TRANSFORMATIONAL SPEAKING: AN EXAMINATION OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION STYLE IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT DURING CORPORATE TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

Corporations today are looking for a complete transformation into a new existence that is lean and productive, generating more business that is focused on future needs while maintaining current products. Greater than half of them are currently involved in some level of transformation. Leadership plays a large role in engaging the work force in the transformation process. This study examines the impact of autocratic and transformational leadership communication styles on employees’ feeling of engagement at a corporation currently going through a corporation transformation. A survey was given to employees lead across both leadership styles to measure the impact on the employees’ feeling of engagement. The results of the survey were considered using Deetz’s critical theory and Foucault’s philosophical assumption that knowledge is power. Other literature and studies on the topic of leadership and corporate transformation were used in interpreting the data from this study. The results of the study provide a clear understanding of the impact of the autocratic and transformational leadership communication styles on employee engagement. Suggestions for further research on this study are also provided.
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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

In our current economic climate, corporations are downsizing, outsourcing, being bought out, and closing their doors. Corporations today are in a constant flux of change, new software, new products, new processes, and even new leadership. But today more than ever before companies are facing the impact of globalization. The global market is presenting new challenges for corporations that require more than a simple change. Corporations are looking for a complete transformation into a new existence that is lean and productive, generating more business that is focused on current and future needs. A snap-poll of large corporations conducted by Bloomberg Business Week (2010) shows that greater than half of them are currently involved in some level of transformation (Renewed Urgency section).

Defining corporate transformation as a process helps us understand that processes are not made successful just by defining them and putting them in place. Miles (2001) makes the point that realizing the transformational benefit of focusing on critical businesses and functions and retaining a better defined set of employees is directly dependent on managements’ ability to engage the employees in the transformation (p. 313). Because of the impact leadership communication style has on employee engagement (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 2), Deetz’s critical theory will be considered in determining the balance of power in the corporation. Corporate transformation requires that employees be engaged and empowered to contribute so that new innovation is realized as part of the transformation process (Isem & Pung, 2007, p. 6). The requirement for employee engagement during corporate transformation suggests that a balance of power is tantamount.

There are many different leadership styles, all of which have a lasting impact on the corporation. Hackman and Johnson (2009) believe that the type of leadership can be evaluated...
by the leadership communication style; in fact, the communication style names the leadership style (p. 2). They define leadership as a form of human communication that transitions attitudes and behaviors to focus on collective shared goals and needs (p. 11). The definition holds great importance when a corporation is embarking on a transformation journey.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A great deal of research has been conducted regarding the impact of leadership traits on individual outcomes, but limited research has been done on understanding the impact of leadership styles on corporate processes and end results (Wang, 2009, p. 380). Successful corporate transformation requires leadership communication skills that stimulate employee engagement and productivity improvements. Researching the impact of leadership communication styles on the engagement and productivity of employees during a transformation process will help us understand that leadership communication skills need to be considered in the transformation planning stage.

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of leaderships’ communication style on engagement and the corporate transformation process. The study will compare the impact of the opposite communication styles of transformational leadership and autocratic leadership. The measured impact of communication styles on engagement may encourage corporations to allocate time and resources for leadership communication training as part of the transformation process.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The following definitions are used for the purpose of this study:

*Corporate Transformation:* Transformation in a corporation is a journey to develop a new corporate culture that embraces positive change, fosters open communication, streamlines
processes, measures outcomes and continuously evaluates performance (Paslidis, 2008, p. 28). Corporate transformation focuses on core competencies, reduces layers of management, streamlines decision making and processes, and builds a skilled workforce that will assist in promoting and reaching corporate goals (Miles, 2001, p. 313). Whereas change is a single event that can produce something different in an instant, corporate transformation is a state of constant change aimed towards consistent and measurable performance improvement.

*Employee engagement:* Employee engagement is commitment to their work and to the mission and vision of the organization. Highly engaged employees feel a sense of ownership in the corporation, inspiring them to focus on doing their very best, including making changes where needed for the success of the organization as a whole (Noel, 2010).

*Leadership communication style:* A sophisticated communication process that delivers results. Hackman and Johnson (2009) believe that the type of leadership is defined by the leadership communication style (p. 40). They define leadership as a form of human communication that transitions attitudes and behaviors to focus on collective shared goals and needs (p. 11).

*Autocratic leadership:* Autocratic (authoritarian) leadership maintains full control over their employees by strictly governing policy, procedure and their behavior (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 42).

*Transformational leadership:* Wang and Huang (2009) define transformational leadership by a group of characteristics that include inspirational, admirable, trustworthy, influential, and visionary (p. 381).

*Knowledge:* Information and skills acquired through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject or process; what is known in a particular field, process or in
total; facts and information. Facts associated with a process or concept (Merriam-Webster Online, n.d.).

ORGANIZATION OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

This chapter introduced the reasons why a corporation would implement a full transformation and the importance of engaging the employees across all areas of the corporation in order to realize a successful transformation. The introduction explores the possibility that autocratic and transformational leadership communication styles may have a varying impact on employee engagement.

Chapter 2 considers the philosophical assumption that knowledge is power and explores the role of critical theory in exploring the balance of power within an organization. The notion of “knowledge is power” is a common belief in the corporate environment and thus causes many knowledgeable workers to safeguard knowledge rather than share it. Critical theory, however, seeks to determine if there is an imbalance of power and to determine the cause of the imbalance. Understanding that knowledge is perceived as power, the impact on the corporate transformation process is considered. Chapter 2 also provides an exemplary review of the literature regarding corporate transformation, the importance of communication during a corporate transformation, and the communication styles of both transformational and autocratic leadership. Chapter 2 concludes with the study research questions.

Chapter 3 explores research that has been done in transformational leadership, autocratic leaders and corporate transformation; it explains the scope of this study and how it is different from other studies that have been conducted. The methodology describes how the data was collected and analyzed in the study.
Chapter 4 provides the study data analysis and results. The content of the supervisor interview questions and the results are discussed. Chapter 4 provides a copy of the email message that distributed the survey, the survey given to the employees, and the results of the survey.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study and includes the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for further study. The research questions are answered using the literature and the data resulting from this study.
Chapter 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

In the corporate world knowledge is seen as power. Leadership is often chosen based on level of experience; this equates to an individual receiving a position based on a level of knowledge in a given area. Michel Foucault (1977) made the statement:

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.' Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. (p. 27)

Lines (2009) sees the concept of knowledge as power as a limitation in potential growth. Specifically, Lines believes, when an individual sees knowledge as power, the ability for that individual to learn from others is often non-existent because the individual believes he or she already has all the knowledge (Limitations of Knowledge is Power section, ¶1). Lines believes that the concept of sharing and thus gaining knowledge is lost in the feeling of power (p. 2).

If knowledge is withheld or distorted by a supervisor, then the control and power is held by the supervisor. Sharing knowledge and having a constant exchange of information, process, experience, and training knowledge, is very important when a corporation is going into a transformation process. Applying critical theory would suggest that withholding or distorting knowledge creates an imbalance in power which results in narrow and bias decisions (Deetz, 1982, p. 139). Critical theory evaluates the cause of an imbalance in power in decision making and then works to develop a way to overcome the imbalance (Deetz, 1982, p. 147).

Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) explain that involvement in producing and disseminating knowledge shapes possibilities and determines boundaries (p. 122). Sharing knowledge through
leadership communication engages the workforce in the vision, mission and goals of the corporation and invites them to contribute to the success of the corporation. Sharing knowledge distributes the power for others to contribute and results in balanced decisions made through a productive communication process. This study assumes that different leadership styles reflect different leadership communication styles which have a varying impact on employee engagement. Employee engagement and productivity are classified as critical elements in corporation transformation (Padlidis, 2008, pp. 29-31). This study aims to determine the impact of leaderships’ communication style on the corporate transformation process. The study will compare the impact of the opposite communication styles of transformational leadership and autocratic leadership.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Because of the increase in global market, combined with a struggling global economy, corporations today face an enormous challenge to produce a good product at a competitive cost. Employee loyalty to corporations has fallen short in an environment of down-sizing, layoffs, and plant shut downs. Maintaining and engaging top talent in corporations has reached a new level of challenge. Corporations are looking for new creative ways to increase production with a reduced workforce, which requires careful construction of team-based skilled labor. Corporate survival is dependent on the corporation finding a way to become competitively sound in a global market. Long standing corporate cultures are being set aside, giving way to corporate transformation as a way to achieve their goals. Although successful transformation has a long list of requirements, communication plays a major role in its success. Leaders with appropriate communication skills will lead the way to successful corporate transformation.

