



The Team Improvement Laboratory

Introduction

The Team Improvement Laboratory empowers managers and supervisors to improve quality, reduce waste, and improve productivity. Unlike other such programs the Team Improvement Laboratory is a development program, as opposed to a training program.

Strategies

There are six basic strategies underlying the **Team Improvement Laboratory**

1. Strategy One: Build upon your current Strengths.

Build upon the strengths which you currently have. The strategy of building upon what already exists has the virtue of strengthening current practice, permits improvements in select areas, is easily accepted, and strengthens the organization. This approach emphasizes consistency, effectiveness, results orientation, and cost containment:

2. Strategy Two: Critical Mass

Educate sufficient employees and managers to ensure a critical mass large enough to impact the system. The goal is to

transform the system through mobilizing the intellectual and creative resources of its members; to push the power and authority for making improvements down to the appropriate level. One wants to avoid the natural tendency for power to float ever upward.

Strategy Three: The "Right" to Make Improvements

The aim is not mere participation, which provides employees temporary access to the springs of power but is swiftly withdrawn or minimized as employees attempt to bring about the improvements and changes they have designed. The aim is to enshrine the responsibility for improvement in the concept of a "Right" to make improvements in the work we do. A right is something that is innate and cannot be withdrawn. The decision as to how money is to be invested, time spent, and the decisions to invest effort and improve performance remains a management prerogative. The recognition of employee "rights" to improve the work they do in no way diminishes the responsibility and authority of managers to make decisions.

However, the encouragement of employees to take on responsibility and make improvements, based on an inherent "right" to do so, puts pressure on managers and executives to support and encourage,

but more important to permit such changes to take place. The withholding of support or the need to exercise arbitrary power over employees as a defense against anxiety or the fear of the loss of power will certainly create tension. There is no question that the Managers and Executives will have to support the efforts being made to transform the system. Resistance on the part of Managers will create problems that may not even exist today. In other words, change, if it is to be successful, must occur, not only on the part of the employees, but also on the part of the managers. To believe that you can induce change in one part of the system without change occurring in the other half is folly. To this degree all managers have to be a part of the process.

The basis for bringing about this change must be based upon evidence: scientific, social and economic, that supports and encourages employees to pursue improvements in their work and cost savings as both a personal and a company goal. A personal goal, in that it gives meaning to what they do, as well as personal recognition, a sense of accomplishment and mastery or control over their environment; a company goal in that they make a contribution to the overall good of the organization as well as to their personal benefit. While the goals of the individual and of the company may not always be the same, in this situation, they are inextricably tied together: What benefits one also benefits the other. (It is for this reason that it is important to ensure that as a result of such improvements, which can be quite significant, that no employee is let go (made redundant) as a result of improving performance or reducing costs.)

4. Strategy Four: Scientific, Social, and Economic Basis for Change

The **Team Improvement Laboratory** introduces the scientific, social, and economic concepts as an underpinning to support the efforts of the individual and their right to make improvements in their performance and in the saving of costs to the company.

5. Strategy Five: The Systemic Approach

The entire strategy is based upon a systemic approach to bringing about change in organizations. This focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on the system, its roles, rules, and the relations governing it. As with the other program of Borwick International, Inc the **Team Improvement Laboratory** continues to support the systemic approach.

6. Strategy Six: The Team Improvement Laboratory

Implementation of the **Team Improvement Laboratory** process is the strategy which contains the previous strategies.

The Team Improvement Laboratory differs significantly from other employee programs, not only because of its systemic basis, but also because it is **primarily a development program** for employees and not a training program. As Frederick Herzberg put it many years ago "you train monkeys and you educate human beings." The TIL program is an educational program designed to develop individuals, not a training program to foster a prescribed routine or rote methodology. The solution to achieving the TIL goals is not a rote solution, but requires the mobilization of the intellect and experience of the individuals involved. There is more than sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that there is no industrial or work problem that is

beyond the intellectual capacity of the working employee to resolve. Put another way, the brain power which exists within the working force is in excess of the demands that are made upon it. We are wasting intellectual assets by the way we currently manage our human resources. The **Team Improvement Laboratory** is one strategy for mobilizing those intellectual and motivational resources

How is this done?

The Team Improvement Laboratory introduces nine basic assumptions as well as introduces some of the basic management concepts. These assumptions and management theories are designed to redefine the role of the supervisors and managers. Unfortunately, most productivity programs are designed to try and change people. The Team Improvement Laboratory is not designed to change anyone.

Contrary to popular myth, it is not necessary to change personalities to change behavior. Changing personalities is no small task, and should be left to psychologists and psychiatrists. It is certainly not the role of managers to change other managers' personalities.

Change Without Change

The Team Improvement Laboratory builds upon the concept of change without change. What does this mean? It means a focus upon helping individuals to bring about a change in their roles and not in their persons. Individuals take up many roles in any one day: as bosses, colleagues, subordinates, as spouses and parents, and as sons and daughters. Each of these roles requires different behaviors. One behaves

differently as a Spouse than a Manager. Does that mean that we are different persons? Except for the few Jekyls who Hyde among us, the answer is no. It means that we are capable of behaving differently in different situations, i.e., in our roles.

If a manager can learn to redefine his role, one can obtain swift and effective change in behavior, without the manager feeling that he has to change a person. He is the same person behaving differently in a different role. This is change without change: A change in the role and not a change of the person.

The maximum result one can expect in trying to change people is 10% i.e. that is a 90% failure rate. While changing one's understanding of one's new role has a 90% chance of success.

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ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLING THE TEAM IMPROVEMENT LABORATORY

- 1. People don't resist change; they resist being changed**
- 2. Every job is capable of being improved**
- 3. Every employee has the basic ability to improve the job**
- 4. People like to improve their work, and get satisfaction from their work**
- 5. People like to participate in groups**
- 6. Improvements are best made by those who perform the job.**
- 7. Employees should be provided with the basic skills for job improvement through an educational program**
- 8. The role of the Supervisor is one of advisor, consultant, and coordinator**
- 9. The role of the employee is manager of his own area of responsibility.**