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The Positive Effect of Team Management in an Inbound Call Center

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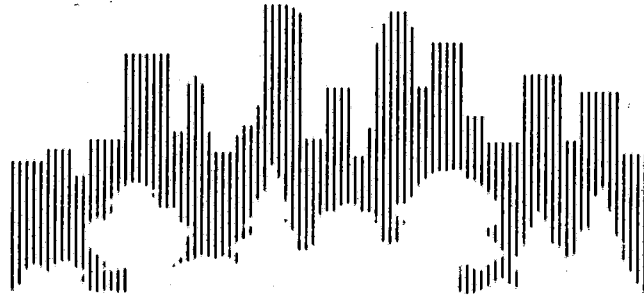
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MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP

Nancy Bernard

**The Positive Effect of Team Management in an
Inbound Call Center**

2007

**THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF TEAM MANAGEMENT IN AN INBOUND CALL
CENTER.**

NANCY BERNARD

Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of
Masters of Arts in Leadership

**AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

2007

MASTERS OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP
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MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

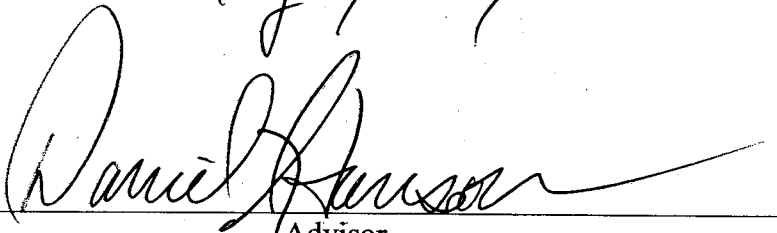
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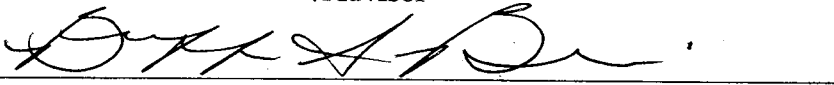
This is to certify that the Master's Non-thesis Project of

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Abstract

**THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF TEAM MANAGEMENT IN AN INBOUND CALL
CENTER.**

NANCY BERNARD

MARCH 2007

 X Non-thesis (ML597) Project

The research proposes to investigate if using team management and self-directed work teams or SDWTs in an Inbound Call Center can be implemented. Would a self-directed team work in the confines of an Inbound Call Center? Could converting to a SDWT environment also foster a positive work environment? The goal of this research project is to test the positive and direct correlation of creating a SDWT environment using team management theory within the structure of an Inbound Call Center that successfully meets all quality measures while maintaining a positive work environment. Using a self-directed work team in an Inbound Call Center may represent a new environment compared with the tightly controlled environment that employees work under in most modern Call Centers.

A total of 72 surveys were sent to managers, supervisors and customer service representatives (CSRs) in two inbound call centers within Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN and one inbound call center in Kansas City, MO.

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The Positive Effect of Team Management in an Inbound Call Center.

Introduction

Working in an Inbound Customer Service Call Center is characteristically a high stress job for the Customer Service Representative (CSR). Call Center work is stressful because the CSR is required to handle a barrage of random incoming calls, remaining pleasant and providing excellent customer service to every customer while knowing that every action they make is being monitored. As Deary, Iverson, & Welsch (2002) state, "Call center work typically requires high levels of sustained interpersonal interaction with customers which can lead to burnout and employee withdrawal. In addition, this form of work tends to involve extensive employee monitoring and surveillance with little job discretion or variety of tasks." (p. 471). In other words, Inbound Call Center work can many times be categorized as routine or work that lacks imagination which also can lead to additional stress of the CSR. A study by Baumgartner, Good, & Udris (2002) "reported turnover rates of 8-50%. They found that *experience monotony* is one of the most frequent reasons that [CSRs] cite for quitting their job." (p. 343)

In addition, the CSR typically has little personal control over their job because in many call centers, representatives work in highly monitored and scheduled environments. In fact, most CSRs log into their phones, like punching a time clock and need to account for all of their time while working. As Deary et al. stated, a CSR is constantly monitored which leads to little or no individual control. In most Incoming Call Centers, it is the role of the supervisor to manage how X number of daily incoming calls will be answered by X number of CSRs in the acceptable amount of time. The Institute of Call Center Management (ICMI)

defines Incoming Call Center management as “the art of having the right number of skilled people and supporting resources in place at the right times to handle an accurately forecasted workload, at service level and with quality.” (Cleveland & Mayben, 2005, p. 4). How does this relate back to the stress of a CSR? CSRs are not typically monitored just for service quality; it has become common practice for supervisors to monitor for greater productivity which translates to supervisors monitoring time spent by the CSRs when they are not on an incoming call. “In most telephone call cent[er]s there are constant efforts to increase the number of calls taken per employee and reduce both customer call time and wrap-up (Taylor, 1998; Taylor & Bain, 1999) Fernie & Metcalf (1998) state, “the pervasiveness of performance monitoring in call centers has led to them being labeled as “electronic panopticons”” (p. 10). The supervisor must balance working strictly with the metrics of the call center to measure success to upper management while remembering the human factor of the CSR that reports to them. “If a supervisor manages strictly for the numbers, the work environment is one where the CSRs perceive themselves as being victims at the ‘sharp end’ of extreme technological control.” (Rose & Wright, 2005, p. 1).