This exemplary literature review will evaluate required changes for a successful corporation
transformation; this study will explore two opposing leadership communication styles, comparing transformational leadership and autocratic leadership, and the impact of the styles on transformation success. The importance of critical theory of communication will be emphasized in developing a new corporate culture that aids in the corporate transformation and in evaluating appropriate leadership communication styles to support transformation.

THE LITERATURE

**Critical Communication Theory**

Critical communication theory focuses on an imbalance in power in decision making, which silences the opinions and input of information from the less powerful, thus resulting in a decision-making process that is “narrow and biased” (Griffin & Deetz, n.d.). In the Griffin/Deetz interview, Deetz explains that the basic culture of corporations is built on constructs developed long ago by powerful people; corporate employees continue to adhere or adjust to those same constructs today without knowing the origin. Those basic constructs restrict or silence the individual voice. Although the environment equates to an imbalance of power, the organization structure feels normal because it has been in existence for so long. Employees operate within the confines without even realizing they are oppressed by a long-standing culture. Critical theorists try to evaluate the constructs that led to the current corporate culture with the intent of changing the dynamic. The basic corporate culture places management in control of all decisions, which is not necessarily a problem unless management fails to consult with primary stakeholders to form a decision. Deetz (1982) states, “The task of critical-interpretive research is not only to reveal these blockages and repressions and the forces which sustain them, but also to provide appropriate action to overcome them” (p. 140).
Deresky (2003) states that a corporation’s structure must be conducive to the overarching corporate strategy, which is continually changing to accommodate global competition (p. 292). She points out that management is faced with the task of determining how the company’s systems and tasks will accommodate the evolution (p. 292-293). Applying critical theory would involve more than management in the decision-making process. Giving employees a voice in the decision-making process results in decisions that will be embraced and supported at all levels. The engagement of all levels generates support at all levels, and thus produces increased productivity. Balanced power in decision-making results in increased knowledge across the workforce so that informed decisions can be made at all levels (Griffin, 2006, p. 310).

Isem and Pung (2007) drive home Deetz’s point regarding employee engagement stating, “Established orthodoxies must be broken and innovation encouraged, so don’t let unconventional ideas fall victim to hierarchy, bureaucracy, or silos (or all three)” (p. 6). Applying critical theory to corporate transformation can break the long standing holds of corporate being, allowing us to transform rather than just change. The existing organization of a corporation can be set up to silence individuals, resulting in manipulated decisions with distorted data (Deetz, 1982, p. 139). Bass and Avolio (1993) bring to our attention that an organization’s culture can hinder future innovation because it is grounded in successes of the past (p. 114).

**Corporate Transformation**

Transformation is defined in general as the act of completely changing something into a better appearance or usefulness; it is more than change. Burns (2003) explains that change is the process of exchanging one for another; but transformation is actually a metamorphosis into a new existence (p. 24). Transformation (metamorphosis) occurs over time and with much work, change (replacement or exchange) can occur in an instant. Transformation will require an
examination and modification of the current corporate culture. The corporate culture defines organization activities and structure; it is the very basis on which all employees form a common understanding and meaning within the corporation (Deetz, 1982, pp 132-133).

Edelman (2006) defines organizational culture as a combination of customs, attitudes, actions, and ideas that saturate the workforce (p. 12). When the culture has a positive charge, it generates happy, productive workers; but when the culture is negatively charged, the opposite is realized. Tunstall (1986) makes the point that when the economic environment requires significant change in the way a corporation conducts business, the elements of a long-standing culture can prevent required corporate transformation (p. 111). The Corporate Executive Board (2010) reports that corporations are recognizing that cutting overhead costs as a way of dealing with decreased sales is a short-term solution to the problem; increased numbers of corporations are turning to significant corporate transformation measures to secure the future of the corporation (Efficiency Gains section, ¶3).

Corporate transformation focuses on core competencies, reduces layers of management, streamlines decision making and processes, and builds a skilled workforce that will assist in promoting and reaching corporate goals (Miles, 2001, p. 313). Morgan (2008) points out that having a well-formed plan on how the corporation will transform and engaging the workforce is the most important first step that impacts and aligns all other aspects of the corporate transformation (p. 30). Corporate transformation often requires change to long-standing corporate cultures that define the corporation to the stakeholders as unique in the global market. Paslidis (2008) lead the transformation of the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care (AFMC). Capturing a very important step that sets the transformation on the path to success, Paslidis states, “A first step to changing the culture of the organization was flattening the reporting
structure of senior management to promote teamwork and communication between senior management team members” (p. 29). Padlidis explains that the action was taken to break down management silos and multi-layered bureaucracy, which resulted in greater utilization of employee skills and productive team collaboration (p. 30). Communication transparency from senior management helps develop trust and engages the workforce in the transformation effort (p. 31).

A study on communication flow (White, Vanc, & Stafford, 2010) emphasizes the importance of direct communication between employees and senior management. The authors report that employees trust the credibility of information when it comes directly from senior management because they recognize that flow of information through multiple management layers is often caught up in bottlenecks or is filtered and distorted as the message travels down to the workforce (p. 72).

**Leadership Communication Styles**

Deetz (2005) makes the point that based on personality, characteristics, and motives, psychology became the means of determining all actions in the twentieth century, but there is the possibility that our psychological basis could be the product of sophisticated communication processes. Leadership can be defined as a sophisticated communication process that delivers results. Hackman and Johnson (2009) believe that the type of leadership is defined by the leadership communication style (p. 40). They define leadership as a form of human communication which transitions attitudes and behaviors to focus on collective shared goals and needs (p. 11). The definition holds great importance when a corporation is embarking on a transformation journey. This study will focus on two leadership styles that would be characterized as opposite ends of the spectrum: autocratic and transformational.
Transformational leadership. Leaders with highly developed cognitive and communication skills are seen as transformational leaders by their followers (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 104). Wang and Huang (2009) define transformational leadership by a group of characteristics that include inspirational, admirable, trustworthy, influential, and visionary (p. 381). Their study showed that transformational leaders have a very high degree of emotional intelligence and that emotional intelligence is directly related to group cohesiveness (p. 389).

Nielsen, Yarker, Brenner, Raymond, and Borg (2008) believe that transformational leadership impact employee performance through three primary mechanisms: influence, involvement, and meaningfulness (p. 467). Nielsen et al. further believe that transformational leaders communicate by modeling values, inspiring employees to see that they can find success by understanding and employing the same values. Part of the values that are modeled is genuine enthusiasm for the task(s) and encouragement to be involved, which inspires the employees to want to be a part of the big picture. Finally, transformational leaders establish meaningfulness in the hearts and minds of the employees by sharing the vision and communicating the importance of their roles in the overall success of the vision (pp. 467-468). Although the hypotheses of Nielsen et al. were only partially confirmed, the study confirmed their belief that transformational leadership behaviors have a direct impact on employee interpretation of their working environment (p. 472). The traits modeled by transformational leaders generate a feeling of well-being in the workforce.

Transformational leaders are very innovative, always searching for new opportunities to improve and further the corporation (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 105). Stimulating creativity involves removing potential blockages to the creative process and inviting staff to be involved in the creativity (pgs. 108 & 109). Transformational leaders communicate visions by creating
images, models and metaphors that give meaning and purpose to their followers (p. 111). Interaction with followers provides constant sources of new ideas and innovations, creating a constant flow of communication, involvement, and engagement.

