What Constitutes a Great Place to Work?

Rebecca M. Burkwit

St. John Fisher College

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What Constitutes a Great Place to Work?

Abstract
Many organizations have focused their efforts on creating an environment where employees consider it to be a great place to work. As a result, organizations have made improvements to create this environment. Such improvements include strategies, such as a) the increase of employees participating in the decision making process that pertain to their jobs, b) more flexibility in regards to employees balancing work life and home life, and c) increased accessibility to ask questions of senior management and get answers to questions. In order for organizations to become a great place to work and obtain a rating on the Fortune 100 Best Places to Work for (2004) list, it is necessary to create an environment in which trust, pride, and camaraderie are explicit. To become a great place to work other companies could benchmark and modify their policies to match those of Wegmans, Paychex, and Genencor. This study will describe what constitutes the best place to work, go into further detail what organizations did successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work for (2004) list and discuss the advantages for an organization to be on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list.

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First Supervisor
Timothy Franz

Second Supervisor
Seth Silver

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Jennifer Winquist

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What Constitutes a Great Place to Work?

Rebecca M. Burkwit

GHRD 590: Applied Research

Master of Science in Human Resource Development Program

St. John Fisher College

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We approve of this paper submitted by Rebecca M. Burkewit.

Timothy Franz, Ph.D.
Advisor
Assistant Professor of Psychology
St. John Fisher College

Seth Silver, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor of Human
Resource Development
St. John Fisher College

Jennifer Winquist, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Psychology
Valparaiso University
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Abstract

Many organizations have focused their efforts on creating an environment where employees consider it to be a great place to work. As a result, organizations have made improvements to create this environment. Such improvements include strategies, such as a) the increase of employees participating in the decision making process that pertain to their jobs, b) more flexibility in regards to employees balancing work life and home life, and c) increased accessibility to ask questions of senior management and get answers to questions. In order for organizations to become a great place to work and obtain a rating on the Fortune 100 Best Places to Work For (2004) list, it is necessary to create an environment in which trust, pride and camaraderie are explicit. To become a great place to work other companies could benchmark and modify their policies to match those of Wegmans, Paychex, and Genencor. This study will describe what constitutes the best place to work, go into further detail what organizations did successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list and discuss the advantages for an organization to be on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list.
Chapter 1

What Constitutes a Great Place to Work?

Certain HR policies implemented by organizations contribute to the creation of a positive work environment. HR policies include such things as medical benefits, employee recognition programs, mentoring programs, education reimbursement, wellness programs, stress reduction classes or employee development programs. In addition to this, some organizations have an environment in which employees enjoy being at work because they have a sense of trust, pride and camaraderie. It is a combination of all of the three that makes a company a great place to work.

Overview of Problem

"Many companies offer good benefits, competitive pay, a comfortable workplace and competent management. But great companies create strong, positive company cultures that foster happy, engaged employees who feel empowered to make decisions in their daily work" (Pomeroy, 2004 p.1). A great place to work can also be an organization in which the employees "...want to be told the truth, for one thing, especially if the news is bad. They also want, corny as it sounds, to feel that they make a difference and to be given a chance to grow" (Levering, Moskowitz, Boorstin, Tkaczyk, et al, 2004, p.56).

The Great Places to Work Institute (2004) defines a great place to work as "...a place where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with" (Best Place to Work Institute , 2004). Given this definition, it is possible to identify some of the best companies for which to work. The
Great Places to Work Institute has done this by surveying organizations and ranking the top 100 best places to work.

Of over a thousand of organizations, “some 46,526 randomly selected employees from 304 candidate companies filled out an employee-opinion survey” (Levering & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 79) to be ranked on the listing of the Fortune Magazine 100 best places to work. “Each candidate company also filled out a questionnaire detailing its people policies, practices, and philosophies…. evaluated each company on both the employee surveys and the company questionnaires, with the employees’ opinions accounting for two-thirds of the total score” (Levering et al., 2004, p.58). Compared to the financial number formerly determining the success of the organization, a different type of number reflects the success of these organizations.

What did the 100 companies that were chosen do successfully to obtain a ranking on this list? As per the Great Places to Work Institute (2004), the criterion that distinguishes the best place to work is credibility, respect, fairness, pride, and camaraderie. According to The Great Places to Work Institute (2004) “as companies become great, the division between management and labor fades. The workplace becomes a community. Employees take pride in their job, their team, and their company. They feel that they can be themselves at work. They celebrate the successes of their peers and cooperate with others throughout the organization. People take pleasure in their work - and in the people they work with - in a deep and lasting way. They want to stay around for their careers” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).
The companies that obtain a rating onto the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list are obviously doing certain things right. The employee survey is designed to accurately measure the levels of credibility, respect, fairness, pride, and camaraderie from the employee's viewpoint. Even though the participating organizations have one thing in common by obtaining a rating onto the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list, these companies do differ in what they were doing right to obtain a rating on this list.

**Purpose**

There are three purposes for this qualitative case study: The first is to define what it takes to be a great place to work. The second is to identify what organizations did successfully to get onto the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. Finally, the purpose of this study is to identify if there are any HR advantages to these organizations resulting from being on this list.

**Research Questions**

1. What constitutes the best place to work?
2. What do organizations do successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list?
3. Are there any advantages for an organization to be on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list?

**Significance**

The significance of this qualitative study is that it will assist organizations and human resource development practitioners to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a better workplace. The organizations participating in this study will receive
recommendations that can be used as a benchmarking tool. This will also assist organizations in identifying what they need to do successfully to get a ranking on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. This will benefit human resource development practitioners for recommendations to organizations trying to obtain a ranking on this list. Finally, organizations will have a clearer understanding of how they will benefit if they obtain a ranking. In order to suggest any type of intervention, the human resource practitioner needs buy-in from the management of an organization. To obtain this buy-in, the managers of the organization would want to know the benefits for implementing new policies and procedures.