As described, not only can the environment for a CSR can be stressful, but it can also be stressful for the supervisor to have to monitor them so strictly. If the leadership style of the supervisor is more transformational or servant leader, instead of being a micro-manager., it can be difficult to continually monitor CSRs using just the numbers. This is something that this researcher struggles with personally on a daily basis. There has to be a better approach to managing an Inbound Call Center. Instead of a system of lack of control, constant monitoring by the supervisor and the constant pressure that the CSR endures, perhaps it would be more ideal for Call Centers to be run using self-directed work teams

(SDWT) where the CSR takes an active role in the entire Call Center process. A SDWT, defined by Kauffeld (2006), is “a synonym for self-managing, self-regulating, or autonomous work group.” (p.1) More specifically, Yeatts & Hyten, (1998), define “[a] SDWT is a group of employees, typically 5 to 15 members, responsible for performing and managing all or most aspects of a set of interdependent work tasks. A SDWT; however, does not mean an absence of supervision. Instead, the supervisor is an integral member of the team. Norton (2005) defines team management as the art of leading people much like a driver of a dog sled who guides the dogs, but lets the dogs do what they need to do to pull the sled. “The extended metaphor of treating people like dogs is a version of the golden rule.” (Norton, 2005, p. 7) For all practical purposes, once fully trained in the operation, a CSR knows what is needed to get their job done. Unlike traditional management techniques used in a call center of monitoring and controls, a SDWT and team management, CSRs and supervisors would work together to determine how to achieve the set quality measures and confront areas where improvement is needed. Supervisors would concentrate on ensuring the team’s success. Supervisors could use many different leadership approaches in this SDWT environment as well.

Merriam Webster defines environment as the circumstances, objects or conditions by which one is surrounded; therefore work environment can easily be defined as the conditions that employees must endure at work. Work environments can be positive or negative depending on the specific situations. Work environment can be measured by a variety of methods including, but not limited to, employee satisfaction, employee turnover and ultimately on Customer Service Surveys completed by external customers. Since many factors influence a work environment and there is not a conclusive, empirical study that

states that all call center work environments are negative, as life in an Inbound Call Center has been previously described as a monotonous, rigorously monitored place, more than likely this environment would be a negative one for the CSR. Work culture will be defined a bit later in this paper.

The research proposes to investigate if using team management and SDWTs in an Inbound Call Center can be implemented. Would a self-directed team work in the confines of an Inbound Call Center? Could converting to a SDWT environment also foster a positive work environment? The goal of this research project is to show the positive and direct correlation of creating a SDWT environment using team management theory like Lecioni's (2002) model within the structure of an Inbound Call Center that successfully meets all quality measures while maintaining a positive work environment.

As the growth of employment in call centers continues to increase, Call Center Management will be the key to the success of the center and retaining qualified employees. Changing the way CSRs are managed can have a greater impact on the entire industry. It is important to realize the vital role a positive work environment has on the individual CSR performance and willingness to stay in the job. Additionally, a positive work environment translates to better customer service provided by the CSRs to the customers. In an article published in ICMI's Call Center Magazine, "Customer perception about your call center are [sic] hinged upon a leaders' ability to establish a customer friendly environment along with pleasing soft-skill behaviors. If you don't think customers can hear your environment – think again." (Coscio, 2005, p.33).

The Inbound Call Center

According to a 1998 Datamonitor report, “three percent of the working population of the United States are [sic] currently working [in call centers] and it has been estimated that up to 1.3 percent of the European workforce will be employed in call centers by the year 2002.” (Deary et al., 2002, p.471). Inbound Call Centers seem to be the new factories of the 21st century. They span multiple industries from 911 emergency services to catalog shopping to technology help desks and are located world wide. Regardless of what the specific mission of a call center is or where it is located, Inbound Call Centers share a common language. To accurately understand what an Inbound Call Center is, certain terms need to be described. These terms define the metrics to which many call centers measure their success. These terms also play a key role when describing the work environment in which CSRs work.