**Autocratic leadership.** Autocratic (authoritarian) leadership maintains full control over their employees by strictly governing policy, procedure and their behavior (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 42). They tend to remain distant from their employees in order to distinguish roles. They generally believe that employees cannot complete tasks without the manager’s involvement. The autocratic leadership communication style is directly related to telling employees how something will be done or how they will behave (p. 42). Although groups of people led by autocratic leadership can be very efficient in completing tasks, often the employees are unhappy, leading to high absenteeism and high employee turn-over (p. 45). Those operating under authoritarians are more dependent, reluctant to make decisions without consulting leadership; successful contributions are dependent on the extent of knowledge held by the leader (pp. 45-46). Yukl (2006) defines all of the above characteristics as task-oriented behaviors (p. 66). The autocratic leader plans work activities, clarifies roles and objectives, and monitors operations and performance (pp. 68-71).

Lewin and Lippitt (1938) demonstrated the impact of autocratic versus democratic leadership on 11-year old children. The study revealed that the teams lead by the authoritarian produced a more hostile environment that produced poor quality or incomplete work (p. 298). Hackman and Johnson (2009) mention that additional studies on the Lewin and Lippitt (1938) studies show that there was a higher level of productivity when the autocratic leader was with the children, but productivity dropped almost 40 % when the leader left the room (p. 46). The studies indicate that the autocratic leadership communication style is effective for tasks that are routine,
structured, or simple. Autocratic leadership is also recommended to lead extremely large groups or other situations where time does not permit the opportunity for discussion, such as in the military (p. 46).

**Impact of Leadership Communication on Transformation**

Leadership communication plays a major role in engaging the workforce in the corporate transformation process. The communication style of leadership will play a major role in employee perception of the transformation effort. Robertson (2003) shares that top-down leadership communication at the New York Times and Salt Lake Tribune resulted employee retention problems and the loss of top talent during their transformation (p. 36). Robertson believes that if leadership would have communicated why certain directions were necessary and afforded the staff the opportunity to contribute to the decisions and process changes the workforce would have suffered much less (p. 36). Reluctance to change can often cause followers to look for inconsistency in the vision being presented. For this reason, it is important that leadership share the same vision with consistent and frequent communication across the corporation.

Communication in all directions and at all levels is the most important need in order to set the corporation transformation up for success. Gardner (2009) mentions ten primary causes of transformation failure; out of the ten, six contribute communication as a fail point ranging from failure to communicate to inadequate communications (p. 3). Kotter (2007) provides eight reasons why transformation efforts fail (p. 99). All eight reasons involve communication processes, with the fourth being focused on key communications that need to occur throughout the transformation (p. 100). It is important to create a powerful guiding coalition to help evaluate
the problems and opportunities within the company and to align the coalition to a corporate vision (p. 101).

Tunstall (1986) relates the importance that AT&T saw in communication regarding their transformation by quoting the Chairman of AT&T, Charles L. Brown to his senior managers:

We have to learn to take more risks, and, where we fail, to cut our losses. We have to open the channels of communication, so that ideas for improvement, cost savings, new opportunities come to the fore in timely fashion and don't die on the organizational ladder. A swifter, more responsive, more accountable style of management will be required.

Summary of Literature Review

To meet the challenges that corporations face today in a global competitive market, increased numbers of corporations are turning to significant corporate transformation measures to secure the future of the corporation. Often the transformation requires a complete change of the corporation’s culture. Changing a corporate culture requires all corporate employees to contribute new concepts and ideas for development of a new vision and operating decisions. Corporate leadership sets the tone, the pace, and the energy of the workforce throughout the transformation process by engaging and empowering the employees. The communication style of the leadership will generate the level of commitment and excitement of the employees. By critically evaluating the corporate culture and the leadership communication styles, the corporation can transform into a successful, competitive business model.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A great deal of research has been conducted regarding the impact of leadership traits on individual outcomes, but limited research has been done on the impact of leadership communication styles on corporate transformation. Successful corporate transformation requires
leadership communication skills that will encourage active employee engagement in developing a new corporate culture. Questions that need to be answered are:

RQ 1: During corporate transformation, what impact does the communication style of an autocratic leadership style have on employee engagement?

RQ 2: During corporate transformation, what impact does the communication style of transformational leader have on employee engagement?

RQ 3: During a corporate transformation, what is the most effective leadership communication style to engage employees?

Researching the impact of leadership communication styles on the engagement of employees during a corporate transformation process will emphasize the type of leadership that needs to be emphasized in the transformation planning stage. The measured impact of communication styles on engagement may encourage corporations to allocate time and resources for leadership communication training as part of the transformation process. Chapter 3 will explain the scope and methodology of the study.
Chapter 3: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A great deal of study has been conducted on leadership communication styles and the impact of those styles on employee performance. No research has been conducted on the impact of leadership style and their respective communication practices on employee engagement during a corporate transformation.

Previous successful corporate transformations have captured the importance of using leadership communication to engage and empower (Tunstall, 1986). As shown in multiple studies, both transformational and autocratic leadership styles have proven to be successful in certain environments (Conger, 1999, Lewin & Lippitt, 1938, Wang & Huang, 2009, Yukl, 1999), but the environment at a corporation going through a transformation requires a leadership style that shares knowledge across the workforce and works to engage employees in the corporate transformation process and plan. This study will focus on the impact of transformational and autocratic leadership communication styles on the required levels of employee engagement during a corporate transformation process.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study used a combination of personal interviews and a self-administered survey. Supervisors were interviewed in person to determine an equal mix of leadership styles. The interview consisted of a structured set of questions asked in a preset order (Rubin, Rubin, Haridakis & Piele, 2010, p. 221). Personal interviews allowed the opportunity to ask additional questions for clarification and allowed the respondents to expand on their answers. Conducting interviews also allowed the opportunity to observe non-verbal communication (Reinard, 2008, p. 373). Non-verbal communication helped identify areas of confusion regarding the questions that
were asked, which helped the respondents answer the questions. Because of the importance of having a balance of leadership styles participate in this study, personal interviews helped gain greater participation (100%) than what is usually obtained in an electronic survey (p. 372).

Six groups of people were selected to be surveyed based on the interviews conducted with the supervisors. Three groups were determined to have transformational leadership and three groups were determined to have autocratic leadership. Survey research was determined as the best tool to measure the impact of leadership communication style on employee empowerment because it provides a means to gather information from a large group of people in a limited period of time (Rubin et al., p. 219). Survey research allows respondents to freely decide whether or not they want to participate (Reinard, 2008, p. 355). An Internet based survey tool was selected because it provides a feeling of anonymity, which encourages participation and honesty in response (Sepulveda, n.d., p. 25).

A corporation currently undergoing a corporate transformation was selected for the study. The corporation is involved in a line of business that is dependent on innovation. Because of changes in the market, government regulations, and globalization, the company believes that a transformation is necessary for them to be competitive in a global market in the future. The corporation used in this study has a global market, conducting clinical research in more than 50 countries, with research and development facilities located in 8 countries and manufacturing plants located in 13 countries. They market product in 143 countries. Worldwide the company has slightly over 38,000 employees. The company has been in business for 135 years, originally owned and operated as a family business; it now a fortune-500 corporation run by a board of directors.
Supervisor Interviews

Supervisors of the corporation were interviewed to gain an understanding of their leadership styles. The purpose of the interviews was to aid in selecting employee survey respondents from both transformational and autocratic leadership styles. Supervisors were initially identified for interview based on the number of employees that report to them so that a large enough data set could be considered to eliminate personality conflict as a potential influence on the survey data. The supervisors were interviewed instead of surveyed so that they did not have time to think about the questions, in hopes that they would provide an honest answer to the questions. In addition, body language was observed to determine their level of comfort in answering the questions.

