

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-PERFORMING EMPLOYEES

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Bachelor of Science

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Stillwater, Oklahoma

May, 1976

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

May, 1988

Thesis
1988
P934c
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to Ms. Carol Ebert, Ms. Debbie Hixson and Dr. Mark Vincent. Carol's and Debbie's long hours of typing, correcting and retyping were invaluable to the completion of this study. Mark's expertise with statistics and computer programs made the task of analyzing and sharing the data much easier.

Special appreciation is extended to Dr. Mel Miller whose time and expertise as well as the frequent, continuous and gentle prodding were instrumental in the completion of this project.

This study is dedicated to Susie, Joshua and Whitney, whose love and understanding were needed as well as greatly appreciated throughout the project.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A thousand years ago the wealth of kingdoms was measured in gold, gems and other fine objects in the treasury. More recently, the wealth of nations has been judged mostly on the basis of industrial capital--factories, processing plants, and other installations capable of producing goods (Bell, 1987).

As the striking rebirth of the economies of Europe and Japan after World War II illustrated, however, the capacity to produce wealth depends as much on knowledge, skills and organizations as on tools, factories and other capital. Today, there is growing recognition of the overwhelming importance of the cerebral dimension of human capital, compared to the declining role of physical plants and natural resources, as the source of wealth (Bell, 1987).

Economic growth and productivity depend on human resources--not as consumers, but as resources for production. Most of our growth in national income and three-quarters of the productivity increases since 1929 are attributed to growing on-the-job expertise, reallocating labor, and increasing labor quality through education, training and health care (Carnevale, 1982). Economists note a shift "from natural and machine resources to acquired human skills as the basic building block of production" (Carnevale, p. 9). For example, earth resources (minerals, energy, food) accounted for 50 percent of the gross

national product in 1890; today, these same resources account for less than ten percent. According to Carnevale (1982), "Human resources grew to account for more than four-fifths of the nation's total economic output" (pp. 9-10).

The revival of the competitive market system throughout the world will impart further dynamics to the economic performance of many nations. While the world bazaar will offer multiple opportunities, the intensity of global competition will raise the standard of performance that workers and managers must achieve if they are to succeed. International trade will tie the price of any product to the cost of production in whatever country of the world that can produce it cheapest. The tendency truly will be for the fittest to survive; and fitness will be reckoned in terms of creativity, adherence to the work ethic, facility for cooperative endeavor, concern for quality, flexibility, responsiveness, cost competitiveness and the ability and willingness to master new technologies and methods. Those who display those qualities will prosper; those who do not will not. Those who wish to enjoy high living standards will be pressed increasingly to be more productive and/or to provide unique goods or services (Bell, 1987).

The national economy reflects the productivity of human resources. An estimated 75 percent or more of the nation's growth in products is attributed to the human factor (Morse, 1934). The impact of the productivity of human resources is even more recognizable at the organizational level. One of the main distinctions between excellent organizations and average organizations is the human resource component, according to Peters and Waterman (1982).

Magazine (1987), president of the Council on Competitiveness, claims that some of this nation's most disturbing indicators on competitiveness are in the area of human resources.

Our ability to compete in world markets today, and in the future, depends to a great extent upon a skilled, motivated and flexible work force. Technology can help, but it is ultimately people who invent new products and processes and who build and operate the machines. Education and training are the foundation of these efforts. But as you are painfully aware, years of inattention to developing our human resource capabilities have left us with some serious problems (p. 2).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study was that a definition of characteristics of high-performing employees did not exist.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a definitive profile of employees within a variety of organizations who are recognized by management as high-performing employees.

Need for Study

With the advent of global competition, changing technologies, and a declining American competitiveness, the human resource component of the American economic system is coming under close scrutiny. With this scrutiny comes an increased expectation about the performance of employees.

A key factor in the successful operation of any organization is employees. The nature and degree to which they perform their

respective duties, maintain an overall good work ethic, possess the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, etc., could be critical elements in the overall organizational performance. There is no question that one of the goals of management in any organization is to acquire, create and/or maintain high-performing employees.

As the education and training community is looked upon to provide American industry with a "high-performing" human resource component, it would seem that a universal description of what constitutes a high-performing employee would be valuable. However, without a clear, concise, description of what constitutes a high performer, management and the educational community, are faced with a difficult challenge in attempting to develop high-performing employees. Given a behavior profile of such employees--assuming there is consistency between industries in what constitutes high performance--organizational managers, personnel managers, trainers and the educational community would have a model with which to work.

Questions to be Answered

In keeping with the purpose of the study, answers to the following research questions were sought:

Are there identifiable characteristics which can be commonly attributed to high-performing employees?

Is there a high degree of agreement among managers regarding such characteristics?

What are the top seven characteristics of high-performing employees?

Assumptions

This study was guided by the following assumptions:

1. Organizations have some employees who "out-perform" others and are considered high-performing employees.
2. Management within organizations can identify high-performing employees.
3. High-performing employees within organizations do demonstrate identifiably different behaviors than other employees.

Limitations

This study is limited to Oklahoma businesses, industries and organizations. Further, the behavioral characteristics of high-performing employees are based upon the subjective perceptions of management personnel. No attempt was made by the researcher to further validate these perceptions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The quality of the labor pool is critical to America's ability to compete. At a time when increased productivity depends directly on educated, skilled and motivated people the United States is falling behind a number of its major trading partners in developing human resources. (Porter, Cohen, Teece, Tyson, Zysma and Kemar-Schloss, 1987). Magazine (1987) further states that education alone is not sufficient for the development of a skilled, motivated and flexible work force. Reward systems for employees must be designed to increase productivity. There needs to be greater appreciation of the need for training the current work force to enable them to improve productivity, performance and profitability.

Technology, international competition and changing demands for resources are creating structural shifts in the economy and are changing the skills that American workers need (Porter et al., 1987). Today's work, today's workers--even today's customers and clients--are changing, and the organizations they work for are learning to change with them. The successful companies of future decades will be those who can meet the challenges to change today by tapping the innovative potential of their workers and guiding that innovation into effective

teamwork (Zenger-Miller, 1985). The challenge facing management for continuing to develop high-performing employees seems to be clearing the way for employees to play a constructive role in the business.

