CONFERENCE LEADERS' REPORTS

Working Conditions and Employee Attitudes

Group #1 - G. L. Simmons

1. We have poor working conditions for these reasons:

   a. Lack of funds.

   b. Low priority of working conditions improvements.

   c. Lack of engineering and engineering know-how.

   Comment - Question that if we cannot spend money to correct adverse working conditions, we should not make the products.

   - Introduction of new products and changes in operations should not be made unless the appropriations include necessary money for working conditions.

2. We have more than adequate standards, but they are academic and not practical.

3. Working conditions are affected by profits and they should be.

4. If we strive to improve and correct working conditions, we can prevent the spread of harassment.

5. Substandard working conditions affect quality, turnover, labor unrest, production costs, etc. To what degree, we do not know.

   Comment - Research product proposals should not include toxic materials. Should be eliminated prior to introduction in plant if possible.

   - Ear muffs should be only a temporary expedient. We should concentrate on engineering improvement, but we don't have the skills.

   - Requirement of ear muffs for visitors should be left to plant management discretion.

Group #2 - K. H. Slater

We are creating and have adverse working conditions for these reasons:

- Lack of know-how to correct bad situations.

- Failure to provide necessary facilities in new installations.

- Failure to recognize the effect of small changes in the plant. One case was cited of a move in another division having a relationship to a fatality in a neighboring division's plant.

Johns-Manville Industrial Relations Conference Leaders' Reports on Working Conditions (1966)
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- Lack of approval of appropriation requests.

- Lack of proper plant organization.

Recommend:

1. A look at whole or complete plan of new installations for working conditions approval.

2. A plant review of any methods or equipment changes at the plant for working condition approval. An I.E. study with each appropriation request or incentive study application.

3. A task force approach with the use of I.E. or similar staff groups rather than line organization when breakthroughs are necessary.

4. Use department contests to aid in control of conditions involving all personnel—housekeeping or accident prevention.

5. A better marriage of GPED and plant on project work.

6. Experts on noise, sound and dust from outside GPED.

7. Prompt disposal of appropriations concerning working conditions outside the normal channels, similar to fire prevention program.

8. A complete review of IH-700 with a dry run in a plant before issuing.

9. New color suggestions.

10. New plant floor covering suggestions.

11. Use attractive J-M materials in offices visited by outsiders.

12. Clear up confusion on visitors wearing eyeglasses and ear muffs when plant personnel do not.

Group #3 - R. L. Lewis

We have and are creating adverse working conditions.

For example: Duplication of manufacturing conditions and processes have been made since building the Penbryn Plant without any change or improvements.

We ask — Why, after being given the charge at Absecon to build in safety in working conditions, are we duplicating our problems?

We think because of:

Lack of engineering effort.
Lack of division and GHQ support.
Exceeding facility limits within existing plants.

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Substandard working conditions have had these effects:

Created turnover.
Caused employees leaving J-M to be unemployable by other companies.

Statement: We have created adverse safety and working conditions by setting certain standards, without the recommendations on HOW to correct or the MONEY and technical know-how to do it.

Group #4 - L. E. Inguagiato

All felt that we have and are creating adverse working conditions.

The reasons are:

1. Production requirements take preference, also exceeding capacity.
2. Additions to existing processes.
3. Additions of new raw materials.
4. Takes too long for GPED to design proper equipment.
5. Hard to get Appropriation Requests approved at Division and top levels.
6. New operations or changes in operations are expedited at minimum expenditures with thoughts of labor correction of substandard conditions.

All agreed that substandard working conditions have an adverse effect on quality, labor, turnover, production costs and labor unrest.

Cannot assess a dollar value.

Adequate standards - Too many.

Group #5 - R. R. Nicodemus

1. Do we have adverse working conditions?
   a. All mine plants admitted having some adverse working conditions.
   b. Most of the plants agreed that usually when new machines or processes are installed, adverse working conditions are created.
2. Why?—Insufficient engineering attention being given to good working conditions, equally important is the reluctance to spend money to provide good working conditions.

   The group felt that the chief reason was the fact that it is far more difficult to measure the costs resulting from adverse working conditions.

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Another detriment is lack of engineering talent available. Noise abatement is example.

3. The group was unanimous in the belief that our standards are high enough, and, in some cases, too high.

4. Group said, "No."

5. Group felt substandard working conditions almost always have an effect on quality, because of this they also affect production costs. Substandard conditions have a far greater effect on the younger employees than they do on older employees. People with long service many times have grown up with the conditions and are accustomed to what we have--younger employees will just not become accustomed to it. Turnover and labor unrest do result among the younger generation.

   For this reason, it was unanimously agreed we've got to do a better job of improving working conditions.

Group #6 - W. L. Ruff

We most emphatically agree that we all presently have adverse and substandard working conditions.

To name a few, and some of the reasons:

1. Antiquated buildings.
2. Antiquated equipment.
3. Improperly engineered new equipment.
4. Lack of advice on how to handle toxic materials.
5. Lack of funds appropriated for correcting substandard conditions.
6. Crisis planning.
7. Past lack of emphasis on correcting problems, i.e., more action and less lip service.

Relative to the effects of substandard working conditions on quality, labor turnover, labor unrest and production costs, there is no question but that these items are adversely affected.

With respect to our present IH standards, many are adequate, while some are impractical.