Twenty-minute interviews were scheduled with ten supervisors across two components of the corporation. Supervisors received an email explaining that the interview was to determine leadership styles for the purpose of a further study and emphasizing that participation was completely voluntary. The email also explained that names would not be associated with the interview data and that the data collected would not be used by the corporation in any way. These instructions were emphasized again prior to conducting the interviews.

A set of interview questions were developed based on the dimensions of leadership communication style for autocratic and transformational leaders presented by Hackman and Johnson (2009, pp. 40-46). The interview questions are a slightly modified version of a survey developed by Clark (2010). Each question was scored, using a five-point Likert scale. The interview questions reflect styles of both autocratic and transformational leadership communication styles. The interview questions were multiple choice. A score sheet was used during the interviews to track supervisor responses. After the scores were determined, groups of
employees to be surveyed were identified based on an equal number of autocratic and transformational supervisors.

**Employee Survey**

To measure the impact of leadership communication on employee engagement, a survey was developed using the company’s Microsoft SharePoint survey tool. The SharePoint survey tool was chosen because it is a free survey tool that is easy to use and easy to access, and because it is on a platform that is used at the study corporation and is understood as a confidential survey tool without identifying markers. This is important so that the respondents trust that the information is confidential and that they cannot be identified. The survey was distributed to the respondents via email with information about the purpose of the survey and instructions on how and when to complete the survey. The email expressed that participation is completely voluntary and confidential. The survey tool does not identify the respondents in any way. The email explained that individual responses will be rolled into and reflected in the study as a cumulative data set.

The survey was given to 200 employees in varying roles ranging from areas responsible for developing products to administrative support roles and included all supervisor roles just below executive management. A good cross-functional selection of subjects was chosen to measure the impact of leadership communication styles across areas of responsibility. Lower levels of leadership were included in the survey in order to gain understanding of leadership influence and communication from executive management levels. The groups chosen to be surveyed each consist of at least 20 employees. The survey was divided into three sections: an instructional and general information section; a leadership communication style section, and an
employee engagement section. Each section of the survey explains the rating system, which is consistent for all sections.

The instructional section repeats the information provided in the email as a reminder regarding confidentiality and to encourage them to complete all questions with extreme honesty. The section also includes general questions such as their role in the organization, length of time in their current role, and the number of years with the company.

The leadership communication style section of the survey is set up to measure the employee’s perception of their supervisor’s leadership communication style. They are asked how long they have reported to their current supervisor to establish a baseline for relationship development. The randomly distributed questions reflect styles of both autocratic and transformational leadership communication styles. The survey consists of all the questions that were used in the supervisor interviews and are scored using a five-point Likert scale.

The employee empowerment section of the survey is set up to measure the employees perception of how engaged they are in transformational. The questions associated with the measurement of engagement are based on the recommendations of Gallup Consulting (2010). Gallup Consulting has done considerable research on the impact of employee engagement on productivity and business outcomes. Gallup uses surveys to determine the level of employee engagement in corporations with the intent of identifying areas of low engagement targeted for improvement. Although the survey does not have a section related directly to productivity, the level of employee engagement has a direct impact on productivity. Noel (2010) emphasizes that counting the number of widgets each employee produces does not measure success in a corporation (¶5). Noel points out that Microsoft, Google, General Electric, Proctor & Gamble,
Marriott, Nike, and many other successful companies, focus on employee engagement, realizing that actively engaged employees are highly productive employees (¶6).

The instructional section repeats the information provided in the email as a reminder regarding confidentiality and to encourage them to complete all questions with extreme honesty. The questions are based on a slightly modified and expanded version of the survey used by Gallup Consulting (2010). The questions were scored using a five-point Likert scale based on a consistent list of responses.

Chapter 4 provides the content of the interview questions and results. It also provides a copy of the email message, the survey provided to the employees, and the results of the survey.
Chapter 4: THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Ten supervisors across two components were interviewed to gain an understanding of their leadership styles. The purpose of the interviews was to aid in selecting employee survey respondents from both transformational and autocratic leadership styles. As a result of the interviews, six groups of employees were selected to be surveyed. Three groups were lead by autocratic leadership and three groups were lead by transformational leadership. The employee survey was structured based on the recommendations of Gallup Consulting (2010) for measuring employee engagement levels. The data analysis and results are provided.

DATA ANALYSIS

The study consisted of two steps of data gathering. The first step helped to determine groups of employees that were lead by the two leadership communication styles being compared, autocratic and transformational. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 10 supervisors to determine their leadership style. Out of the 10 supervisors, based on the interview scores, three were chosen as autocratic and three were chosen as transformational. Electronic surveys were then distributed to 200 employees that report to the six supervisors. The surveys were distributed with instruction to respond within five days. After five days the survey was shut down and the results were exported to Microsoft Excel for analysis. Fifty-two percent of the employees responded to the survey.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Supervisor Interviews

The Appendix A interview questions were presented to 10 supervisors across two components. Table 1 captures the resulting scores of the interviews. The score sheets were
completed during the interviews. The supervisors appeared to respond to the statements with ease and seemed to clearly understand the statements as often they would clarify their answers with examples. The examples solidified their answers. Out of the ten supervisors interviewed, Figure 1 shows that there is nearly an equal mix of leadership styles, with only one being inconclusive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisors</th>
<th>Autocratic</th>
<th>Transformational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Supervisor interview scores

The autocratic and transformational scores were averaged for each supervisor. The scores were averaged for each leader to find the autocratic and transformational score. Based on the results of the scoring, groups associated with supervisors 1, 4, and 9 were selected to be surveyed, representing groups influenced by autocratic leadership communication style. The scores were significantly high enough to feel confident that the supervisors’ communication styles were more autocratic than transformational. Groups associated with supervisors 2, 5, and
10 were selected to be surveyed, representing groups influenced by transformational leadership communication style. The supervisor scores were high enough to feel confident that their communication styles were more transformational than autocratic. Collectively the groups included in the study will include a good cross of roles, time in their roles, and time with supervisor and the corporation.

The body language of the supervisors, whether they scored as autocratic or transformational, showed that they were relaxed and confident in their responses. Their answers were direct, often followed by reasons for their beliefs, although not solicited. Those who responded highly autocratic, however, almost took a posture of defense for their beliefs, as they provided more examples, justifying their beliefs. The defensive posture may be the result of the company’s campaign for a more transformational leadership stance. Those who responded highly transformational were very passionate regarding their beliefs, providing examples of personnel success and process improvement. The supervisor that scored inconclusive seemed to be trying to provide answers that seemed correct and appeared uncomfortable in responding. A great deal of fidgeting, such as doodling on a scratch pad, and shifting in seating position was observed. Most of the questions had to be restated or clarified.

Employee Survey

A total of 104 out of 200 distributed surveys were completed. According to Reinard (2008) analyzing and reporting on a 52% response rate is considered adequate (p. 372).

**General survey questions.** Respondents represented a good cross section of roles with varying time in position, time with the corporation, and time under current supervision. The results show that 50% of the respondents were in lower level roles, and 50% of the respondents were in higher level roles. Of the higher level roles, 5% were definitely in supervisory roles, with
another 8% that could have supervisory responsibilities. Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 show the cumulative responses to the questions used to capture this information in the general section of the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Roles</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistants</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Respondent roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years with Corporation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 15 years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Respondent years with corporation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in Current Role</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 15 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Respondent years in current role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years with Current Supervisor</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 15 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Respondent years with current supervisor

**Leadership communication style.** The second section of the survey asked employees from the six groups to respond to statements about the leadership communication style of the respondents’ immediate supervision. The survey questions in this section were a slightly modified version of the interview questions used for the supervisor interviews. The employee responses were scored using a five-point Likert scale, where “almost always true” was equal to 5 and “almost never true” was equal to 1. Table 6 shows the cumulative results of the leadership section of the survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Communication Style</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconclusive*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Inconclusive data will not be considered in evaluating the differences between transformational and autocratic leadership communication style impact on employee engagement.