Characteristics of High-Performing Employees

According to Zenger-Miller (1985) people must be taught the skill of being a good or high-performance employee. There are two dimensions to this teaching process: technical skills and employee skills. The technical skills are obviously those skills that relate to the technical aspects of one's job which must be acquired by the employee. The employee skills fall into four broad areas:

1. How to initially understand and learn their jobs and what is expected of them.
2. How to be an effective team player in an organization including:
 - How to offer and receive help from co-workers.
 - How to become a contributing member of a team meeting.
3. How to build stronger relationships with an immediate boss, including an ability to confront difficult situations.
4. What it takes to work successfully inside a large organization with policies that must cover large numbers of people, including:
 - How to influence the system when its impact is negative.
 - How to evaluate the way actions and daily decisions affect the business (Zenger-Miller 1985, p. 6).

Zenger-Miller (1985) separated these four areas into 12 different sub-areas for the purpose of developing skills for employees to address the issue of good "employee" skills. These 12 areas are:

1. Listening to understand clearly--listening to get the message straight, even when others are not good at saying what they mean.
2. Giving feedback to help others--telling others what is going well or not so well, without embarrassing them or making them mad.

3. Taking on a new assignment--learning quickly so you can become successful faster.
4. Requesting help--knowing when and how to ask for help, so you can avoid trouble.
5. Getting your point across--getting others to listen to you and understand your ideas about how to improve things.
6. Participating in group meetings--helping prevent group meetings from going around in circles.
7. Keeping your boss informed--helping your boss understand things that he or she may be unaware of.
8. Resolving issues with others--resolving problems you have with other people so the problem between you does not drag on.
9. Positive responses to negative situations--preventing emotions from making bad situations worse.
10. Working smarter--focusing your efforts where they will count the most.
11. Dealing with changes--dealing effectively with the challenges of change.
12. Being a team player--helping pull your work group together as a team (p. 3).

According to Zenger-Miller (1985), these 12 modules of instruction constitute the interpersonal skills that, when accompanied with appropriate, competent, technical skills, form the coalition to create a high-performance or "good" employee.

While the Zenger-Miller (1985) research and subsequent program build a solid case for the role of interpersonal skills and high expectations as key ingredients for good employees, there are other factors which must be examined. One of these factors is employee motivation. Carnevale (1982) says:

The evidence of the economic impact of human motivation is compelling. Convincing data show that the key difference in productivity among firms and nations cannot be attributed to the quantity of resource inputs but to

some unmeasurable qualitative human 'factor X.' Research shows that productivity differences between workers in the same plants with the same pay and equipment can vary by a factor of four, and differences between plants with identical equipment, labor and pay can vary by 50%. According to available research, the variation in 'X' efficiency is rooted in motivational and cultural differences. Recent advances in the measurement of motivational factors in the workplace suggest that a 10% improvement in motivational factors allows for a 1% reduction in product prices (p. 4).

Motivation and commitment do have an impact on performance, according to May (1979). May says good ways to motivate employees to better job performance include:

- Establishing a rapport between the worker and the department head.
- Placing each worker in a job which he or she finds interesting.
- Treating each worker as though this person were 'someone special.'
- Giving each worker recognition with all peers.
- Using competition as a motivating force.
- Giving each employee a 'piece of the executive action.'
- Improving the appearance of the work environment (p. 13).

According to Frederick (1981), the Public Agenda Foundation discovered through its research that workers are motivated to work hard when:

- They perceive their tasks to be interesting, varied and involve some learning, challenge and responsibility.
- They have enough information, support and authority to get the job done.
- They help make decisions that affect their jobs because bosses recognize that workers know their jobs best.
- They understand how their own work fits into the larger picture.
- They are treated as individuals, personally important to the company (pp. 70-84).

Peters and Waterman (1982) identified that the main factor between the excellent organizations and average organizations was the commitment level of the individual employee. As a result of a greater degree of commitment (which was fostered through delegating autonomy,

i.e., entrepreneurship, sharing pertinent information, emphasizing training and recognizing commitment on behalf of each employee), the excellent organizations were getting a higher level of performance from their employees, which helped identify the company as an excellent company.

Individual employee self-esteem and self-leadership also play a role in the performance level of employees. According to a Gallup poll commissioned by Robert Schuller, "Persons with a high level of self-esteem feel productive: those with a low self-esteem do not feel themselves productive and seem to lack productive incentives. Conclusions from the survey results state that the 30% in the low-esteem group are a drag on themselves, their employers and American society in general" (Pope, ND).

Noting that economists and the federal government generally prescribe capital investments and new plants as the solution to the problem of static or falling productivity, it seems that raising people's self-esteem may be nearly as important," stated Schuller (Pope, ND).

Self-leadership has also been identified as a critical factor in high performance of employees. Self-leadership, as it is presented by Manz (1983), is an internal discipline for each employee. As increased autonomy and participation evolves in the American workplace, employees must learn to manage themselves to a much greater degree than ever before. High-performing employees are evidencing a high degree of self-leadership which enables them to achieve high performance and excellence on the job.

Based on research by Moore (1987):

Hard work is considered the key to success. In a USA Today poll, 71% of respondents said hard work helps you get ahead. In a survey of successful executives by executive search firm Korn/Ferry International, 'hard work and integrity' also ranked highest for getting ahead. 'It's not by finagling, it's not by cheating,' says Korn/Ferry Vice President Virgil Baldi. 'The successful people that I see in our business are the people that are really driven, that get a kick out of what they're doing (p. 8B).

According to Zweig (1987), high performers in the workplace are not exceptionally gifted; rather, they are developed by the process of engaging intensely in their work. Zweig quotes the research of management consultant, Sherrie Connelly in identifying seven qualities that signal the presence of "work spirit": (1) Individuals with work spirit have enormous energy. (2) They appear to maintain a positive or open state of mind. (3) They also have a strong sense of purpose and a full sense of self. (4) Individuals with work spirit tend to characterize their participation as creative and nurturing. (5) Those with work spirit report a different sense of time, which Connelly describes as a "risking, sensing, living moment". (6) It involves play, humor, vitality and being absorbed totally in what one is doing. (7) Finally, they report a sense of higher order and oneness, a feeling of unity with something larger.

