Workplace satisfaction is an important issue for Human Resource and Company Wellness officers. Surveying workplace satisfaction is a great way to find out what employees are feeling, what they need, and what they want from their work experience. This study was conducted as a service to a company which asked not to be identified by name in this report. Throughout the paper it will be referred to as “The Company”. Thirty employees were surveyed to determine satisfaction with several specific aspects of the workplace. It was found that the overall level of workplace satisfaction is very high among these employees. The results from this survey have given The Company a tool to address specific needs and target areas in order to continue to improve the level of employee satisfaction.

According to Ng & Feldman (2008), “the median age of the American workforce has been increasing over the last 30 years.” They also say that the 2006 figure is 41 years old. This proves to be true in my workplace, and I wonder if the age level has anything to do with the level of satisfaction. This project was conducted as a service to my employer which asks not to be identified by name in this report. This business will hereafter be referred to as “The Company”. A large number of The Company employees are tradesmen, meaning they are very skilled in a particular area, whether it be welding, carpentry, etc. These employees generally have a background of multiple jobs. Their work experience may be a factor in their satisfaction. Ng and Feldman (2008) also state on page 4 of their article that “older workers are often stereotyped as being resistant to change and slow in learning new material.” Employee training has been an area of recent emphasis within The Company. I wonder, then, since the mean age of The Company employees is in fact around the average cited by NG & Feldman, if responses to training program-related items on the survey might be related to the ages of the employees.

Kelloway and Day (2005) provide a definition of a healthy workplace. “Organizations can become healthy by incorporating health promotion activities, offering employee assistance programs, having flexible benefits and working conditions, treating employees fairly, and offering programs for employee development, health and safety, and the prevention of work stress”. The Company recently has striven to improve its offerings in these areas in order to increase workplace satisfaction. This project is designed to focus on the areas of training and changes in employee benefits and treatment in order to assess their possible effects on employee satisfaction.
Method

The Respondents

There were four different questionnaires that pertained to the four different job title categories at The Company: Lab personnel, supervisors, OMs (Office Managers), and Executive/Other (includes technical writers, engineering assistants, accounting, Human resources, secretary, assistants, etc). I distributed the questionnaire to each employee; each one corresponded with the employee’s job title. My sample size for this survey was 30. The sample was multi-racial and included each job title category.

Procedure

I was present during the administration of the survey at the corporate office FL, but sent surveys to other offices via e-mail. Those were returned via mail. The surveys I distributed were completed during the employee lunch hour. Each employee at work that day was asked to complete a survey. They returned the surveys to a basket in the lunchroom to ensure confidentiality. It took the employees approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. There were some clarification questions about the directions, as some employees speak English as a second language. When I handed them the survey I reminded them that their survey would remain confidential. There was some question about whether or not “the boss” would see their responses. I assured the participants (even participants at the other two locations, via email) that their data would be entered into a computer system and their actual survey would not be viewed by anyone but myself.

The Questionnaire

The objective of the questionnaire was as follows:

To determine employees’ satisfaction with the workplace at The Company, in terms of:

Quality of Employee Programs:
- Level of medical benefits received
- Level of dental benefits received
- Employee ranking system
- Overall satisfaction with HR department

Quality of workplace environment:
- Satisfaction with supervisors
- Feeling that there is a career path for employees
- Current state of workplace morale
- Level of training received
- Safety of workplace
Satisfaction in the Workplace

Level of challenge presented in workplace

Ideas for the objectives were drawn from discussions with managers. Most of the objectives came from the Human Resources Department. I drafted the original questionnaire and sent it to the CEO and Human Resources Director for comments. She returned the survey and I made appropriate corrections. The demographic items were chosen so that I would be able to correlate responses with demographic information. I initially included a question on the surveys that were emailed to other offices that asked which office the respondent worked at, but chose to remove that item from the surveys I distributed to the employees at the corporate office and to not report the responses to that question on the surveys from the satellite offices. I made this decision based on the fact that there are only 2 respondents from each office. I did not want their responses to be obvious. An example of the questionnaire, in final form, appears in Appendix A. The items on each questionnaire differ only slightly, as there are items that pertain only to supervisors and items that pertain only to lab personnel. These items were analyzed according to the group they were representing. There are two opened ended questions at the end of each survey.