Conceptual Framework

Annually, Fortune Magazine ranks the top 100 best places to work. For a little background on the list, “FORTUNE’s signature lists are recognized across the globe as the ultimate measure of business success. From the FORTUNE 500® to America’s Most Admired Companies, the lists are where consumers, advertisers and executives alike turn for the definitive word on business” (Fortune, 2004). This qualitative study’s main focus is what constitutes the best company to work at. The interviews conducted will be with local organizations that have obtained a ranking on this list.

Fortune Magazine (2004) publishes the list, but the surveys are created, administered, and analyzed by a consulting group for a Great Place to Work Institute Inc. Primarily, the selection process of an organization is “…on the basis of their employees' responses to the Great Place to Work Trust Index, a proprietary employee survey developed by the Great Place to Work Institute. In addition…” they “…evaluate materials submitted by the company, including the company's response to the Great Place
to Work Culture Audit, any accompanying materials submitted by the company for consideration, as well as information gathered from other reputable sources such as media stories about the company” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).

To conduct this research, there will be interviews conducted with the Human Resource Department of three of the organizations ranked on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. The organizations consist of Paychex, Wegmans and Genencor. Interview questions will focus on what organizations did successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. Interviews will also be conducted with three key employees at each organization. These questions will focus on their opinion of why their organization is the best place to work.

In addition to the above research, this paper will briefly discuss the advantages for the employees that work at the previously mentioned organizations that obtained a ranking on this list. A great place to work can be described as “…a place where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004). This is an environment in which employees are empowered.

Methodology

This qualitative study will consist of interviews with HRD Professionals and key employees in three local organizations that ranked in the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. The main focus of the interview questions is what these organizations did successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to determine what constitutes a great place to work, to identify what organizations did successfully to get onto the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list and to identify if there are any advantages to these organizations from being on this list. This chapter provides a review of what creates a great place to work, guidelines to obtain rating on Fortune 100 Best Places to Work For (2004) list, results of creating a great place to work and background information of the companies in this qualitative study.

*What creates a Great Place to Work?*

Throughout the past two decades, many organizations have been focusing their efforts on creating an environment where employees consider to be a great place to work. As a result, organizations have made improvements to create this environment. Such improvements include strategies, such as a) the increase of employees participating in the decision making process that pertain to their jobs, b) more flexibility in regards to employees balancing work life and home life, and c) increased accessibility to ask questions of senior management and get answers to questions. In addition a large number of organizations now have profit sharing plans from which all employees can benefit in the event the organization reaches its revenue goal. Most importantly, managers within organizations have a sense of humor that results in a fun place to work. “Other factors which have contributed to an improvement in the quality of the work places have been advancement of women and minorities into management ranks (they bring a fresh perspective to the work at hand), incorporation of environmental needs (workers need to
breathe fresh air, too), and a greater health consciousness (reflected in gleaming fitness centers and health education programs)” (Levering & Moskowitz, p.xiv).

The Great Places to Work Institute defines a great place to work as “...a place where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004). This definition is an overview of the Great Places to Work Model. According to this model, there are three primary dimensions necessary to create a great place to work: trust, pride and camaraderie. The remainder of this section is organized around these three dimensions.

Trust

Trust is the “…respect for and belief in the reliability, honesty, competence, and integrity of the party with which one is dealing. Having trust in someone or in an institution entails that being vulnerable or taking risks for that person or institution will be reciprocated, recognized, rewarded, or at least, not betrayed” (Werhane, 1999, p.239). In order for management to best utilize human capital, a reasonable level of trust must be demonstrated. If there is a low level of trust employees will be hesitant to make recommendations in fear of any negative consequences. In addition to this, employees want to have a sense of support and confidence from their employer.

Teamwork, goal setting, and leadership are some positive benefits for an organization that has a high level of trust between employees and management. Many believe that trust is the bond that holds the employee and employer together as a team (Shaw, 1997). In order for high levels of trust to exist within an organization three attributes must be apparent, credibility, respect and fairness (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).
Credibility is defined as the "...means managers regularly communicate with employees about the company's direction and plans and solicit its ideas. It involves coordinating people and resources efficiently and effectively, so that employees know how their work relates to the company's goals. It is the integrity of management brings to the business" (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004). In many organizations employees do not understand how their work impacts other departments, let alone how it relates to the companies goals.

Employees want to be in an environment in which management is honest and consistent. Without honesty and consistency employees will not have any level of trust towards management. To gain trust, management’s actions must speak louder than its words. It is unfortunate but many managers are not credible because they say one thing and in fact then do another. In order for management to gain trust from employees, managers need to demonstrate they are credible (Shaw, 1997).

Respect "...involves providing employees with the equipment, resources, and training they need to do their job. It means appreciating good work and extra effort. It includes reaching out to employees and making them partners in the company's activities, fostering a spirit of collaboration across departments and creating a work environment that's safe and healthy" (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004). Instead of talking down to associates, management needs to treat employees as equals. In the grand scheme of things, all employees within an organization have a main purpose to assist the organization in achieving its short-term and long-term goals. Such things as sharing information, creating autonomy through boundaries, and replacing hierarchy with self-directed teams create respect within an organization (Shaw, 1997).
Sharing information is necessary throughout all levels of the organization in order to have a high level of respect. Employees need to have a clear understanding of the current position of the organization. As a result of sharing information, the traditional hierarchical structure begins to breakout down, resulting in employees becoming more responsible. This also encourages employees to act as if they are owners of the organization (Shaw, 1997).

Creating autonomy through boundaries builds upon the information-sharing piece (Shaw, 1997). As a result of this, the vision of the organization is clarified at all levels of the organization. Once the vision is clarified, the employees will have a better understanding of how their job assists the organization in achieving the vision. Not only does the level of respect throughout the organization increase but the decision making process is simplified. As a result of the employees being involved with this process their level of respect increases.