Summary

The review of literature relating to behavioral characteristics of high-performing employees suggests there are some specific, identifiable behavioral characteristics of high-performing employees.

These characteristics include the ability to competently utilize a number of interpersonal skills as well as technical skills to do the

job, a great sense of motivation found within the job itself, a strong, healthy self-image on behalf of the individual employee, and the ability to provide self-leadership, enabling one to function at a high-performing level in a work environment which calls for a greater degree of autonomy and participation. A commitment to hard work and integrity is critical, along with that "work spirit" which allows employees to attack their job with great intensity.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop a definitive profile of high-performing employees. The basic assumption at the outset was that most organizations employ some people who out-perform others. Given this assumption, this research project was conducted (1) to determine if there are observable behavioral characteristics of high performers which management can identify, (2) to determine if there was agreement regarding the behavioral characteristics of high-performers and (3) to determine the seven top-ranked characteristics of high-performing employees.

The research had two phases; the first was to establish characteristics of high-performing employees. This was done by interviewing a variety of company CEOs. These characteristics formed the basis for a Likert scale questionnaire. The second phase involved the distribution of questionnaires to a variety of different managers in various organizations and industries to determine the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the characteristics identified in the interviews. These same managers were asked to rank from one (most important) to seven (least important) the top seven characteristics of high-performing employees.

Population

The population of this research project included selected chief executive officers (CEOs) of a variety of Oklahoma businesses or industries, together with management-level personnel in all types of organizations (i.e., manufacturing, service, financial, government). These latter organizations are located geographically within the state of Oklahoma in both metropolitan and rural areas.

Methodology

Interviewing the CEOs was the first technique utilized in this research. Twelve CEOs from organizations within the parameters identified in the limits of this research were chosen for interviews to determine if there were identifiable characteristics which could be commonly attributable to high-performing employees. These CEOs were asked the following questions:

1. Are there any employees within your organization who consistently out-perform other employees?
2. If so, can you identify any behavioral characteristics of these employees that are different from the rest of the employees in the organization?

Once the interviews were completed, the data was then compiled and converted into a series of statements (Appendix A). These statements were modified to form a seven-point Likert scale to determine if there was a high degree of agreement among managers regarding the characteristics.

The questionnaire referenced the characteristics and gave respondents the opportunity to rate the level of agreement or disagreement based upon their subjective perceptions of behavior of

high-performing employees (Appendix B). It was predetermined that any characteristics which received an average score of 5.75 or better would constitute agreement.

To determine the top seven characteristics of high-performing employees, the list of characteristics was presented in a vertical column (Appendix C), and the respondents were asked to identify only the top seven characteristics by ranking them numerically, with one being the most important to seven the least important.

The top-ranked characteristic was given a point value of seven, next highest six, continuing on to the seventh ranked characteristic which was assigned a value of one. Total points accumulated based on this point system was used to establish the seven top-ranked characteristics.

Finally, a multiplicative factor was utilized to derive a final ranking based on weighted scores. This was done by multiplying the average score from each characteristic on the Likert scale by the total score for each characteristic on the ranking of the seven top characteristics. This provided a total weighted score which was used to rank each of the characteristics against themselves.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop a definitive profile of employees within a variety of organizations who are recognized by management as high-performing employees. This was accomplished by addressing the following questions through interviews and surveys. 1) Are there identifiable characteristics which can be commonly attributed to high-performing employees? 2) Is there a high degree of agreement among managers regarding such characteristics? 3) What are the top seven characteristics of high-performing employees?

Data

In the attempt to determine if there were identifiable characteristics which could be commonly attributed to high-performing employees, a group of 12 CEOs (Chief executive officers) of Oklahoma companies were identified to be interviewed. However, after conducting 45-60 minute interviews with seven of these CEOs, this researcher noted that the responses, which ranged from seven to ten per CEO, were similar and repetitive in describing characteristics of high-performing employees. As a result, no further interviews were conducted and the responses were clustered into similar categories to develop the questionnaire. All seven CEOs responded "yes" when asked

if there were any employees in their organization who consistently out-performed other employees. When asked to identify the characteristics of these employees the CEOs provided responses that are represented by the statements shown in Table 1.

To determine whether there was a high degree of agreement among managers regarding these characteristics, they were compiled and converted into statements for a Likert scale questionnaire. A seven-point scale was used allowing managers to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. It was predetermined that any characteristics which received an average rating of 5.75 or above would be considered as having a high level of agreement. Questionnaires were distributed to 175 managers with 138 being returned for a 72 percent response rate. Figure 1 represents the ten characteristics which constituted high agreement.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 represent the average ratings of all 21 characteristics as identified by what high-performing employees do and what high-performing employees are.

To identify the seven most important characteristics, the questionnaire respondents were asked to rank the top seven characteristics with one being the most important to seven being the least important. Values were then assigned to each characteristic based upon its ranking. Table II identifies how the values were assigned by ranking:

Figure 4 represents the forced ranking of the characteristics which were determined by totaling the values assigned to each characteristic from the rankings of the top seven characteristics. It was noted that the second ranked characteristic of the top seven

TABLE I

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-PERFORMING EMPLOYEES
AS IDENTIFIED BY CEOS

-
1. Good basic skills - math, reading and writing
 2. Good judgmental skills - situations, people
 3. Healthy self-esteem
 4. Genuine concern about what is going on - involved
 5. Concerned about the organization
 6. Emotionally stable - controls own emotions
 7. Commitment to the organization - willing to look 10-12 years down the road for career advancement
 8. Initiative - takes action, self-driven, self-starter
 9. Open minded - good listener, willing to consider ideas of others
 10. Concerned more about accomplishment than time
 11. Don't need much monitoring/supervision
 12. Ability to relate to whomever working with
 13. Perceptive - deal with a variety of factors at one time - analytical, tuned into environment
 14. Willing to take risk
 15. Persuasive, influential - get other people involved
 16. Good thinker - constantly thinking about ways to expand or improve
 17. Ability to think and communicate thoughts in a logical, sensible manner
 18. Ability to zero in on important issues - not get hung up on the minor issues
 19. High self-confidence - win attitude
 20. Good leadership skills
 21. Resilient - ability to bounce back from temporary setback
 22. High aspirations and strong ambitions - willingness to work hard to achieve
 23. Proactive as opposed to reactive - make things happen
 24. High integrity/trust
 25. Humility - don't see themselves as better than anyone else
 26. Extremely high energy level
 27. Very results oriented as opposed to task oriented
 28. Strong family support
 29. Strong American traditional value system - God, family and country
-