Table 6: Response to leadership style survey section

Although six groups of people were chosen to be surveyed based on an equal division of supervisor leadership style, three transformational and three autocratic, the survey data shows that better than half of the respondents scored their supervisors as being more transformational than autocratic. This fact could indicate that either more of the transformational leaders’ employees completed the survey or the respondents see their supervisors differently than how the supervisors perceive themselves. Because the survey contained no markers that would identify the respondents, it is not possible to confirm the reason for the division of respondents across leadership styles; however, the survey results showed that the majority of the supervisors were not seen as completely transformational or completely autocratic. To determine the dominant leadership style of the supervisors, a final score was determined by finding the average score of the two styles. Table 7 shows the scores and the number of respondents per score. Higher scores demonstrate supervisors with more traits of autocratic or transformational leadership. Inconclusive scores were determined when the averaged transformational and autocratic scores were the same, thus cancelling each other out.
### Table 7: Leadership style scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style Scores</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic Score: 5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic Score: 4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic Score: 3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Score: 5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Score: 4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Score: 3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Employee engagement section. The employee engagement section of the survey consists of 17 statements based on the recommendations of Gallup Consulting (2010) for measuring employee engagement. A survey was emailed to the six groups of employees determined by the supervisor interviews. The distributing email is provided in Appendix B. The recipients were blind copied so that they would not know the names of other participants and thus be able to identify groupings of supervision.

Of interest is the fact that the majority of the higher level positions (consultants, scientists, advisors, physicians, and supervisors) view their supervision as having a transformational communication style (34 % transformational versus 13 % autocratic). Table 8 shows the distribution of roles by autocratic and transformational grouping and includes inconclusive results.
### Table 8: Role distribution

#### Total Roles - Autocratic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>% of Autocratic</th>
<th>% of all participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>29%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Total Roles - Transformational

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>% of Transformational</th>
<th>% of all participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistants</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>64%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Total Roles - Inconclusive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>% of Inconclusive</th>
<th>% of all participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>107%</strong></td>
<td><strong>7%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The feeling of engagement for employees with autocratic leadership is measured against the score that determines the number of autocratic traits in the supervisors’ communication style by graphing the responses as shown in Figure 2. The average engagement score of employees with an autocratic supervision level of 3 was 51. As the autocratic supervision score climbed to level 5, the average engagement score dropped to 36.

**Figure 2: Autocratic level vs. level of engagement**

The feeling of engagement for employees with transformational leadership is measured against the score that determines the number of transformational traits in the supervisors’ communication style by graphing the responses as shown in Figure 3. The average engagement score of employees with transformational supervision at level 3 was 56. As the transformational supervision score climbed to level 5, the average engagement score climbed to 74.
The average engagement score of the employees with leadership scores that were inconclusive was 48. The lower engagement scores are comparable to the scores seen in employees led by the autocratic leadership communication style.

The employees were invited at the end of the survey to contribute any additional information they wanted to in a free text field. They were asked not to provide any information that would identify them or any supervision. Eleven comments were contributed. Eight of the comments were made by respondents that scored their supervision as being transformational; however, the scores were very low. Three of the comments were made by respondents where the leadership score was inconclusive. The messages expressed that because the corporate message is to engage and empower the workforce, middle management goes through the motions of soliciting input from staff; but the action that they take includes none or very little of the
suggestions contributed by the staff. If the staff questions supervision, they are labeled as unwilling to change and not team players. The general impression is that they hear the right corporate transformation message from top management, but the message is filtered and often changed by middle management. Although the 11 comments only represent 12% of the respondents from the transformational grouping, it demonstrates the possibility that 8 of the 67 responses may be autocratic with false transformational scores based on actions rather than true characteristics.

Table 9 shows the percentage of respondents that strongly agree and agree with the statements in the engagement section of the survey. Percentages were calculated based on the number of respondents that responded with strongly agree or agree divided by the total number of respondents that felt their supervision was autocratic (30) or transformational (67). The rating of “somewhat agree” was not included in the percentages as it could imply that they are not 100% in agreement with the statement as it stands. The transformational percentages are significantly higher than the autocratic percentages.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Autocratic</th>
<th>Transformational</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My position allows me to make independent decisions.</td>
<td>0% 23% 23%</td>
<td>36% 36% 76%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have the support and authority to make the decisions necessary for</td>
<td>0% 13% 13%</td>
<td>45% 45% 79%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accomplishing assigned tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have enough involvement in decisions that affect my work.</td>
<td>0% 3% 3%</td>
<td>27% 27% 63%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My department uses employee feedback to make improvements.</td>
<td>0% 0% 0%</td>
<td>24% 24% 66%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am encouraged to be self-sufficient.</td>
<td>10% 30% 40%</td>
<td>33% 33% 73%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. This is the type of job in which I can feel a sense of accomplishment.</td>
<td>10% 17% 27%</td>
<td>31% 31% 61%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My job encourages creativity/innovation.</td>
<td>0% 10% 10%</td>
<td>30% 30% 61%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The work I do makes a difference here.</td>
<td>13% 33% 47%</td>
<td>43% 43% 81%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I understand how my work contributes to the company's overall goals</td>
<td>3% 47% 50%</td>
<td>43% 43% 88%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and strategy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel comfortable with what I am asked to do in meeting my job</td>
<td>0% 30% 30%</td>
<td>27% 27% 75%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Upper management does a good job in communicating corporate goals.</td>
<td>0% 0% 0%</td>
<td>21% 21% 69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel valued as a team member.</td>
<td>0% 10% 10%</td>
<td>31% 31% 61%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I receive encouragement to come up with new and better ways of doing</td>
<td>10% 3% 13%</td>
<td>21% 21% 72%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I am permitted to exercise independent judgments that align with</td>
<td>0% 13% 13%</td>
<td>30% 30% 85%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I have a close friend at work.</td>
<td>33% 17% 50%</td>
<td>37% 37% 76%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I spend time trying to improve problem processes that I can fix so I</td>
<td>10% 40% 50%</td>
<td>34% 34% 78%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can be more productive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. When the solution is obvious, I take action to correct problems or</td>
<td>20% 43% 63%</td>
<td>61% 61% 99%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>processes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Autocratic versus transformational responses in agreement with the statements

**DISCUSSION**

The survey conducted in this study clearly demonstrates the impact of autocratic and transformational leadership communication styles on employee feelings of engagement. When supervisors have higher scores in transformational leadership communication skills, the engagement scores are also high. The opposite is true when supervisors have higher scores in autocratic leadership communication skills. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) make the point that an increase in profit can be seen by an increase in employee engagement (p. 247). Gallup,
Inc. (n.d.) quotes Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric, “Any company trying to compete … must figure out a way to engage the mind of every employee” (¶6). The survey data shows that transformational leadership communication style is more effective for engaging employees.

The engagement section of the survey includes two important statements that have direct impact on innovation and productivity:

1. I receive encouragement to come up with new and better ways of doing things.
2. I am permitted to exercise independent judgments that align with professional standards.

The survey shows that 76% of the participants with transformational leadership responded to the first statement with “strongly agree” or “agree,” and 79% of them responded to the second statement with “strongly agree” or “agree.” Comparatively, 23% of the participants with autocratic leadership responded to the first statement with “strongly agree” or “agree,” and 13% of them responded to the second statement with “strongly agree” or “agree.” Both of the statements measure how comfortable the employees are with determining new ways to accomplish their work and make independent decisions without supervisor involvement. The finding corresponds to the point made by Griffin (2006) that balanced power in decision making results in increased knowledge across the workforce so that informed decisions can be made at all levels (p. 310). Additionally, the survey results show the point made by Isem and Pung (2007) that innovation can be encouraged by breaking down hierarchy, bureaucracy, and silos (p. 6). Deetz’s critical theory (1982) emphasizes that the existing organization of a corporation can be set up to silence individuals, resulting in manipulated decisions with distorted data (p. 139). Applying critical theory would then encourage evaluating the cause of an imbalance in power in decision making so that a way to overcome the imbalance can be achieved (p. 147). The survey data shows that increasing the use of the transformational leadership communication style will
increase the balance of power required for employees to feel like they can be innovative contributors.