With the exception of demographic items, each item was rated on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

While there is not a specific hypothesis for the study, I did expect the response to be generally positive.

Results

The responses were coded in the following way: Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Neutral/N.A.=3, Disagree=4, Strongly Disagree=5 and entered into SPSS. I ran correlations, one-way AVOVAs (with each demographic item in relation to each questionnaire item), and descriptive statistics. Results show an overall satisfaction with the workplace in terms of the specific aspects and programs that were surveyed. The mean scores for all the questionnaire items reflect a general satisfaction with The Company. The lowest mean, 1.6000 (representing the strongest agreement), is for the item that states “I have a clear idea of my job responsibilities.” The item stating “I worry about losing my job” yielded the response closest to neutral (3.7333). There were no means that fell into the disagree category.

There were significant correlations between many of the individual questionnaire items (p = .01). Level of education was correlated (+.658) with Job Title, which would seem obvious, the higher the job title, the higher the level of education. Also significant was the relationship between satisfaction with supervisor and satisfaction with feedback from supervisor (+.679). These questions were answered by the lab personnel only. With a positive correlation of
.553, those who felt like they were a part of a team are also happy with how they are being evaluated. Team satisfaction had a positive correlation of .791 with one’s opinion about their ability to motivate their team. Not surprisingly, there is a strong correlation between one’s feeling that he/she has an effective supervisor and one’s feeling that his/her supervisor is open and approachable (.937). One’s feeling of part of a team is positively correlated (.889) with one’s feelings that he/she has an effective supervisor and (.900) with one’s feeling that his/her supervisor is open and approachable. A positive correlation of .723 exists between one’s feeling that the workplace is safe and one’s feeling that he/she knows his/her job responsibilities. There are strong correlations between the item that states “I would recommend working at The Company to a friend” and the following items: one’s feeling that his/her supervisor is effective (.740), that his/her supervisor is open and approachable (.709), that he/she is part of a team (.889), and that workplace morale is high (.681).

Although there were other strong correlations, the above are the correlations worth mentioning for this project. In the interests of saving space, the complete set of correlations is not included in this report. However, these were included in the version of the report provided to The Company.

Discussion

The overall response to workplace satisfaction from this survey is very positive. I was, of course, hoping this would be the case. I am not surprised at the response. There are a few outlier responses that will be mentioned when the survey is reviewed with my company. They did not skew the data a negative way, but are still opinions of the workplace environment and are worth noting. Although mostly positive, the responses to this survey have given me an idea of where the needs of the employees lie. This is great knowledge to have going into a new calendar year. The results will allow us at The Company to meet needs more specifically and not have to guess where the needs lie. I am very impressed with the number and quality of free response answers that were given. Although they are not reported here, there were many great ideas and comments regarding improving workplace morale. These will be very beneficial to our work in boosting morale and workplace satisfaction.

The correlations that resulted from the data show consistency, as the responses of the specific areas (feelings about supervisors, etc) are correlated. I was hopeful that this would occur, although was somewhat skeptical about how the employees would respond to the items. I wondered if they would feel bad having negative feelings about each question pertaining to their supervisor, but the correlations show that a negative response to one shows a negative response to another. This is a good result of the data.

If I were to administer a survey similar to this again, I would probably
change the job title categories and make the questions even more specific to the job titles. Perhaps I’d even analyze each category separately since I’ve already pooled the responses together. There are a few other specific areas of workplace satisfaction I would survey if I were to do this again. Of course, the addition of these items to this survey would have made it painfully long, which should be avoided for the participant and for myself as the researcher, but they nonetheless might yield important responses that could facilitate an increase in workplace morale and satisfaction. These areas include specific training target areas, status of specific equipment, safety of equipment, procedural aspects, certain benefit and policy aspects, and cleanliness aspects.