HIGH PERFORMANCE EMPLOYEES ARE / DO... TOP TEN RESPONSES

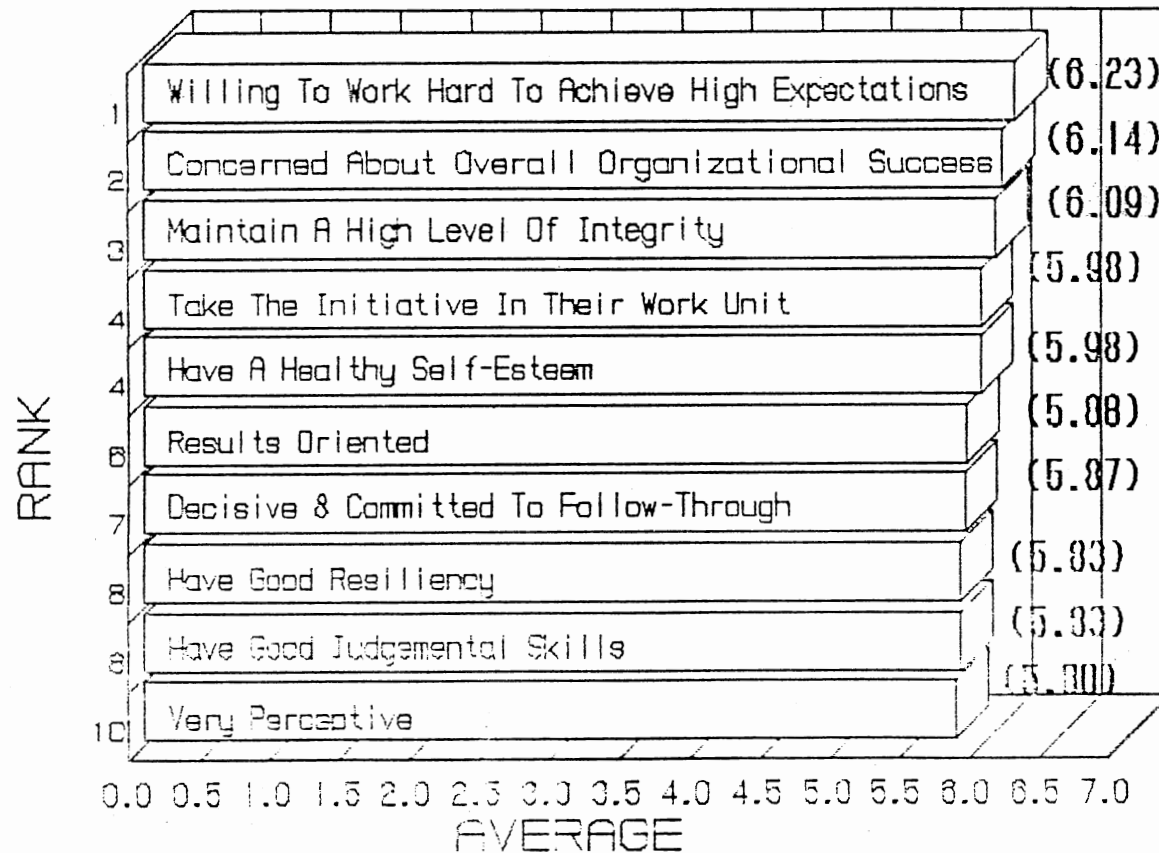


Figure 1. High-Performance Employees Are/Do...
Top Ten Responses Which Constitute
High Agreement (5.75 or better average)

HIGH PERFORMANCE EMPLOYEES DO...