Revisiting the point made by Paslidis (2008) that it is necessary to promote communication between senior management and the work force (p. 29), the survey shows that 69% of the respondents that believe they have transformational leadership believe that upper management is doing a good job communicating corporate goals, providing them with a greater understanding of the goals. Perhaps for this reason 88% claim to understand how their job contributes to the corporate goals and 81% believe that their work makes a difference.

Considering the philosophical assumption that knowledge is power (Foucault, 1977, Lines, 2009), the survey data would suggest that knowledge is being shared by upper management, and employees are using that knowledge in determining the impact of their work on the corporation. However, those led by autocratic leadership have a lower level of information exchange; none of the autocratic respondents feel that upper management is doing a good job communicating corporate goals. Subsequently 50% claim to understand how their job contributes to the corporate goals and 47% believe that their work makes a difference.

The 69% difference between the transformational and autocratic respondents answer regarding upper management communication validates the study by White, et al. (2010) which reports that employees trust the credibility of information when it comes directly from senior management because they recognize that top-down flow of information through multiple management layers is often caught up in bottlenecks or is filtered and distorted as the message travels down to the workforce (p. 72).

The survey results show that the transformational leadership communication style gives the employee the authority to make independent decisions because they feel they have been
given the authority over their responsibilities and tasks. Nielsen, et al (2008) point out that transformational leadership inspires the employees to want to be a part of the big picture. The leaders establish meaningfulness in the hearts and minds of the employees by sharing the vision and communicating the importance of the employees’ roles in the overall success of the shared vision (pp. 467-468). By doing so, the transformational leader engages and empowers the followers to lead others and ultimately to transform into a new existence that is valuable in the transformation of the corporation.

The respondents influenced by an autocratic leadership style show 72% less confidence in independent decision making and 66% less feeling of support and authority to make decisions regarding their responsibilities and tasks. Hackman and Johnson (2009) provide the explanation that the autocratic leader keeps employees more dependent and reluctant to make decisions on their own (pp. 45-46). Yukl (2006) points out that autocratic leadership is actively involved in planning responsibilities/tasks, clarifying roles and objectives and then monitoring progress and performance (p. 66). Because the knowledge is held by the leader, successful decisions are dependent on the leader being involved.

Miles (2010) emphasizes the importance of engaging employees from top to bottom (pp. 4-6). Failure to engage the employees can cause the transformation effort to stall. Most transformation efforts fail because the corporation fails to engage the employees from the onset (p. 7). Figure 4 shows Miles (2010) concept of launching a transformation while completely day-to-day, on-going responsibilities (p. 4).
Gallup (2010) emphasizes the impact of employee engagement in their statement, “Beyond the dramatic difference engaged workgroups show in productivity, profitability, safety incidents, and absenteeism versus disengaged workgroups, Gallup has proven that companies with world-class engagement have 3.9 times the EPS growth rate compared with organizations with lower engagement in their same industry.” As demonstrated by the survey data, engagement is dependent on management communications practices. Engagement, as pointed out by Noel (2010), is the main ingredient to produce highly productive employees (¶6).

Isern and Pung (2007) credit leadership directly for stimulating change by modeling change (p. 9). They point out that the process of soliciting input without implementing change spreads the message that nothing is changing. The free-text comments in the survey reflect the feeling that nothing is changing. The employees are asked for input, they give input, but new, innovative processes are not being put into place. Miles (2010) makes the point that leadership who fails to engage will not engage employees, and this will lead to corporate transformation failure (p. 6). This study has shown that transformational leadership communication style engages employees far more than autocratic. Chapter 5 will address the limitations of the study, make recommendations for further study, and provide a conclusion to for this study.
Chapter 5: SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

The study showed that the communication style of transformational leadership stimulates a higher level of employee engagement, while the communication style of autocratic leadership generates a lower level of engagement. The study demonstrates the impact of the transformational and autocratic leadership communication styles on various measures of engagement that would be important during a corporation transformation, such as involvement in decision making, process improvement, and the feeling of empowerment. Because a successful corporate transformation requires a high level of engagement and productivity across the work force, measuring the level of engagement during a corporation transformation process can also be a predictor of the success or failure of the transformation process.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the study shows a clear decrease in engagement when the leadership communication style is autocratic and an increase in engagement when it is transformational, the survey did not capture cultural or generational differences. The ages of the respondents were not collected in the study. The age of the employees could impact the respondents’ interpretation of their experiences with supervisors. It is also possible that the ages of the supervisors could play a role in how they are interpreted by the various ages of the employees. Because the ages of the respondents and the supervisors were not collected, it is not possible in this study to determine if generation played a role in the outcome of the study. Likewise, it is also not possible to determine if employee maturity may have played a role in the level of engagement or the interpretation of the supervisor’s communication style.

The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) study of generational differences (2004) shows that different generations respond to different forms of communication,
including oral versus written (p. 9). Likewise, different generations have different levels of comfort with technology used to communicate. The form of communication used by the supervisor and received by the employee can cause communications failures, which would have an impact on employee engagement.

The study did collect data regarding the amount of time the employees were with their current supervisor, how long they were in their current position, and how long they have been with the corporation. The study showed that 13% of the respondents had been in their roles for less than one year, 2% had been with the company less than 1 year, and 40% had been with their current supervisor for less than 1 year. Likewise, 4% had been in their current role over 15 years, 43% had been with the corporation over 15 years, and 4% had been with their current supervisor for over 15 years. It is possible that the survey results were impacted by the “honeymoon” period of less than a year or the “burn out” period of over 15 years. However, because the respondents were promised that results would not be singled out and would be reported cumulatively, it is not possible to measure any differences that the time variances may have had on the opinions of the employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

After the results of the study were analyzed, several additional studies became obvious. A study related to impact of leadership communication style on different generations and the subsequent impact on employee engagement would be valuable in determining the best communication avenues to use in a multi-generational environment. An expansion of this study may also want to consider the impact of transformational and autocratic leadership communication styles in a multi-cultural environment.

It would also be valuable to look into the leadership training that the supervision has
received during time in the role. The majority of the managers that participated in this study were promoted over time into their positions and do not have any formal leadership training. This could suggest that they were given their positions because of experience in the area of responsibility rather than based on their leadership skills. If the corporate culture is top-down management (autocratic), the leadership of managers promoted over time will tend to be more autocratic because they learn what they have experienced. When a corporation is undergoing a transformation, which requires highly engaged employees, it would be helpful to know if leadership training can help develop transformational leaders.

The study should definitely be expanded to determine the impact, if any, time in position and time with the corporation has on employee engagement. This study showed that 13% of the participants had been in their current role for less than a year, 2% had been with the company for less than a year. These individuals could still be in the learning process in their jobs, which could result in a lesser feeling of engagement or a greater feeling of engagement because of the desire to prove their qualifications. It is possible that their supervision is more autocratic because they are in the learning stages of their job. The study had 4% that had been in their current role over 15 years and 43% that had been with the corporation for over 15 years. As employees become more experienced, are they more engaged or burnt out? It could be possible that their supervision is more transformational because the employees are more skilled.

CONCLUSIONS

Although additional areas of study could clarify many potential contributors to the employees feeling of engagement, this study was able to answer the research questions established for the study. In addition, the study shows alignment with the philosophical assumption that knowledge is power and is strengthened by critical theory.
RQ 1: During corporate transformation, what impact does the communication style of an autocratic leadership style have on employee engagement?

This study was conducted using a corporation that is currently involved in a corporate transformation process. The study demonstrates that employees under autocratic leadership have a considerably lower level of employee engagement. The highest level of employee engagement scored among the respondents influenced by the autocratic leadership communication style was 59, which was realized only when the autocratic score was 7 or lower, meaning the autocratic communication style was low. When the autocratic communication style was high, low engagement scores were realized.