Prior to replacing hierarchy with self-directed teams, management has to work from the top of the organization down to the employees (Shaw, R. 1997). The skills and knowledge in a team setting is more effective than individual employees making the decisions. This is because the employees within the team are more involved with the decision making which results in a higher level of respect.

The final attribute of trust is fairness, which is whereby “...everybody receives equitable opportunity for recognition. Decisions on hiring and promotions are made impartially, and the workplace seeks to free itself of discrimination, with clear processes for appealing and adjudicating disputes” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004). The performance evaluation process is usually when employees feel that are being treated
unfairly. Employees want to recognition from management of the organization in regards to their hard work (Landy & Conte, 2004).

In the event that employees feel that they are being treated unfairly they need to be aware of the appeal process within their organization. With an appeal process in place, employees should be given the opportunity to object to any procedural process in which they feel is unfair or was carried out unfairly. This can be done through a feedback process. If the employee feels that their voice is being heard then they will feel that the process in place is fair (Landy & Conte, 2004).

Another component of fairness is consistency. Management needs to treat employees consistently with the recognition and rewards system that an organization implements. Employees want management to be consistent, this is not only beneficial to management but the organization in its entirety. Management needs to find the best person for the job.

There are several different components in creating a high level of trust. With these components are several advantages for an organization with this high level of trust. Such advantages are flexibility, enhanced learning organizations and the attraction/retention of talented individuals (Shaw, 1997). These advantages will enhance the organizations competitive advantage.

An important result of a trusting work environment is enhanced learning. Within an organization that has a high level of trust information is shared among different levels. Management openly communicates positive and negative information, the employees and management can learn from this information. Employees also need to be in an environment in which they feel that they can also communicate openly to management.
A majority of the learning takes place as a result of the negative information shared (Shaw, R. 1997). Management with employees can learn from their mistakes and correct what is not currently working.

The final advantage of a high level of trust within the organization is the attraction and recruitment of talented individuals. New recruits are looking for employment at an organization in which there is a high level of trust. Individuals want to work for an organization whereby management is honest, consistent, respectful and fair. Many talented individuals are attracted to this type of organization. Employees already within the organization are benefiting from the high levels of trust as a result employees want to continue working at the organization. The organization retains a large number of employees since the grass doesn't get any greener on the other side.

“As companies become great, the division between management and labor fades. The workplace becomes a community. Employees take pride in their job, their team, and their company. They feel that they can be themselves at work. They celebrate the successes of their peers and cooperate with others throughout the organisation. People take pleasure in their work - and in the people they work with - in a deep and lasting way” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).

Pride

Pride is the second dimension of the Great Places to Work Model. Pride is when “work is organized so that employees at all levels feel a direct connection with the product or service the company provides. People feel proud of their personal accomplishments, and they are recognized for their outstanding achievements” (Levering & Moskowitz, 1993, pg. xviii). Employees are committed to their organization in ways
such as the employee feels that their identity is linked to the organization. The
employees also feel as if there is a direct link between their goals and objectives
professionally, to the organization's goals and objectives.

This sense of pride creates a level of involvement felt by the employees to assist
their organization in becoming a success. Employees work together collaboratively as a
team towards the vision of the organization. Working together as a team, employees have
a positive social contribution to the organization.

Lower rate of absenteeism, decrease in turnover, commitment and higher
productivity are advantages of a high level of pride within an organization (Meyer &
Allen, 1997). As a result of such a strong connection between the employees and the
organization, employees feel that they make a difference. Employees want to go to work
and they want to be involved. The stronger the level of commitment, the higher level of
productivity, employees go above and beyond what is expected by management since
they feel they are important to the success of the organization. Not only does the
productivity increase but also the quality of the work product. The employees are
important and make a difference.

According to Katzenbach (2003), “More than any other motivator, it is pride that
fosters cooperation and collective effort as well as individual initiative. It is pride in one's
fellow workers that encourages information sharing as well as camaraderie. And it is
pride in collaborating with respected colleagues that leads to team performance” (p. 41).
When the employee feels connected and involved in the long-term goals of an
organization they will go above and beyond than what is expected for the success of the
organization.
The level of pride within an organization is not only dependant on the actions by management but also by the employees. It is a collaborative effort on both sides. The lines of communication need to be open in order to have a high sense of pride through the entire organization. The end result of a high level of pride is a higher level of commitment by the workforce towards management and most importantly the organization.

Camaraderie

Camaraderie is an environment in which “employees talk about being part of a family, team, or special community that includes everyone at all ranks in the company. They clearly enjoy working (and playing with one another). They socialize together at various functions during the year. There’s laughter in the halls” (Levering & Moskowitz, 1993, pg. xviii). Included in this type of communication, ideas and information may be exchanged but the most valuable piece of this communication is the bond that develops among the ranks within the organization. “Because people are more likely to talk to one another, good business ideas are more common and onerous tasks made less unpleasant. Stress has also been reduced” (Anonymous, 2001, p.21).

Camaraderie is a strong component of the attraction of the member’s to an organization and the desire to remain. Each group has attributes that form this bond, this may be situational, social and even personal. In the workplace setting, the initial formation of a group is situational. Over time, this bond moves from situational to more of a social and personal level.

The level of camaraderie within an organization can be thought of as the glue that holds it all together. If there is a strong level of camaraderie, the glue is obviously strong
and information is shared throughout all levels of the organization. This can also be defined as cohesion.

Cohesion is "the degree to which a group tends to maintain a stable, committed membership over time" (Thye & Lawler, 2002, p.1). Within the work environment this type of relationship among employees is important for the success of an organization long term. Initially, in a work environment the employees are formed together within a team setting. In an environment with strong cohesion, the employees start to develop a relationship with one another. Over time this relationship becomes social or personal. Over time this relationship within the individual groups start to overlap with another creating the organizational level of cohesion.