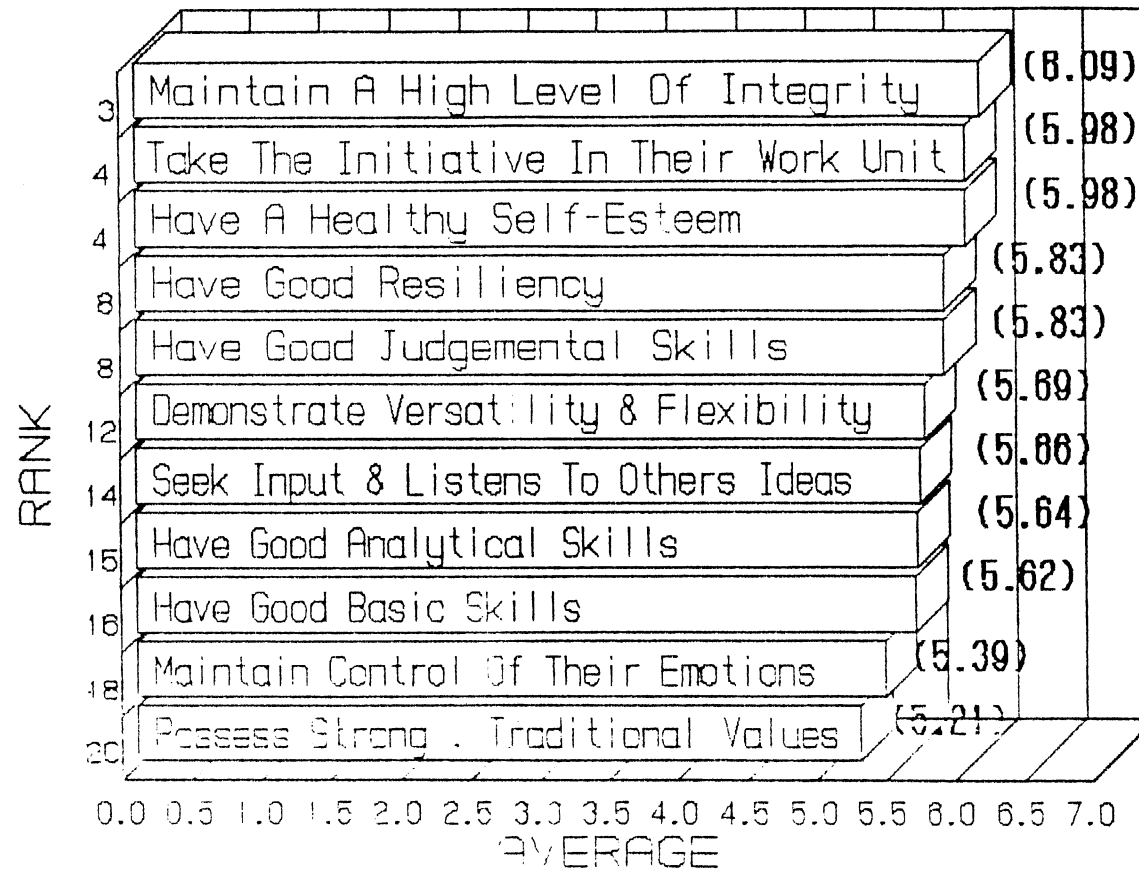


Figure 2. Average Ratings of Characteristics of What High-Performance Employees Do

HIGH PERFORMANCE EMPLOYEES ARE...

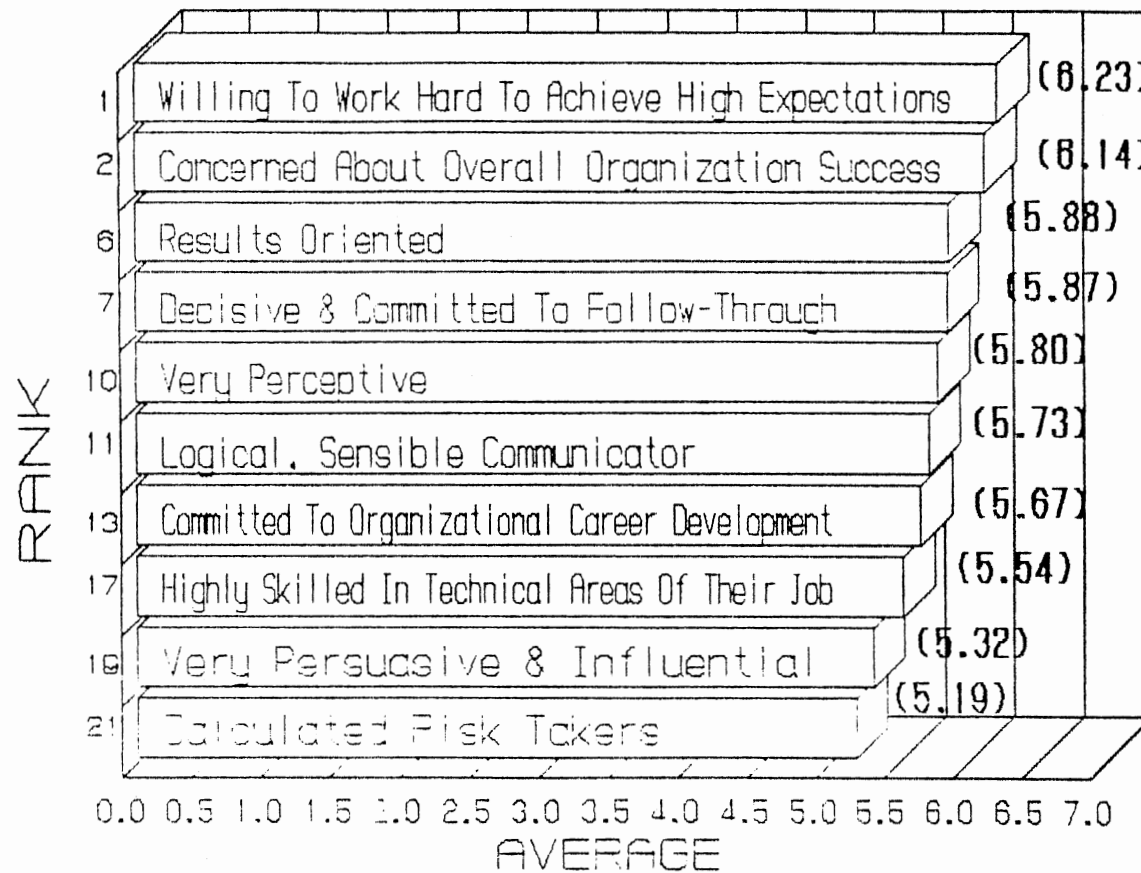


Figure 3. Average Ratings of Characteristics of What High-Performance Employees Are

TABLE II

ASSIGNED VALUES OF TOP SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS
OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE EMPLOYEES

Ranking	Value
#1	7 points
#2	6 points
#3	5 points
#4	4 points
#5	3 points
#6	2 points
#7	1 point

