JUN 03 1993 Xc: Lorell FYI

MONSANTO
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Date: May 27, 1993

cc: Cyndy Brashares
Kevin Cahill

Subject: WGK Employee Focus Group Report

To: Don Bacich, Keri Bauch-Sparks, Vern Bozarth, Gary Johnson, Pat McMahon, Keith Miller, Russ Sackett, Bill Sullivan

On May 12, I conducted an informal focus group with three salaried and three hourly employees, representing a cross-section of personnel at the plant. Below is a synopsis of their comments. After you've had a chance to look this over, I will be contacting you to get your feedback and recommendations.

WEEKLY WGK NEWSLETTER

-- A weekly newsletter makes sense.
-- The newsletter should be three times per week, to cover all that's going on in the plant, especially during the Charity Fund campaign.
-- Employees like to read about people, and what departments and individuals are doing. We've lost a lot of family feeling at the plant over the years. When it's more like a family, people care more.
-- More news, less fillers.
-- Put in lighter articles. When you can see yourself in humor it helps.
-- HPDESK could be used to supplement the weekly newsletter.
-- People get so much HPDESK mail that they get overwhelmed and don't read it all.
-- Some departments use HPDESK more than others. We could run a test with a "Read Acknowledgment" to see who is using it.

EMPLOYEES SAY THEY GET THEIR NEWS FROM. . .

-- Rumors -- many times they are accurate, but usually suspect.
-- If you hear rumors through the grapevine first, then get the official announcement, you wonder why we weren't told the news sooner. The company announcement seems old and has lost some credibility.
-- No one is telling us the whole story, so people put together information.
-- The worst rumor is the destructive rumor, selling departments, for example.
-- People are always looking for the negative and don't believe positive news.
-- If rumors are not allowed to circulate, and management can squelch rumors with real facts and information, the doomsayers don't have a chance to be effective.
-- Management should spend more time out in the plant. Employees should get information first hand, then have it backed up in the Today sheet.
-- Face-to-face meetings are helpful.
-- Plantwide meetings are effective, but you can't get everybody there.
-- Videotaping the meetings works well. It's a good idea to broadcast them live into control rooms.
-- A suggestion box is a good idea.

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EMPLOYEE MORALE

-- There is overall negative morale at the plant. Every change is viewed as a negative.
-- The bad feelings are justified. We've had a string of bad news. There are some champions of WGK at GO, and some who are not in favor of us.
-- People are afraid to ask questions and to say what they think, but it is better at the plant than it is at corporate. People are afraid others will put them down for speaking up, or that no one will listen to them.
-- We're not hearing positive people. We only hear the naysayers, who are always the same people.
-- A handful of negative people are tearing down the plant.
-- People who aren't negative are the silent majority. We must reaffirm to employees that positive comments are good.
-- We probably have more apathy among the salaried employees now than among the hourly employees.
-- The impression we get from corporate is indecision.

COMMUNICATION AND PLANT CULTURE

-- Over the past few years, more information has been shared with hourly employees, but we're hearing mostly negative news. We were "blissfully ignorant" before.
-- People now know about what's going on, but now they have anxiety of information.
-- There is so much information, that communication has to be very responsible because there are a lot of educated people now.
-- People's attitudes have changed. Some people have been shoved out of jobs because they were unable to do complicated jobs, others have stepped up to the challenge of high technology.
-- People have more and more put on them. It's scary. People have to be made to feel better about what they've gained, not that they're put upon.
-- People need more reognition. You may be told you did a good job, but it's never good enough. We need more "atta boys" and "atta girls."
-- We don't celebrate the everyday stuff very well. If you get recognized it's usually because you screwed up.
-- If people go out of their way to say "good job," that means more than getting a gift certificate.
-- We could use a "cheerleader."
-- People want to know where we're at so we can chart our progress. Mike Winkel has lined out what we have to do.
-- The newsletter could highlight where we came from and the progress we have made to get to where we are today.

ENVIRONMENTAL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

-- Employees are much more environmentally aware than they used to be.
-- There is a lot of anxiety about the thin sheet of ice we all walk on about possible incidents. We could all lose our jobs.
-- Suggestions for community environmental projects:
  - tire collection day
  - hazardous household waste collection day
  - expand plant recycling to include newspapers, cardboard, plastic.

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