Within an environment of strong cohesion the information sharing among teams increases. The individuals within the teams form the social and personal relationships that then develops into a sense of a family or special relationships. This type of bond that sticks employees together then develops the culture of the organization. Employees are working together for the common goal of the success of the organization. A high level of cohesion throughout the organization increases the competitive advantage of the organization (Thye & Lawler, 2002).

The competitive advantage that goes along with camaraderie or cohesion within an organization is if there is a high level. It is practically impossible for other organizations to imitate another organizations high level of camaraderie. Camaraderie or cohesion is a reflection of the individual's background and personality within the organization. Even if the specific group of individuals with a high level of camaraderie is moved to another organization such things as the environment may lower this level.
The Work Place Model (2004) is a guideline for organizations to follow to create a work environment that constitutes a great place to work. With high levels of trust, pride and camaraderie organizations will achieve this type of environment.

*Results of Creating a Great Place to Work*

The most obvious result of creating a great place to work is in this type of environment, employees look forward to going to work and enjoy being at work. A high level of empowerment within an organization gives employees a sense of being part of the success of the organization. In a great place to work, management and employees are a team, working together towards the vision of their organization.

In addition to the above, employee turnover and absenteeism decreases significantly while productivity and profitability increases (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The level of involvement by employees within the organization is very high. As a result, employees want to go to work. The dedication by the employees is reflected in the organization’s financials, as well as, the level of customer service.

*Guidelines to obtain rating on Fortune 100 Best Places to Work For List*

While Fortune Magazine (2004) publishes the list, the surveys are created, administered and analyzed by a consulting group for a Great Place to Work Institute Inc. Primarily, the selection process of an organization is “...on the basis of their employees' responses to the Great Place to Work Trust Index, a proprietary employee survey developed by the Great Place to Work Institute. In addition... they ...evaluate materials submitted by the company, including the company’s response to the Great Place to Work Culture Audit, any accompanying materials submitted by the company for consideration, as well as information gathered from other reputable sources such as media stories about
the company” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004). Of over a thousand of organizations, “some 46,526 randomly selected employees from 304 candidate companies filled out an employee-opinion survey” (Levering & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 79).

**Trust Index**

“The Great Place to Work Trust Index is an employee survey tool that measures the level of trust, pride, and camaraderie within your workplace. Employee responses to this instrument comprise the majority of an organization's score for all of our Best Companies lists. We make this instrument available to accepted applicants for any of our Best Companies lists during the employee survey portion of the application process” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).

This employee survey “consists of 57 statements that cover credibility, respect, fairness, pride, and camaraderie - the five dimensions that correspond with the Great Place to Work Model…contains two open-ended questions which allow employees to express, in their own words, what makes their company great and what could be done to improve the work place” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).

**Culture Audit**

According to the Great Place to Work Institute;

The Great Place to Work Culture Audit is a management questionnaire that we utilize to gain a better sense of the overall culture of the organization. We only make this instrument available to accepted applicants…there are two parts to this instrument. In Part I, we ask about items such as employee demographics (i.e. number of employees in the U.S., voluntary turnover, ethnic breakdowns, tenure, etc.). We also ask
general information about the company (i.e. year founded, revenues), as well as about benefits and perks offered to employees (i.e. on-site fitness center, percentage insurance premium paid by company for employee, number of holiday days). Part 2 of the Culture Audit asks open-ended questions that give the members of the company an opportunity to share with us various aspects of their culture. The questions in Part 2 relate to the Great Place to Work Model which is the focus of this component of the evaluation (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).

Introduction/Background of Companies in Study

The Companies participating in this study are Paychex, Wegmans and Genencor. These companies have offices located in Rochester, New York. Paychex, Inc. Below is a background of each organization.

Paychex, Inc.

According to the Paychex website, (http://home.paychex.com (2004), Paychex is:

A leading national provider of payroll, human resource, and benefits outsourcing solutions for small- to medium-sized businesses. Paychex has a comprehensive product offering that includes payroll tax administration, direct deposit, and other payroll services. The human resource and benefits outsourcing services that Paychex offers include 401(k) recordkeeping, section 125 plans, workers’ compensation administration, and comprehensive human resource outsourcing called Paychex Administrative Services. Paychex invests in its employees, and the return
on that investment is an unparalleled commitment to the company, to customer service, and to the continued success of Paychex.

**Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.**

According to the Wegmans website, (www.wegmans.com (2004)), Wegmans is:

A major regional supermarket chain, and one of the largest private companies in the U.S. Raised the bar on the shopping experience - better quality goods, a spectacular abundance of choice, restaurant-quality prepared foods, beautiful stores and displays, a nearly telepathic level of customer service.

**Genencor, Inc.**

According to the Genencor website(www.genencor.com(2004), Genencor is:

A different kind of biotechnology company, Genencor traces its roots to 1982 when a joint venture was established between Genentech and Corning to exploit the industrial applications of protein engineering. Genencor delivers over 250 diverse products to customers around the world. To serve those markets, we operate eight manufacturing centers in United States, Argentina, Belgium, China, and Finland. Our large and efficient organization enables us to deliver protein products at any scale to customers around the world.

Demonstrated in Table 1 is a summary of the brief background information regarding the organizations participating in this qualitative study.
Table 1: Brief Background of Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Paychex</th>
<th>Genencor</th>
<th>Wegmans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Founded</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Biotechnology &amp; Pharmaceuticals</td>
<td>Retail - Grocery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Employees</td>
<td>9400 Employees</td>
<td>633 Employees</td>
<td>32,000 Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Argentina, Belgium, China, Finland</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>Training Magazine</td>
<td>Fortune Magazine</td>
<td>Forbes Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Top 100 training organizations”;</td>
<td>“100 Best Companies To” (1 year);</td>
<td>“Largest Private Companies in the U.S.”; Supermarket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fortune Magazine</td>
<td>Work For” (1 year); S.F. Chronicle</td>
<td>News list of the Top 75 Supermarkets;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“100 Best Companies To” (3rd consecutive year)</td>
<td>“Best Place to Work in the Bay Area”; Forbes “200 Best Small Companies List”; R&amp;D 100 Technology Award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work For” (7th consecutive year)</td>
<td>“100 Best Companies To Work For”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual Revenue