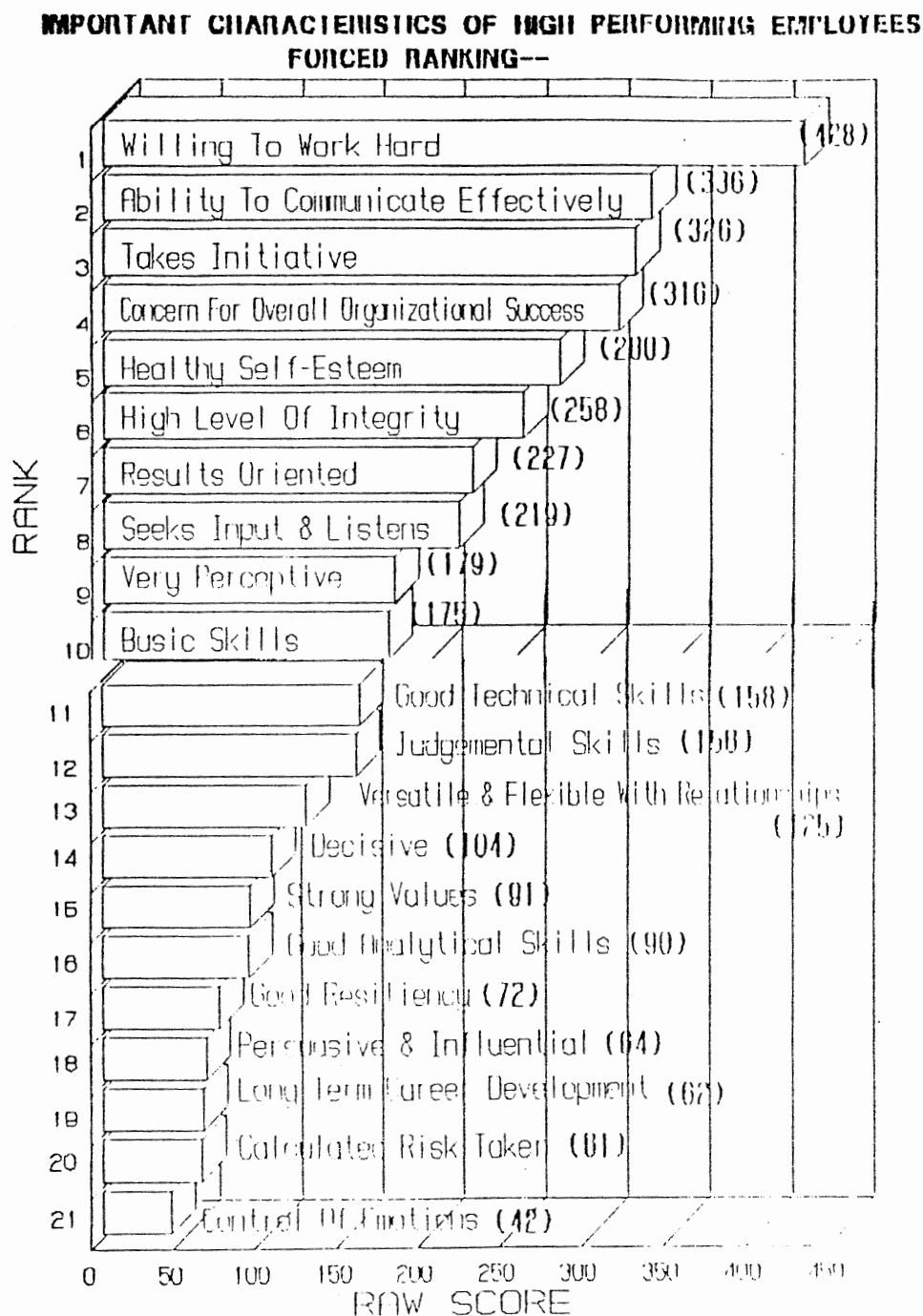


Figure 4. Important Characteristics of High-Performing Employees Based on Forced Ranking

characteristics, "ability to communicate effectively", received a score of 5.73 on the Likert scale questionnaire; therefore, it was not included as one of the characteristics which had a high level of agreement. This phenomena may have occurred as a result of the difference in phrasing the statement on the two instruments.

Figure 5 represents the final ranking derived from a multiplicative model. The average score for each characteristic from the Likert scale was multiplied by the total scores from the forced ranking of the top seven characteristics. This provided a total weighted score used for the final rankings of the characteristics.

Findings

Based on the data obtained through this research, it was found that:

1. It is possible to identify characteristics which can be commonly attributed to high-performing employees.
2. 21 characteristics of high-performing employees were identified. Ten of these were what high-performing employees are and eleven were what high-performing employees do.

High-Performing Employees Are:

1. Willing to Work Hard to Achieve High Expectations
2. Concerned About Overall Organization Success
3. Results Oriented
4. Decisive and Committed to Follow-Through
5. Very Perceptive
6. Logical, Sensible Communicator
7. Committed to Organizational Career Development
8. Highly Skilled in Technical Areas of Their Job
9. Very Persuasive and Influential
10. Calculated Risk Takers

High-Performing Employees Do:

1. Maintain a High Level of Integrity
2. Take the Initiative in Their Work Unit
3. Have a Healthy Self-Esteem
4. Have Good Resiliency

