive or negative.

Communicate to employees that their jobs are not as difficult as what other people have to deal with in their organizations (clean, not noisy, don't have to stand all day long, friendly environment).
We could fix the issues of salaries and perhaps keep the same hours in all the departments in the entire organization and wear similar uniforms, yet , differentiate different uniforms for certain advanced positions (just a thought).
Managers
You must earn a Mexican's trust. I win them over by taking time to observe them and responding to the needs they have (e.g. childcare for families). Employees basically need to feel "apoyados" (shown that we have their best interest in mind) by management.
Perhaps one thing that can be done by the new ownership is a realignment of warehouses in the U.S. to be done here in Mexico. This would help utilize this plant to a higher capacity. Here in Mexico, we have an in-house broker which aids tremendously in financial, regulatory, and efficiency issues. Perhaps, obtaining an in-house broker on the U.S. side could save the company a lot of money, time, and effort.
Perhaps a good review of our employees' salaries three times a year would be more responsive than waiting to review salaries once a year.
Having an open-house at the plant allows employees' families to see where the family member works.
Obtaining the right software and training to aid in our position is very important for this organization to obtain.
Not only reviewing the salaries of the employees who will compare the fairness of the salary, but also obtaining input from each department as to the correct job titles offered to its subordinates.
We used to have a party for may reasons. Perhaps stability in the new organization will allow management to focus more on the organization's employees.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A good way to conceptualize culture may be to consider at what level of culture you need change. Bear in mind that you will get no change at the core or primary stage and that business should not concern itself with these issues. The table above shows a clear conceptualization of culture. It may very well be that a manager can be very effective at just the organizational level (e.g., company t-shirt day, organizational extracurricular activity), while others may find a way to tap their employees' personal level of culture (i.e. finding what the employees value – movie tickets for the whole family). Culture is different based on an employee's educational level and position within the organization. This was easily seen by a recent, false story that ran in a local

newspaper. While all management positions are quick to dismiss the article as false, union employees think there must be some truth to it because it was printed and an administrative employee may lose pride in working for the organization because of the bad publicity.

Allow me to quickly mention a few things pertaining to the new ownership of this company. This organization has done a fair amount of work in preparing for an Asian culture. They respect the fact that people in Asia do not hug and greet each other as they do in Latin America. They want to gain mutual respect and trust. They also are willing to give specific details of the job to their counterparts. It is important to mention to any Asian culture that is going to deal with the Reynosa plant that they must not make the false assumption that the Mexican employee is lazy. In fact, to gain full cooperation of the hardworking Mexican, an individual must first gain their trust by showing them that they have their needs and best interests in mind. Showing this to an employee must be done in a true and humble manner and not in some fake or generic way. One manager has gained her employees' trust by lowering her position and treating the employee as a valuable asset. She feels that this has gained a large amount of employee loyalty. It is important to mention that by first gaining employee trust, the efficient production culture of Asian systems will be well-received.

Some preliminary recommendations are as follows. Directly speaking to our workforce with the truth would be extremely helpful, because many times, the direct labor employees are up to date on the issues being dealt with by the organization's management. We must also be sensitive to the gaps created by the nature of the different positions and educational levels in the organization. Managers need not know the

answers if they clearly communicate that the answer is not currently obtainable to the employee who is asking many questions. It is also important to remember that if you treat employees like children, you get child-like responses from them. This issue is most important at the production level because a lot of pressure is placed on the supervisor to meet certain goals.

In concluding, a smart man (a retired gentleman from Sony Corporation) mentioned that he also told top managers that worked with employees on a daily basis the following, "I always stressed to my co-workers (staff) that what they said was not important. What is important is what people hear." Communication by nature contains a lot of noise. One of the most important recommendations that can be made and may be looked upon as wishful thinking is that top management should look for a way to make a profitable business with a purpose out of this repair facility. If the purpose is to repair all broken phones for North America, so be it. Another option is to diversify into cell phone repair and perhaps begin to manufacture new products. The final thought could find the organization leveraging its knowledge base of what goes wrong with the phones and obtaining a design and research purpose. Obtaining a clear vision of where you want this organization to go will help the organizations immensely.

It can easily be argued now that the organization's managers have too much work on their hands to correctly deal and care for the employee as was done in the past. Thus, stabilizing the organization's daily operations will help in obtaining a highly motivated workforce. Managers will also have time to eat with or share a piece of cake with their subordinates. It is also recommended that small, yet significant incentives be instituted once the new owners are stable. Having a change of ownership party, along with

perhaps a movie night at the organization may be beneficial in showing employees that things will continually get better once the new owners are in place.

Qualitative research is extremely challenging, time-consuming, difficult, and costly. Yet, surprisingly is able to produce incredibly useful results towards understanding and explaining a researched phenomena. There is an old Mexican saying that emphasizes, “We don’t ask God for anything. We simply ask that He puts us near to where there is some opportunity (meaning They will take care of doing the hard work).” Mexican multinational organizations would serve themselves well to understand this Mexican saying because God has put them where opportunity is at and must now do the hard work to obtain advantages over their competition. These recommendations are viewed as important in this investigation: 1) Have an “open house” once a year; 2) Gain subordinates’ trust by being open, honest, and direct; 3) motivate employees with things which they value; 4) celebrate the change of ownership at the plant; 5) pursue organizational citizenship behavior from all employees (extra-role behavior and reward it – recall that fairness and job satisfaction creates trust which lead to OCB); 6) make a conscious effort to show the organization’s fairness to all; 7) continue educating your workforce in new ways to motivate employees; 8) similar uniforms may aid in creating a good organizational culture; and 9) strong, direct, open, and honest communication using the multimedia resources available will benefit the organization. These recommendations should help an already effective organization. Employees are an organization’s greatest asset and in Mexico, tapping employees’ values is essential to motivate them.

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