I would also have asked our Human Resources Director to call a staff meeting for all staff members to complete the survey. Although the completion of the survey did not interrupt any work activity or pose any issues, it might have been more beneficial to explain the purposes of the survey once and might have increase participation. While participation in this survey was not mandatory, it was strongly encouraged by HTL’s Human Resources department.

The strong correlations that are a result of this survey come as no surprise to me. I am happy with the responses on the items related to satisfaction with supervisors and our employee ranking system. This is a newly implemented structure/program and the fact that it is generally accepted (although the mean response is somewhat close to a “neutral”) is encouraging. This gives us an area to improve in, but lets us know that in general, the feeling is positive. The items that yielded responses closer to “neutral” are the ones that will be addressed most immediately through careful planning and implementation of programs, policies, etc in hopes that the feeling of satisfaction will only increase.

The responses to this survey, while not always completely appropriate to address in full length for this class purpose due to workplace confidentiality issues, are extremely beneficial and have provided a great amount of knowledge to work with to increase workplace satisfaction at The Company. I am excited to see where these results are able to take us as a company and look forward to re-surveying employees in a year or so to note changes in workplace satisfaction.

References
Appendix A
Workplace Satisfaction Survey-Executives

This questionnaire asks for your opinions about workplace satisfaction at THE COMPANY, LLC. We request your help to make our study a success. Your responses will provide feedback that may be helpful in improving THE COMPANY’s workplace. Please do not complete this questionnaire if you have already done so.

Please respond to each of the following items by circling the best choice. This should take about 10 to 15 minutes of your time. Your responses will be anonymous and will be pooled with the responses of other employees. Please note that completion of this questionnaire implies you have given permission for your responses to be used for the purposes of the study. This survey serves two purposes: to find ways to improve your workplace satisfaction and is a college psychology project.

What is your age?
18-22  23-30  31-40  41-50  51-60  61+

What is your education level?
High School Diploma    Some College/Technical School
College Degree         Technical Certificate   Graduate School

What is your title at The Company?
Lab    Lab Supervisor    Office Manager    Executive/Other

Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?
Asian    Black/African American    White/Caucasian
Hispanic Other (Please Specify) _________________________

What is your Gender?
Male    Female

How many previous jobs have you held?:
1-3  4-6  7-9  10+

For each of the following, respond using this scale. Circle the best choice for each item:
Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree
Strongly Disagree

1. The Company’s health benefits meet my needs.
Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree
Strongly Disagree

2. I know where to go for information related to job benefits.
Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Satisfaction in the Workplace

3. I am satisfied with the level of dental benefits offered.
   Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral               Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

4. Overall, I am generally satisfied with The Company’s Human Resources department.
   Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral               Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

5. I believe the employee ranking system is effective.
   Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral/N.A.               Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

6. I understand how I am being evaluated.
   Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral/N.A.               Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

7. My supervisor provides me with adequate feedback.
   Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral/N.A.               Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

8. In general, I am satisfied with my team.
   Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral               Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

9. I feel I am able to do an effective job motivating my team.
   Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral               Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

10. I have a clear idea of my job responsibilities.
    Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral               Disagree
    Strongly Disagree

11. I feel as if I am part of a team.
    Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral               Disagree
    Strongly Disagree

12. Workplace morale is high at The Company.
    Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral               Disagree
    Strongly Disagree

13. I worry about losing my job.
    Strongly Agree               Agree               Neutral               Disagree
    Strongly Disagree
14. I believe there is a career path for me at The Company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. The training I have received at The Company has fully prepared me for my job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. I am continually learning and trying to improve my job skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. I feel safe in my workplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. I know what to do in an emergency situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. I believe employees follow safety rules and regulations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. The Company presents a high level of challenge in the workplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. I would recommend working at The Company to my friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. If you had an opportunity to make any change (other than a pay increase) you wanted to make a better place to work, what one improvement would you make?

23. What would boost the workplace morale at The Company?