Summary

Throughout this chapter what creates a great place to work, guidelines to obtain rating on Fortune 100 Best Places to Work For (2004) list and the background information of the companies in this qualitative study was discussed. In order for the organizations participating in this study to become a great place to work and obtain a
rating on the Fortune 100 Best Places to Work For (2004) list, an environment in which trust, pride and camaraderie are explicitly apparent is necessary. To become a great place to work other companies could benchmark and modify their policies to match those of Wegmans, Paychex and Genencor. This study will describe what constitutes the best place to work, go into further detail what organizations did successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list and discuss the advantages for an organization to be on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list.
Chapter 3
Methodology

This qualitative study consisted of twelve face-to-face or phone interviews in one set of three and another set of nine. The first set were with three HRD Professionals who were responsible for compiling the necessary information in order to obtain a ranking on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. In addition to the set of interviews with the HRD Professionals, a second set of interviews included three key employees of the three core organizations (9 total). All participants in this study are individuals with whom I have personal relationships or are contacts made through personal relationships.

The interviews with the HRD Professionals and key employees consisted of six open-ended interview questions. For the HRD Professionals the main focus of the interview questions, which were specifically designed for this study (Table 2), is what these organizations did to successfully get rated on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. For the key employees the main focus of the interview questions were how these individuals view their organizations and if they consider it a great place to work and why. The interviews were semi-structured so that the key questions were consistent among all participants. Some of the participants were probed with additional questions depending upon their responses.

The setting of the interview was consistent among the HRD Professionals; the interviews were all over the phone 1. The employer interview questions were specifically designed for this study (Figure 1).

1 The HRD Professional from Paychex was no longer with the organization.
Table 2: Employer Interview Questions

- Why did your organization want to get a rating on the Fortune 100 Best Places to Work list?
- How many years of applying did it take your organization to obtain a rating on the list?
- What does your organization do right to obtain a rating on the list?
- What does your organization need to do to improve or maintain its rating?
- Do you think that being on this list benefits the employees within your organization? In what ways?

The setting of the one-on-one interviews with the key employees varied among the participants. The interview conducted with the key employees from Paychex was face to face at a conference room located at the organization. The interviews with two of the key employees at Wegmans were conducted at a local coffee shop. The remaining interviews were all conducted over the phone. The employee interview questions were specifically designed for this study (see Table 3).

Table 3: Key Employees Interview Questions

- How long have you been working at your current organization?
- What attracted you to want employment within this organization?
- Do you consider this work environment one of the best places to work? In what ways?
- What aspect of your organization makes it unique compared to others?
- As an employee, how do you think your company needs to improve?
- On a five point scale, where would you rate your intention to stay at this organization? 1 being I intend to be at my job until I retire to 5, being I intend to leave my job as soon as possible? Why?
Each interview with the HRD Professionals and key employees lasted approximately thirty minutes. All handwritten notes were taken in a notebook with no information regarding any individual’s identity. As a result of participating in this study, the HRD Professionals received a summary report of what the other companies were doing to improve their rating on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. This report can then be used by the organizations as a benchmarking tool. The one HRD Professional no longer working at the organization and the key employees participating in this study received two movie tickets as a token of appreciation for their participation.

All information was confidential and to maintain anonymity no information was recorded in the interview. A statement regarding implied consent was included on each questionnaire, and participants reviewed the statement prior to participating.
Chapter 4
Results

This qualitative study consisted of twelve interviews conducted in one set of three and another set of nine. The first set were with three HRD Professionals who were responsible for compiling the necessary information in order to obtain a ranking on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. In addition to the set of interviews with the HRD Professionals, a second set of interviews included three key employees at each organization.

HRD Professionals

The three HRD Professionals who were interviewed were responsible for compiling the necessary information in order to obtain a ranking on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list.

A majority of the participating organizations were invited by the Best Places to Work Institute to participate in the rating process of the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work for (2004) list. Normally an organization interested to partake in the process would have to initially get nominated and then submit necessary paperwork prior to being invited to participate in the rating process. These organizations skipped the first two steps of the process. As a result these organizations obtained a rating on this list the first attempt.

The participating organizations in this study believed that the reason they obtained a rating on the Fortune 100 Best Places to Work For (2004) list resulted from the training offered by the organization. The training offered by the organizations focused on different areas of employee development. The type of employee development offered included the standard classroom training on soft and technical skills, shadowing
of others throughout the organization, management training programs, tuition reimbursement, giving the employees the necessary tools to manage work/home life balance and on-the-job training. The main concentration in the specific area of employee development varied among the organizations.

In addition to continue what they are currently doing, according to the HRD Professionals their organizations have to strive to do better in order to improve their rating. Because the number of participating organizations increases annually the competition increases.

Being rated on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work for (2004) list has only had a minimal impact on the employees. The sense of pride has slightly increased as per the HRD Professionals. The employees are already benefiting for working in a positive work environment with strong employee development opportunities.

**Key Employee Results**

The responses to the questions by the participant’s were grouped together. The similarities and differences in the responses by participants were then analyzed. Three key employees were interviewed from each organization that participated in this qualitative study (total of nine employees). The main focus of the interview questions were how these individuals view their organizations and if they consider it a great place to work.

Responses are in Table 4 to the first interview question, “*how long have you been working at your current organization?*”
Table 4: Interview Question # 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>1-4 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>Greater 10 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genencor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paychex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegmans</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of the employees have been at their organization between five to ten years (55%). The remaining employees were at their organization between one to four years (approximately 23%), or greater than ten years (approximately 23%).

Responses are in Table 5 to the second interview question, “what attracted you to want employment within this organization?”