Responses to specific questions indicate that only 3% of the 30 respondents feel that they have enough involvement in decisions that impact their daily work. Twelve percent feel that their job encourages creativity and innovation and are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things. Twenty percent feel that they are permitted to exercise independent judgments that align with professional standards. The responses validate the point made by Hackman and Johnson (2009) that the autocratic leaders keep employees more dependent and reluctant to make decisions on their own (pp. 45-46). As pointed out by Yukl (2006), because autocratic leaders are actively involved in planning responsibilities/tasks, clarifying roles and objectives, the knowledge is held by the leader, and decisions are dependent on the leader being involved (p. 66). Of particular interest, none of the employees influenced by the autocratic leadership style feel that upper management does a good job in communicating corporate goals. All of these findings support Michel Foucault’s (1977) statement, “Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true” (p. 27). Control and power is held by those who possess the knowledge. When a corporation is going
into a transformation process, critical theory supports that withholding knowledge creates an imbalance in power which results in narrow and biased decisions (Griffin & Deetz, n.d.).

Tunstall (1986) pointed out that elements of a long-standing corporate culture can prevent corporate transformation (p. 111). In the United States one of the longest standing elements of corporate culture has been top-down, autocratic leadership. Although corporate transformation success can be directly linked to communication throughout the process (Kotter, 2007, pp. 99-101), the study has shown that autocratic leadership creates the feeling among the employees that leadership is not communicating the goals at all. Reluctance to change can often cause followers to look for inconsistency in the corporate transformation message. For this reason, it is important that leadership share the same vision with consistent and frequent communication across the corporation.

Based on the results of this study, Critical communication theory as described by Deetz (1982), would determine autocratic leadership as the cause of an imbalance in power in decision making. Sharing knowledge through leadership communication engages the workforce in the vision, mission and goals of the corporation and invites them to contribute to the success of the corporation transformation. The autocratic leadership style fails to share knowledge which distributes power and results in balanced decisions. The imbalance in power silences the opinions and input of information from the less powerful, thus resulting in a decision-making process that is “narrow and biased” (Griffin & Deetz, n.d.). Critical theorists try to evaluate the constructs that led to the current corporate culture with the intent of changing the dynamic. The autocratic leadership communication style places management in control of all decisions, despite the fact that the corporation transformation requires all employees to be engaged and contributing to new processes and decisions that will shape the future of the corporation.
RQ 2: During corporate transformation, what impact does the communication style of transformational leader have on employee engagement?

This study demonstrates that employees under transformational leadership have a higher level of employee engagement. The average engagement score among the respondents influenced by the transformational leadership communication style was 68.

Responses to specific questions indicate that 63% of the 67 respondents feel that they have enough involvement in decisions that impact their daily work. Sixty-one percent feel that their job encourages creativity and innovation, and 72% are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things. Eighty-five percent feel that they are permitted to exercise independent judgments that align with professional standards. The study results validate the point made by Nielsen, Yarker, Brenner, Raymond, and Borg (2008), that transformational leadership impacts employee performance through three primary mechanisms: influence, involvement, and meaningfulness (p. 467). Transformational leaders establish meaningfulness in the hearts and minds of the employees by sharing the vision and communicating the importance of their roles in the overall success of the vision (pp. 467-468). The study showed that 88% of the respondents feel that their work contributes to the overall goals and strategy.

Transformational leaders likely do believe that knowledge is power, however, because they are very innovative, and always searching for new opportunities to improve and further the corporation (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 105), they must realize that sharing the knowledge creates a more successful power. Sixty-nine percent of the employees influenced by the transformational leadership style feel that upper management does a good job in communicating corporate goals.
Transformational leadership encourages changes to the existing corporate culture as a means of removing blockages and repression that prevent developing a new corporate identity and creative innovations. Hackman & Johnson (2009) make the point that stimulating creativity involves removing potential blockages to the creative process and inviting staff to be involved in the creativity (pp. 108 & 109). Interaction with followers provides constant sources of new ideas and innovations, creating a constant flow of communication, involvement, and engagement.

Transformational leadership communication style prevents the imbalance of power that critical communication theorists are concerned about. Deetz (1982) states in regards to power imbalance, “The task of critical-interpretive research is not only to reveal these blockages and repressions and the forces which sustain them, but also to provide appropriate action to overcome them” (p. 140). Based on Deetz statement and the results of this study, leaders with a transformation communication style can ensure good communication across all levels and increase employee engagement. Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) explain that involvement in producing and disseminating knowledge shapes possibilities and determines boundaries (p. 122). Sharing knowledge through leadership communication engages the workforce in the vision, mission and goals of the corporation and invites them to contribute to the success of the corporation. Sharing knowledge distributes power and results in balanced decisions made through a productive communication process.

RQ 3: During a corporate transformation, what is the most effective leadership communication style to engage employees?

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of leaderships’ communication style on engagement and the corporate transformation process. The study compared the impact of
the opposite communication styles of transformational leadership and autocratic leadership and demonstrates that the transformational leadership style stimulates more employee engagement.

The literature shows repeatedly that engaged, empowered, and productive employees contributing to the future of the corporation are absolute requirements for a successful corporation transformation (Edelman, 2006, Isem & Pung, 2007, Kotter 2007, Miles, 2001, Tunstall, 1986, Paslidis, 2008). Miles (2001) emphasizes the point that realizing the transformational benefit of focusing on critical businesses and functions and retaining a better defined set of employees is directly dependent on managements’ ability to engage the employees in the transformation (p. 313). Noel (2010) points out that Microsoft, Google, General Electric, Proctor & Gamble, Marriott, Nike, and many other successful companies, focus on employee engagement, realizing that actively engaged employees are highly productive employees (¶6). The study demonstrates that the transformational leadership communication style generates more engagement in the workforce and thus would create more support for and engagement in the transformational process.
References


Gardener, P. J. (2009). Organization change: all we want is better projects – why so difficult? AACE International Transactions, PM.03.1-PM.03.25.


Appendix A: Supervisor Interview Questions

Instructions: I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. As stated in my telephone conversation with you, I am working on my thesis study which is comparing two successful leadership styles, namely, autocratic and transformational, and the impact of the associated leadership communication styles on employee engagement during a corporate transformation. The purpose of this interview is to determine your leadership communication style. I am interviewing nine other supervisors in addition to you. At the conclusion of the interview process, I will determine departments to be surveyed. Specifically, I will survey employees whose leadership is autocratic or transformational. Participation is optional and completely anonymous. The data collected during this interview will not be disclosed and will only be used to determine which departments will be surveyed. The information gathered during the survey will be used to support a thesis paper that will be presented to the faculty in Communication and Leadership Studies, School of Professional Studies at Gonzaga University. Responses to the survey information will be analyzed and reported in the study as cumulative data. Individual responses will not be disclosed. If you are interested in the results of the study, I will be happy to provide a copy when it is completed.

I am going to make 20 statements for you to respond to that will help me determine if your leadership communication style fits into this study. You will select one of the responses on your score sheet for each statement. The responses are: Almost Always True, Frequently True, Occasionally True, Seldom True, or Almost Never True. Please let me know if you need further clarification at any time during this interview.
Questions:

1. I make most project or process decisions on my own.

2. I consult with my team when making decisions on projects or processes and then maintain the final decision making authority.

3. I do not have time to consider suggestions made by my staff.

4. I ask staff members for ideas and input on upcoming plans and projects.

5. I tell my staff members what has to be done and how best to accomplish it.

6. I use meetings to get staff input on strategy setting.

7. When a mistake is made, I tell my staff not to ever do it again and then make a note of it.

8. I keep focus on fixing problems rather than looking for someone to blame.

9. I do not allow new hires/new staff to make decisions unless it is approved by me first.

10. I ask my employees for their vision of where they see their job going and then help them achieve their goals where possible.