RESULTS of MULTIPLICATIVE MODEL

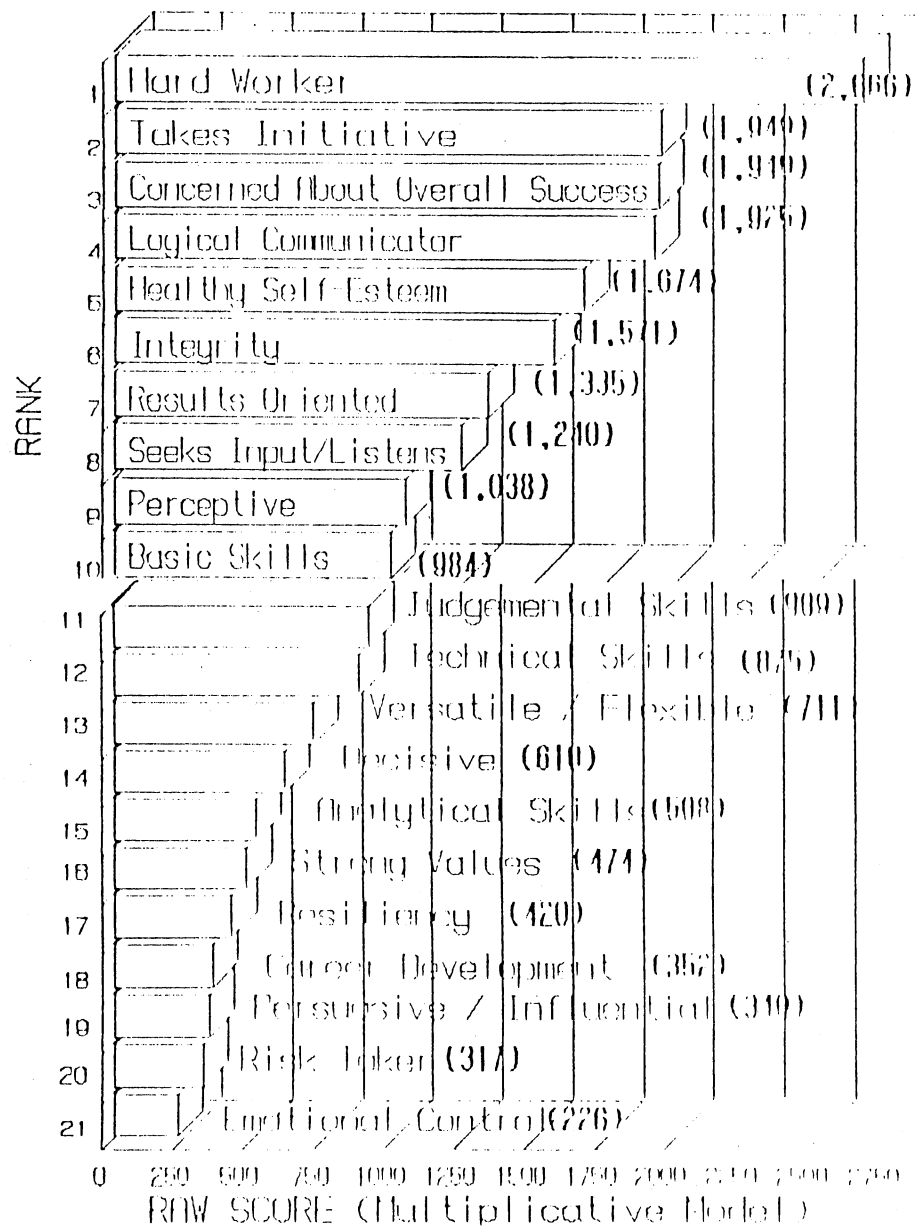


Figure 5. Ranking of Characteristics of High-Performing Employees Based on Multiplicative Model

5. Have Good Judgmental Skills
 6. Demonstrate Versatility and Flexibility
 7. Seek Input and Listen to Others Ideas
 8. Have Good Analytical Skills
 9. Have Good Basic Skills
 10. Maintain Control of Their Emotions
 11. Possess Strong, Traditional Values
3. Out of the 21 characteristics of high-performing employees identified, ten characteristics had a high degree of agreement. Five of these were from the list of what high-performing employees do and five were from the list of what high-performing employees are:

Characteristics with a High Degree of Agreement

What High-Performing Employees Are:

1. Willing to Work Hard to Achieve High Expectations
2. Concerned About Overall Organizational Success
3. Results Oriented
4. Decisive and Committed to Follow-Through
5. Very Perceptive

What High-Performing Employees Do:

1. Maintain a High Level of Integrity
2. Concerned About Overall Organizational Success
3. Have A Healthy Self-Esteem
4. Have Good Resiliency
5. Have Good Judgmental Skills

4. The top seven ranked characteristics of high-performing employees are:

1. Willing to Work Hard
2. Ability to Communicate Effectively
3. Takes Initiative
4. Concern for the Success of the Organization
5. Healthy Self-Esteem
6. High Level of Integrity
7. Results Oriented

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Economic growth and productivity depend on human resources---not as consumers, but as resources for production. Much of the growth in national income and productivity since the late 1920s has been attributed to the human resource component in the workplace. With the advent of global competition, changing technologies, and a declining American competitiveness, the human resource component of the American economic system is coming under close scrutiny. With this scrutiny comes an increased expectation about the performance of employees.

The purpose of this study was to develop a definitive profile of employees within a variety of organizations who are recognized by management as high-performing employees. The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Are there identifiable characteristics which can be commonly attributed to high-performing employees?
2. Is there a high degree of agreement among managers regarding such characteristics?
3. What are the top seven characteristics of high-performing employees?

The data in this study were gathered through a two-stage process. First, several CEOs were interviewed to determine, (1) if there were employees who consistently out-performed other employees; and (2) if so, what were the characteristics of these employees? Secondly, this information was converted into statements to comprise a Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to 175 managers in a variety of industries. Each response that received a 5.75 or better average score on a one to seven point Likert scale was considered to have a high degree of agreement. Finally, the questionnaire respondents were asked to rank the seven top characteristics in their order of importance.

This study was limited to Oklahoma businesses, industries and organizations. Further, the behavioral characteristics of high-performing employees are based upon the subjective perceptions of management personnel. No attempt was made by the researcher to further validate these perceptions.

As a result of this study, 21 characteristics of high-performing employees were identified. Ten of these characteristics were found to have a high degree of agreement among managers throughout a variety of industries.

Conclusions

As a result of this research, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. It would be possible to improve the productivity of an organization if the number of employees possessing the top-rated characteristics of high-performing employees could be increased.

2. The acquisition of the top-rated characteristics of high-performing employees identified in this study by the American workforce would result in an increase in America's competitiveness in the global economy.

3. Individuals seeking a competitive advantage in the workplaces of America should strive to exude the top-rated characteristics of high-performing employees identified in this study.

Recommendations

As a result of this research, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Educational programs should emphasize experiences which will promote the development of those traits that are characteristic of high-performing employees.

2. Research should be conducted to develop assessment devices which will determine the extent to which individuals possess the characteristics of high-performing employees.

3. Interview guides should be created to determine if prospective employees possess the characteristics identified in this study.

4. Further research should be conducted to determine if the characteristics of high-performing employees are synonymous throughout different types of industries.

5. Further research should be conducted to determine if the characteristics of high-performing employees are synonymous throughout all levels in an organization.