Where poor conditions exist, we should ourselves take immediate action to correct substandard conditions rather than allow the union to force the issue.

Low profitability at a location should not be a deterrent to correcting adverse conditions

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Group #7 - D. R. Thomas

1. Adverse working conditions.

    a. Noise - all plants.
    b. Dust - some.
    c. General housekeeping.
    d. Heat.
    e. Cold.
    f. Inadequate facilities:
        Locker rooms.
        Drinking fountain.
        Toilets.
        Parking lots.
        Office space.
    g. Frustration - poor maintenance - location of plants.

2. Why?

    a. Some supervisors do not recognize the far-reaching effects of a discontented, unhappy employee.

    b. Unwilling or unable to make expenditures.

    c. Insufficient funds in original appropriation to do necessary job.

    d. Crash programs to get in new markets or increase capacity.

    e. J-M not using their full line of materials to correct.

    f. Unrealistic budgets for cleaning and maintenance.

3. Recommendations:

    a. Maintain a plant housekeeping and maintenance program and provide necessary budgets.

    b. More ways and means from GPED to reduce noise and provide dust collection.

    c. Education and communication at plant level to inform salary personnel of company and division standards and practices.

    d. Review standards for office space and facilities, including toilet facilities and locker rooms.

    e. Maintain in GPED necessary specialists to attack these problems.

    f. Maintain sufficient design personnel at plants.

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Group #8 - C. E. Tharp

Do we have adverse working conditions?

Yes - Unanimous.

What are we doing to overcome them?

Lead fumes - installing recommended safeguards. Plant having trouble getting basic information on scope of problem.

Noise - sound absorbing materials used. No engineering help available. Ear muffs are used.

Safety hazards - being engineered and corrected at the plant level.

Dust - dust collectors. Respirator must be used. Need additional engineering on this problem.

Congestion - warehouse, lunch room, parking lots, offices. Safety problems -- try to get more space.

Water - keep clean as possible. Need engineering help.

Are we creating adverse working conditions?

Yes - New plants and equipment are under-designed for good working conditions.

Industry should pressure machine vendors to build in noise control in their equipment

Changes and additions to present plants and equipment need more consideration to working conditions.

We refuse to spend the money, in many cases, to do the job right at the start.

What effect do substandard working conditions have on quality, labor turnover, unrest, production costs?

Labor turnover.
Poor employee attitude and gripes.
High costs.
Poor quality products getting into the field.

Group #9 - O. L. Swallow

We are creating adverse working conditions.

1. New construction on new product lines.

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2. Modification to existing equipment.

3. Changes in methods.

4. Changes in materials.

Do substandard working conditions affect the following unfavorably?

1. Quality - yes.

2. Labor turnover - yes.

3. Labor unrest - yes.

4. Production costs - yes.

The group has specific examples of each of these points at their plants.

To stop spread of harassment:

- keep our house in order.
- improve human relations in handling present claims.
- keep informed on liberalization of laws and take positive action opposing changes to detriment of company.

Should we have full-time people to study and controvert unfavorable statements concerning health conditions?

Higher management decision.

Group #10 - A. J. Trepanier

1. Do we have or are we creating adverse working conditions? Why?

   Yes, but in direct relationship to type of product manufactured. We must differentiate between unpleasant conditions and those that adversely affect health. We have several unpleasant conditions that are not necessarily a health hazard for which money to correct is not readily available.

2. What effect do substandard working conditions have on quality, labor turnover, labor unrest, production costs?

   To a degree--where a comparison of conditions in a neighboring plant might be possible.

3. Do we have accurate standards?

   They appear to be relative, not absolute and subject to interpretation in regard to housekeeping.

   With regard to dust, noise and other standards, they are measurable and appear to be accurate.

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4. Do we relate conditions to profit?

   Yes, in most cases.

5. Where do hourly people take their gripes?

   To foreman, stewards, other employees.

6. Where do salaried employees take their gripes?

   To washrooms, coffee breaks, supervisors, some to top level.

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CONFERENCE LEADERS' REPORTS

Working Conditions and Employee Attitudes

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- Lack of approval of appropriation requests.

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Recommend:

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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE REPORTS "SAFETY & MEDICAL 1966" JANUARY 10-14 1966 AB-367-AB2

JSZ071

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   The group felt that the chief reason was the fact that it is far more difficult to measure the costs resulting from adverse working conditions.

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JSZ0711

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Another detriment is lack of engineering talent available. Noise abatement is example.

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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE ARIZONA JANUARY 10-14 1966 SAFETY + MEDICAL 1966

AD-367-A12

JSZ0711

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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE PROGRAM JANUARY 18-19 1966 "SAFETY + MEDICAL 1966"

AB-367-A12

JSZ071

2. Modification to existing equipment.

3. Changes in methods.

4. Changes in materials.

Do substandard working conditions affect the following unfavorably?

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2. Labor turnover - yes.

3. Labor unrest - yes.

4. Production costs - yes.

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AB-367-AIA

JSZ0711

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4. Do we relate conditions to profit?

Yes, in most cases.

5. Where do hourly people take their gripes?

To foremen, stewards, other employees.

6. Where do salaried employees take their gripes?

To washrooms, coffee breaks, supervisors, some to top level.

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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE REPORTS JANUARY 18-19 1966 "SAFETY & MEDICAL 1966"

MB-367-A13

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