Table 5: Interview Question # 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Advancement</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genencor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paychex</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegmans</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty-three percent of the participants were attracted to their organization due to the salary. 54% of participants were attracted to their organization due to possible advancement. 23% of the participants, both employees of Wegmans, are in the “other” category. One participant was attracted to his/her organization for the tuition scholarship offered by Wegmans. The other participant was attracted to Wegmans due to the word of mouth regarding the positive work environment.
Responses are in Table 6 to the third interview question, "do you consider this work environment one of the best places to work? In what ways?"

Table 6: Interview Question # 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Employee Development</th>
<th>Empowerment</th>
<th>Advancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genencor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paychex</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegmans</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixty-seven percent of the participants were in consensus that employee development was what constituted their organization a great place to work. Employee development consists of training programs offered within the organization.

Responses are Table 7 to the fourth interview question, "what aspect of your organization makes it unique compared to others?"

Table 7: Interview Question # 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Employee Development</th>
<th>Advancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genencor</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paychex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegmans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixty-seven percent of participants were in consensus that employee development is the main contributor to the uniqueness of their organization. Each organization had consistent forms of employee development through training and shadowing others within
the organization. Wegmans has the management, training program which one participant mentioned. The individual works in all of the departments at the store prior to becoming a manager. Time restrictions make it obvious why most organizations do not have such a program. Paychex has a somewhat similar technique but this is done once the individual becomes a manager. Every few years the managers would rotate and manage a different department. These types of training makes the management team well educated about how the organization runs.

Responses are in Table 8 to the fifth interview question, "as an employee, how do you think your company needs to improve?"

Table 8: Interview Question # 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Employee Development</th>
<th>Advancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genencor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paychex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegmans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The key employees from Wegmans had a difficult time thinking of areas for improvement that there was no response. Using the results from the employees that did respond, 83% felt that the room for advancement needed to improve.

Responses are in Table 9 to the sixth interview question, "on a five point scale, where would you rate your intention to stay at this organization? 1 being I intend to be at my job until I retire to 5, being I intend to leave my job as soon as possible? Why?"
Table 9: Interview Question # 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Work Environment</th>
<th>Money</th>
<th>No Room for Advancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genencor</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paychex</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegmans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixty-seven percent of the participants were planning to leave their organization sometime within the near future. A majority of these employees considered the small room for advancement as a deterrent to remain at the organization. Through training there was a high level of employee development but without having a job to utilize these skills the employees felt it did not benefit them. Most of them felt that they were at a dead end job with no room to grow. Money was also a factor for why employees wanted to leave their current organization. Some of the participants felt that they were not getting compensated for the job they did. One participant could not support his family the way he wanted with his salary. The remaining 33% of the participants (all from Wegmans) wanted to remain with their current organization until retirement resulting from the positive work environment.

A majority of the information retrieved from the HRD Professionals and the key employees were consistent with one another. The key findings resulting from the responses to the interview questions are discussed in further detail in the following chapter.
Chapter 5
Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to attempt to retrieve enough information to answer the following questions:

1.) What constitutes the best place to work?

2.) What do organizations do successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list?

3.) Are there any advantages for an organization to be on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list?

The information retrieved from the interviews did answer the question of what constitutes the best place to work. The third and fourth key employee interview questions were developed to target the answer to this question, “do you consider this work environment one of the best places to work? In what ways?” and “what aspect of your organization makes it unique compared to others?” In addition to this, the third HRD Professional interview question of “what does your organization do right to obtain a rating on this list?” was developed to target the answer to this question and also the answer to the second question.

A majority of the key employees had the same response to the interview questions. Not only did employee development make these organizations one of the best places to work but it also made the organization unique from those not on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. Even though all of the organizations had a form of employee development the main focus of the employee development varied among the participating organizations. The employee development at one organization focused primarily on the strengthening of the employee’s technical and soft skill set. This is
mostly through a structured training program. As per the employees, the training programs at another organization were on-the-job training through shadowing other departments. At the final organization it focused on developing the employees’ tools that are necessary in order to balance work life and home life. Even though this is defined as employee development the concentration of the programs were focusing heavily in one area of development. Once a specific piece of the employee development program is mastered, the focus should shift to another form.

The HRD Professional from one organization was the only participant in which the answer coincided with the employees. A majority of the employees and the HRD Professional answered that the employee program which gave the employees the necessary tools to balance work life and home life was what the organization was doing right. The HRD Professional from another organization did not give credit to the organization but gave the credit to the employee’s instead. The employee’s gave credit to the employee development program within the organization. The same situation happened with the final organization whereby the HRD Professional and the employee’s had different answers to what the organization was doing right. This is an indicator that there is a mismatch between the HRD Professionals perceptions and the employees perceptions. Unfortunately, in some corporate environments, this is not an uncommon occurrence. In order for the HRD Professionals to implement programs to benefit the development of employees it is imperative for the HRD Professional to have an understanding of what the employees will benefit mostly from. In an organization with an older workforce it would make sense to have a program about retirement in stead of a program on child care.
Considering the different forms of employee development (formal training, shadowing, work life/home life balance) these organizations can even learn from one another. It was apparent that the participating organizations did have a specific form of employee development that was dominant over others. Obtaining a rating on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list is somewhat competitive but the organizations can learn from the other participating organizations. An organization that is weak in one area can learn from another organization that concentrates more heavily in that area. For example, perhaps an organization in the beginning stages of planning to build a day care facility can learn from another organization that has daycare on-site.

The third question was answered from the interviews with the HRD Professionals. There was an interview question regarding the benefits to being on this list for the employees but throughout the interviews, the HRD Professionals also shared how it benefited the organization. The HRD Professional from one organization stated that as a result of being on this list the level of pride among the employees has increased. She was very proud that the employees felt this. The HRD Professional from another organization believed that the employees feel good working for an organization that focuses on being a great place to work. The HRD Professional from the final organization felt that the employee development program was a large benefit to the employees. This reduces the level of stress among the employees since they don’t need to worry about issues at home while at work.