11. When something goes wrong, I determine that the procedure is not working correctly and then establish a new one.

12. I want my employees to set priorities with my guidance.

13. I closely monitor my employees to ensure they are following procedures.

14. When there are differences in role expectations, I work with my employees to resolve the differences.

15. I believe I should make all decisions because that is a leadership role.

16. I take pride in using my leadership power to help my team members grow.

17. I expect employees to follow directions and to meet goals that have been set for them.

18. I know my employees will exercise self-direction because they are committed to the objectives.

19. I believe that employees are only seeking job security.

20. I believe that my employees know how to use creativity and ingenuity to solve organizational problems.
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Appendix B: Employee Survey

Email distribution:

Dear GPS & GRA Colleagues:

I am currently working on a thesis study for my masters in Corporate Communication and Leadership at Gonzaga University. My study aims to determine the impact of leadership communication style on employee engagement. The study will compare the impact of the opposite and successful communication styles of transformational leadership and autocratic leadership. This study assumes that different leadership styles reflect different communication styles which have a varying impact on employee engagement.

With permission from GPS and GRA executive management, I would like to invite you to participate in a brief survey (38 questions and less than 15 minutes of your time). The survey is not a measurement of job performance, but specifically a measure of the impact your immediate supervisor's communication style has on your feeling of engagement. Participation is completely voluntary, confidential and anonymous. The responses will be analyzed and reported in the study as cumulative data with no identifying markers that will identify you or your supervision.

Please complete all the questions with complete candor and honesty. The survey has three sections:
1. General information about your role, time at the company, and time with your current supervisor
2. Your perception of your current supervisor's leadership communication style
3. Questions regarding your feelings of engagement

Thank you so much for supporting me in my quest to complete my thesis study. Please respond to the survey by Friday, March 18. If you are interested in seeing the final results, please email me and I will provide a copy for your review.

Link to Survey

Best regards,

Connie Triller
Sr. Associate, Information Analyst

Survey:

The purpose of this survey is to collect data regarding the impact of leadership communication styles on employee empowerment during a corporate transformation. The study will be used to support a thesis paper that will be presented to the faculty in Communication and Leadership Studies, School of Professional Studies at Gonzaga University. Participation is optional and completely anonymous. Responses to the survey will be analyzed and reported in the study as cumulative data. Individual responses will not be disclosed.

The survey has three sections: (1) general information about your role, time at the company, and time with your current supervisor; (2) your perception of your current supervisor's leadership communication style, and (3) questions regarding your work environment.
If you are interested in seeing the final results, please email me and I will provide a copy for your review.

**General Questions**

1. What is your current role? (Required)
   - ☐ Assistant (Any level)
   - ☐ Associate (Any Level)
   - ☐ Consultant
   - ☐ Scientist
   - ☐ Supervision
   - Other: 

2. How long have you been in your current role? *
   - ☐ Less than 1 year
   - ☐ 1 to 5 years
   - ☐ 6 to 10 years
   - ☐ 11 to 15 years
   - ☐ Over 15 years
3. How long have you been with the corporation? *

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- Over 15 years

4. How long have you been with your current supervisor? *

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- Over 15 years

**LEADERSHIP STYLE**

The purpose of this set of questions is to gain an understanding of your perception the leadership communication style of your immediate supervision. Please answer the questions honestly and respond to all the questions. The questions are set up with a consistent rating. For each question select the one rating that applies to the question. The ratings are: Almost Always True, Frequently True, Occasionally True, Seldom True, and Almost Never True.

1. My supervisor makes most project or process decisions on his/her own.

- Almost Always True
- Frequently True
- Occasionally True
- Seldom True
- Almost Never True
2. My supervisor consults with the team when making decisions on projects or processes and then maintains the final decision making authority.

- [ ] Almost Always True
- [ ] Frequently True
- [ ] Occasionally True
- [ ] Seldom True
- [ ] Almost Never True

3. My supervisor does not have time to consider suggestions made by his/her staff.

- [ ] Almost Always True
- [ ] Frequently True
- [ ] Occasionally True
- [ ] Seldom True
- [ ] Almost Never True

4. My supervisor asks staff members for ideas and input on upcoming plans and projects.

- [ ] Almost Always True
- [ ] Frequently True
- [ ] Occasionally True
- [ ] Seldom True
- [ ] Almost Never True

5. My supervisor tells us what has to be done and how best to accomplish it.

- [ ] Almost Always True
- [ ] Frequently True
- [ ] Occasionally True
- [ ] Seldom True
- [ ] Almost Never True
6. My supervisor uses meetings to get staff input on strategy setting.

☐ Almost Always True
☐ Frequently True
☐ Occasionally True
☐ Seldom True
☐ Almost Never True

7. My supervisor does not allow new hires/new staff to make decisions unless it is approved by him/her first.

☐ Almost Always True
☐ Frequently True
☐ Occasionally True
☐ Seldom True
☐ Almost Never True

8. My supervisor asks me for my vision of where I see my job going and then helps me achieve my goals where possible.

☐ Almost Always True
☐ Frequently True
☐ Occasionally True
☐ Seldom True
☐ Almost Never True

9. When something goes wrong, my supervisor determines that the procedure is not working correctly and he/she establishes a new one.

☐ Almost Always True
☐ Frequently True
☐ Occasionally True
☐ Seldom True
☐ Almost Never True
10. My supervisor allows us to set priorities with his/her guidance.

☐ _Almost Always True  
☐ _Frequently True  
☐ _Occasionally True  
☐ _Seldom True  
☐ _Almost Never True

11. My supervisor closely monitors us to ensure we are following procedures.

☐ _Almost Always True  
☐ _Frequently True  
☐ _Occasionally True  
☐ _Seldom True  
☐ _Almost Never True

12. When there are differences in role expectations, my supervisor works with us to resolve the differences.

☐ _Almost Always True  
☐ _Frequently True  
☐ _Occasionally True  
☐ _Seldom True  
☐ _Almost Never True

13. My supervisor reminds us that he/she will make all decisions because that is a leadership role.

☐ _Almost Always True  
☐ _Frequently True  
☐ _Occasionally True  
☐ _Seldom True  
☐ _Almost Never True
14. My supervisor seems to take pride in using his/her leadership power to help our team members grow.

☐ Almost Always True
☐ Frequently True
☐ Occasionally True
☐ Seldom True
☐ Almost Never True

15. My supervisor expects us to follow directions and to meet goals that have been set for us.

☐ Almost Always True
☐ Frequently True
☐ Occasionally True
☐ Seldom True
☐ Almost Never True

16. My supervisor knows we will exercise self-direction because we are committed to the objectives.

☐ Almost Always True
☐ Frequently True
☐ Occasionally True
☐ Seldom True
☐ Almost Never True
EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

The purpose of this set of questions is to gain an understanding of the impact of your supervisor's leadership communication style on your feeling of empowerment. Please answer the questions honestly and respond to all the questions. The questions are set up with a consistent rating. For each question select the one rating that best applies to the question. The ratings are: Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

1. My position allows me to make independent decisions.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Agree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

2. I have the support and authority to make the decisions necessary for accomplishing assigned tasks.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Agree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

3. I have enough involvement in decisions that affect my work.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Agree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

4. My department uses employee feedback to make improvements.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Agree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. I am encouraged to be self-sufficient.</td>
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<td>6. This is the type of job in which I can feel a sense of accomplishment.</td>
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<td>7. My job encourages creativity/innovation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The work I do makes a difference here.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
9. I understand how my work contributes to the company's overall goals and strategy.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Somewhat Agree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

10. I feel comfortable with what I am asked to do in meeting my job expectations.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Somewhat Agree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

11. Upper management does a good job in communicating corporate goals.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Somewhat Agree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

12. I feel valued as a team member.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Somewhat Agree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree
13. I receive encouragement to come up with new and better ways of doing things.

☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Somewhat Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

14. I am permitted to exercise independent judgments that align with professional standards.

☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Somewhat Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

15. I have a close friend at work.

☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Somewhat Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

16. I spend time trying to improve problem processes that I can fix so I can be more productive.

☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Somewhat Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree
17. When the solution is obvious, I take action to correct problems or processes.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Somewhat Agree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

18. Additional comments you would like to share (please make sure that you do not use names of people or groups or include information that will identify you or anyone else.)