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APPENDIXES



APPENDIX A

RESPONSES TO CEO INTERVIEWS

TABLE I

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-PERFORMING EMPLOYEES
AS IDENTIFIED BY CEOS

-
1. Good basic skills - math, reading and writing
 2. Good judgmental skills - situations, people
 3. Healthy self-esteem
 4. Genuine concern about what is going on - involved
 5. Concerned about the organization
 6. Emotionally stable - controls own emotions
 7. Commitment to the organization - willing to look 10-12 years down the road for career advancement
 8. Initiative - takes action, self-driven, self-starter
 9. Open minded - good listener, willing to consider ideas of others
 10. Concerned more about accomplishment than time
 11. Don't need much monitoring/supervision
 12. Ability to relate to whomever working with
 13. Perceptive - deal with a variety of factors at one time - analytical, tuned into environment
 14. Willing to take risk
 15. Persuasive, influential - get other people involved
 16. Good thinker - constantly thinking about ways to expand or improve
 17. Ability to think and communicate thoughts in a logical, sensible manner
 18. Ability to zero in on important issues - not get hung up on the minor issues
 19. High self-confidence - win attitude
 20. Good leadership skills
 21. Resilient - ability to bounce back from temporary setback
 22. High aspirations and strong ambitions - willingness to work hard to achieve
 23. Proactive as opposed to reactive - make things happen
 24. High integrity/trust
 25. Humility - don't see themselves as better than anyone else
 26. Extremely high energy level
 27. Very results oriented as opposed to task oriented
 28. Strong family support
 29. Strong American traditional value system - God, family and country
-

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYEES ARE . . .

1. Genuinely concerned about the overall success of the organization.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

2. Committed to the development of their careers in the organization over the long-term.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

3. Decisive and committed to the follow-through once a decision is made.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

4. Results oriented.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

5. Very perceptive (demonstrate a keen understanding of circumstances and events surrounding them).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

6. Calculated risk takers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

7. Very persuasive and influential in getting others involved.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

8. Able to communicate thoughts and ideas in a logical, sensible manner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

9. Willing to work hard to achieve high expectations.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

10. Highly skilled in the technical areas of their jobs.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYEES DO . . .**11. Have good basic skills (reading, writing, and communications).**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

12. Have good judgmental skills (people and situations).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

13. Have a healthy self-esteem.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

14. Maintain control of their own emotions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

15. Take the initiative in their work unit.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

16. Seek input and listen to the ideas of others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

17. Demonstrate versatility and flexibility in relating to others in the workplace.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

18. Have good analytical skills (ability to sort out and focus on major issues).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

19. Have good resiliency (ability to bounce back from a major setback).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

20. Maintain a high level of integrity.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

21. Possess a strong traditional American value system (God, country, and family).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree

APPENDIX C

LIST OF CHARACTERISTICS TO RANK THE TOP SEVEN

Please rank what you consider to be the seven most important characteristics of high performing employees. In the space provided, rank the most important as 1, the next most important as 2, etc.

Characteristics

- _____ 1. Basic skills
- _____ 2. Judgmental skills
- _____ 3. Healthy self-esteem
- _____ 4. Concern for the success of the organization
- _____ 5. Control of emotions
- _____ 6. Long-term career development
- _____ 7. Takes initiative
- _____ 8. Seeks input and listens
- _____ 9. Decisive
- _____ 10. Results oriented
- _____ 11. Versatile and flexible with relationships
- _____ 12. Very perceptive (circumstances and events)
- _____ 13. Calculated risk taker
- _____ 14. Persuasive and influential
- _____ 15. Ability to communicate effectively
- _____ 16. Good analytical skills
- _____ 17. Good resiliency
- _____ 18. Willing to work hard
- _____ 19. High level of integrity
- _____ 20. Strong values
- _____ 21. Good technical (job-specific) skills

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER ON QUESTIONNAIRE



OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

ROY PETERS, JR., DIRECTOR • 1500 WEST SEVENTH AVE., • STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074-4364 • A.C. (405) 377-2000

September 25, 1987

Dear Manager:

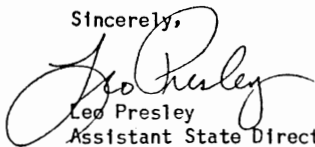
As a manager of employees in your organization, you face the challenge of maximizing your subordinates performance towards the accomplishment of your organization's goals. Your performance in this area of responsibility could be greatly enhanced if it were determined that "high performing employees" had certain characteristics not evidenced by other employees.

This is what the attached questionnaire is designed to do. It is part of an overall research project commissioned to determine the characteristics of high performing employees. Will you please take the next ten (10) minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it to me by October 21, 1987?

The results of this project will be distributed to those participating in the project. Please mark the designated statement on the cover sheet of the questionnaire and include your name and mailing address. The results will be mailed to you as soon as they are tabulated.

Thank you for your support of this worthwhile project.

Sincerely,


Leo Presley
Assistant State DirectorLP:ce
Attachment
11/1p0224

APPENDIX E

COVER PAGE ON QUESTIONNAIRE

In today's competitive environment, businesses must strive to utilize their resources as effectively as possible. In an effort to assist businesses in getting the maximum utilization of their human resources, the following research project is being conducted. This project is designed to determine the characteristics of high performing employees from all other employees in an organization. Will you please assist us in this endeavor by completing the attached questionnaire.

Please read each of the following statements relating to high performing employees and identify the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the appropriate response:

EXAMPLE:

HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYEES DO/ARE . . .

Report to work on time every day.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely	Strongly				Strongly	Absolutely
Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Agree	Agree

_____ Please check here and fill out space below if you would like results of this project mailed to you.

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Please return to:

Mr. Leo Presley
Assistant State Director
Oklahoma State Department of Vocational
and Technical Education
1500 West Seventh Avenue
Stillwater, OK 74074-4364

By October 21, 1987

VITA 2

Leo Edward Presley

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-PERFORMING EMPLOYEES

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Cushing, Oklahoma, December 23, 1952, the son of Claude and Florence Presley.

Education: Graduated from C. E. Donart High School, Stillwater Oklahoma in May, 1971; received Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Oklahoma State University in July, 1976; enrolled in Masters program at Oklahoma State University in January, 1984; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1988.

Professional Experience: Independent consultant, 1976-78; owner/operator of General Motors automobile dealership, 1978-80; coordinator of Productivity Division, Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, 1981-83; coordinator of Business/Industry Training Division and Productivity Division, Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, 1984; director of Industry Training, Francis Tuttle Area Vocational and Technical Center, 1985; assistant state director for Business and Industry Services Unit, Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, 1986-87.