There were a handful of reasons shared by the HRD Professionals regarding the benefits to the organization for being on this list. Because a majority of the employees feel good, have a sense of pride, and are given the tools to balance work life and home
life, the HRD Professional perception was that the retention level of employees should be high. When the key employees were asked the interview question of their intention to stay within the organization, a majority of the participants were planning on leaving due to the small room for advancement. This was occurring even though the participants feel good and have a sense of pride they want to grow in their career.

Many training programs can be offered, but if employees are not able to utilize this training, it has no benefit. For example, an employee can go to a computer training class, such as for Microsoft Access but when they get back to the job do not use Access, the information learned in the class will not be retained by the employee. Training and Development Department can sometimes be a double-edged sword: because the employees are being trained does not mean they are being developed. The employee becomes developed when the skills learned in the training are utilized later. In order to retain employees, management needs to keep in mind that employees want to grow and advance within the organization. Management needs to work with the employees to develop a career plan and develop the employee.

Another benefit for the organization was the attraction for possible new candidates for employment. When the key employees were asked what attracted them initially to the organization being on this list was not a motivator. The room for advancement was a majority of the reason what attracted the key employees meanwhile a majority of the key employees were planning on leaving the organization due to the small room for advancement.

This indicates that the perceptions by the HRD Professionals and employees differ in certain areas. As a result of the organizations participating in the Fortune 100
Best Companies to Work For process these differing perceptions will become more aligned. In order for these organizations to improve their rating it is imperative that the HRD Professionals and employees have parallel perceptions.

This qualitative study helps to determine what constitutes a Best Place to Work For, what organizations did successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list, and the advantages for an organization to be on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. Thus, it is not being on the list that is important to employees but rather doing the things necessary to get on the list that is. Other organizations should look towards the HRD functions at these three organizations for idea on improving their workplace environment.

Conclusion

The main HR advantage to these organizations resulting from being on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list is the employees feeling a sense of pride for working for an organization that rated on this list. It is apparent that the HR Professionals in this qualitative study realize that the success of their organization results from the employees. Other advantages discussed in the interviews were attracting qualified candidates to work for the organization and retention of values employees.

As a result of this qualitative study it was determined that the perceptions from the HRD Professionals and employees differ from one another. What the HRD Professionals perceived as to what the employees need is not necessarily what the employees perceived as being as important. This indicates that the information communicated needs to improve or obtained in a different way. In addition to this, there
is a strong indicator that these organizations can learn from each other regarding the benefits and obstacles of the employee development programs.

There is one main point that was outside of the scope of this qualitative study that needs further exploration. As per a response by the HRD Professional to the third interview question, “what does your organization do right to obtain a rating on the list?” she mentioned that in order to keep the product affordable to the consumer, certain benefits are not offered to the employees. This response indicated that the quantity and quality of employee benefits offered by an organization is dependant on the product or service offered to consumers.

In addition to the success completion to the purposes to this qualitative study there was an indication that there is further exploration necessary outside the scope of this study. The interviews conducted with the HRD Professionals and key employees of the participating organizations in this study fully support that these organizations are one of the best places to work for.

Some organizations have an environment in which employees enjoy being at work because they have a sense of trust, pride and camaraderie. It is a combination of all of the three that makes a company a great place to work. In order to create an environment in which employees have a sense of trust, pride and camaraderie it is a collaborative effort by management and employees.

The responses by the employees indicated that the employee development program is what makes their organization a great place to work. A strong and well-
developed employee development program does create a work environment in which there is a level of trust, pride and camaraderie.

Management displays trust by being involved in the employee's development. Employees indirectly believe that management within their organization has a direct obligation and responsibility to provide the necessary tools, education, training and development to make the employee a productive asset of the organization. Employees have a sense of pride resulting from employee development. Upon gaining additional knowledge and obtaining the necessary tools the employees feel proud of their accomplishments. In most situations the development of employees is reflected in the employees work product that is then recognized by management. Finally, an employee gains a sense of camaraderie resulting from employee development. There is often a social aspect included within the training program, employees meet other employees and relationships are formed. Some of the employee development programs focus on team building or effective communication that gives the employees the tools necessary to work closely with one another.

As a result of this qualitative study the employees demonstrated that the employee development program offered by their organization was what made their organization a great place to work for. All three organizations did have a strong employee development program. Through the programs offered, the employees gained the additional knowledge and tools to do an exceptional job.

It is encouraging that the competition among organizations to obtain a rating on the Fortune 100 Best Places to Work For list is increasing. Management within
organizations are focusing their attention on how to treat employees right and giving them the necessary tools to get their job done effectively and efficiently. Human capital is being recognized as an asset and not a liability.
References


Appendix A – Benchmarking Tool

Executive Summary

➢ Some organizations have an environment in which employees enjoy being at work because they have a sense of trust, pride and camaraderie. It is a combination of all of the three that makes a company a great place to work.
➢ “Many companies offer good benefits, competitive pay, a comfortable workplace and competent management. But great companies create strong, positive company cultures that foster happy, engaged employees who feel empowered to make decisions in their daily work” (Pomeroy, 2004 p.1).
➢ There are three purposes for this qualitative case study: The first is to define what it takes to be a great place to work. The second is to identify what organizations did successfully to get onto the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list. Finally, the purpose of this study is to identify if there are any HR advantages to these organizations resulting from being on this list.
➢ The significance of this qualitative study is that it will assist organizations and human resource development practitioners to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a better workplace.
➢ Three organizations participated in this qualitative study;
  o Paychex, Inc.
  o Genencor, Inc.
    1. A different kind of biotechnology company, Genencor traces its roots to 1982 when a joint venture was established between Genentech and Corning to exploit the industrial applications of protein engineering (www.genencor.com (2004)).
  o Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.
    1. A major regional supermarket chain, and one of the largest private companies in the U.S. (www.wegmans.com (2004))
➢ This qualitative study consisted of twelve face-to-face or phone interviews in one set of three and another set of nine.
  o Three HRD Professionals necessary for compiling the necessary paperwork were interviewed from each organization;
    1. Main Focus: What these organizations did to successfully get rated on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list?
  o Three key employees from each organization (total nine employees)
    1. Main Focus: How these individuals view their organizations and if they consider it a great place to work and why?
Background Information

Many organizations have focused their efforts on creating an environment where employees consider it to be a great place to work. As a result, organizations have made improvements to create this environment. Such improvements include strategies, such as:

a) the increase of employees participating in the decision making process that pertain to their jobs;
b) more flexibility in regards to employees balancing work life and home life; and
c) increased accessibility to ask questions of senior management and get answers to questions.

In order for organizations to become a great place to work and obtain a rating on the Fortune 100 Best Places to Work For (2004) list, it is necessary to create an environment in which trust, pride, and camaraderie are explicitly valued.

➢ Trust

Trust is the “...respect for and belief in the reliability, honesty, competence, and integrity of the party with which one is dealing. Having trust in someone or in an institution entails that being vulnerable or taking risks for that person or institution will be reciprocated, recognized, rewarded, or at least, not betrayed” (Shaw, 1997). In order for management to best utilize human capital, a reasonable level of trust must be demonstrated. If there is a low level of trust employees will be hesitant to make recommendations in fear of any negative consequences. In addition to this, employees want to have a sense of support and confidence from their employer.

Teamwork, goal setting, and leadership are some positive benefits for an organization that has a high level of trust between employees and management. Many believe that trust is the bond that holds the employee and employer together as a team (Shaw, 1997). In order for high levels of trust to exist within an organizations three attributes must be apparent, credibility, respect and fairness (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).

➢ Pride

Pride is the second dimension of the Great Places to Work Model. Pride is when “work is organized so that employees at all levels feel a direct connection with the product or service the company provides. People feel proud of their personal accomplishments, and they are recognized for their outstanding achievements” (Levering & Moskowitz, 1993, pg. xviii). Employees are committed to their organization in ways such as the employee feels that their identity is linked to the organization. The employees also feel as if there is a direct link between their goals and objectives professionally, to the organizations goals and objectives.
This sense of pride creates a level of involvement felt by the employees to assist their organization in becoming a success. Employee’s work together collaboratively as a team towards the vision of the organization. Working together as a team, employees have a positive social contribution to the organization.

➢ Camaraderie

Camaraderie is an environment in which “employees talk about being part of a family, team, or special community that includes everyone at all ranks in the company. They clearly enjoy working (and playing with one another). They socialize together at various functions during the year. There’s laughter in the halls” (Levering & Moskowitz, 1993, pg. xviii). Included in this type of communication, ideas and information may be exchanged but the most valuable piece of this communication is the bond that develops among the ranks within the organization. “Because people are more likely to talk to one another, good business ideas are more common and onerous tasks made less unpleasant. Stress has also been reduced” (Anonymous, 2001, p.21).

Camaraderie is a strong component of the attraction of the member’s to an organization and the desire to remain. Each group has attributes that form this bond, this may be situational, social and even personal. In the workplace setting, the initial formation of a group is situational. Over time, this bond moves from situational to more of a social and personal level.

To become a great place to work other companies could benchmark and modify their policies to match those of companies that have been ranked on the list, such as Wegmans, Paychex, and Genencor.

This study will describe what constitutes the best place to work, go into further detail what organizations did successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list and discuss the advantages for an organization to be on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list.

Research Questions

➢ What constitutes the best place to work?
➢ What do organizations do successfully to get on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list?
➢ Are there any advantages for an organization to be on Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list?

Methodology

➢ Interviewed one HRD Professional from each participating organization.
Main focus of HRD professional interviews: what these organizations did right to obtain a rating on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For (2004) list.

- Interviewed three employees from each participating organization, for a total of nine employees.
- Main Focus of employee interviews: how employees view their organization, if they consider it a great place to work and why

**Key Findings**

- Perceptions by the HRD Professionals and employees differ from one another.
  
  There was a strong indication that there is a mismatch between the HRD Professionals perceptions and the employee’s perceptions. The HRD Professionals from one organization would say one thing and the key employees from the same organization would say something different.

- Organizations should concentrate more on learning from one another instead of competing.
  
  It was apparent that the participating organizations did have a specific form of employee development that was dominant over others. An organization that is weak in one area can learn from another organization that concentrates more heavily in the same specific area.

- Development/retention of Employees
  
  Many training programs can be offered, but if employees are not able to utilize this training, it has no benefit. In order to retain employees, management needs to keep in mind that employees want to grow and advance within the organization.

**Recommendations for Companies**

- In order for the HRD Professionals to implement programs to benefit the development of employees it is imperative for the HRD Professional to have an understanding of what the employees will benefit mostly from.
- Management needs to work with the employees to develop a career plan and develop the employee.
- In order for high levels of trust to exist within an organizations three attributes must be apparent, credibility, respect and fairness (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).
  - There must be a level of consistency between the manager’s actions and words.
Such things as sharing information, creating autonomy through boundaries, and replacing hierarchy with self-directed teams create respect within an organization (Shaw, 1997).

Fairness is whereby “…everybody receives equitable opportunity for recognition. Decisions on hiring and promotions are made impartially, and the workplace seeks to free itself of discrimination, with clear processes for appealing and adjudicating disputes” (Best Place to Work Institute, 2004).

- Employees need to feel that they are involved in the success of the organization.
- Developing the employee’s sense of teamwork through team building will increase the amount of communication throughout the organization.

Limitations of Qualitative Study

- Small Sample Size
  - Interviewed only twelve individuals.

- Time Constraints
  - Only had five months to conduct and analyze information.

- Geographic Location
  - Only one participant in this study did not live or work in the city of Rochester, New York.