Probably the most critical measure of a call center’s success is measured by the service level. Service level is “x number of calls answered in y seconds” (Cleveland & Mayben, 2005, p. 5). Not meeting the set Service Level in any call center is usually not an option meaning that if the service level targets appear that they are not going to be met, CSRs are placed under extreme pressure by the supervisors to see if they can be. CSRs may be taking out of training classes or meetings may be cancelled in order to have more CSRs on the phone to meet the demands of the incoming calls. “Service level ties the resources you need to the results you want to achieve. It measures the degree to which you are getting the transactions “in the front door” and to an [CSR]. It is a stable target for planning and budgeting. It is a unifying concept. It is concrete.” (Cleveland & Mayben, 2005, p. 25). Ultimately measuring the service level in a set period of time, whether in a day or thirty

minute period, it gives the most accurate indication of what callers are experiencing.

Another way to measure the service level is to use the Average Speed of Answer, defined by ICMI as “a measure that reflects the average delay of all calls, including those that receive an immediate answer.” (Cleveland, 2004, p.17.)

Another key term is call load. “Call load is the volume of transaction coupled with how long they last. More specifically, it is volume x (average talk time + average after call work), for a given period of time.” (Cleveland & Mayben, 2005, p. 56). To break this term down further, “talk time is everything from “hello” to “goodbye” and “after call work time, also referred to as wrap-up or not ready, is the time [CSRs] spend completing transactions after saying “goodbye” to callers.” (Cleveland & Mayben, 2005, p. 55). Measuring call load helps to determine staffing levels and has budgeting impact. If, for example, CSRs have to great of talk time or after call work time, they are not available to receive the next call. This can lead to long hold times and most certainly will impact service level as well as the customer’s experience.

Agent adherence is another necessary component to a successful call center. A successful call center uses some sort of scheduling tool to forecast call volume and therefore, predicts the need for x number of CSRs at any given time. “Calls arrive randomly in most inbound call centers most of the time.” (Cleveland & Mayben, 2005, p. 12). “Adherence factor is a measure of time an individual is on the phone, available to take calls. It generally consists of all plugged-in time, including talk time, wrap-up, waiting to receive calls, and necessary outgoing calls.” (Cleveland & Mayben, 2005, p. 187). CSRs need to adhere to the set schedule to ensure all incoming calls are answered within service level goals. The random nature of the incoming calls can be somewhat predicted based on historical calling

patterns, but it is critical to the success of a call center to have an available CSR when the incoming call arrives.

These are just some of the terms that are used in an Inbound Call Center to measure tangible metrics that do equal success; it may be easy to see how call center management slips into a controlling method of management. Supervisors can monitor CSRs to ensure adherence to schedules thereby enforcing the call load for the center. The supervisors in one of the call centers surveyed, stated they spend the majority of their day monitoring CSR adherence and making sure that the center maintains the service level of 80 percent of calls answered in 20 seconds. Ultimately call centers must be successful to remain viable, so making sure CSRs meet the set metrics for a call center is critical. This brings the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1a: Is the work done in an Inbound Call Center is conducive to being completed by a SDWT?

Hypothesis 1b: Can the set metrics for the Inbound Call Center be attained with the same critical level of importance as when supervisors micro-manage if CSRs are in a SDWT?

Self Directed Work Teams (SDWT) and Team Management:

Perhaps it would be important to define what is meant by SDWT or teams in general. “Team involves making up your mind always to remember what a good team is. In a good team, each person knows the importance of teamwork, and each takes individual responsibility for the team’s effectiveness. No one excludes himself or herself from their integrated responsibility.” (Koestenbaum, 2002, p. 212). A good team is not only made up of members, but it also has a leader. As Whitmore (2002) explains, “good group leaders will offer, and encourage team member to take responsibilities and thereby satisfy their assertion needs.” (p. 148). Therefore as Kauffeld (2006) states, “self-directed work teams stands for

the change from behavior-oriented to result-oriented management, which refers to traditional group work, work teams are directed by supervisors who decide what is done, how it is done and who does it. Under behavior-oriented management, which refers to self-directed group work, the team itself is left to decide how best to attain the goals set by management.” (p. 2).

Unfortunately, converting from a traditional group work to a SDWT takes effort, time and there are reasons why teams do not work. One call center manager when asked if their call center would be willing to participate in the survey for this research had such a negative experience implementing SDWTs, she declined to allow her employees to be surveyed. She shared that the call center had since reverted back to a traditional, hierarchical controlled environment. When asked if she would be willing to share specific details as to why their effort failed, she also declined; however, shared generally that the created SDWTs displayed a lack of commitment to the set quality measures as well as avoided any personal accountability for any mistakes that were made that directly affected customers. It was unclear in the interview if the CSRs and management set clear, defined goals that defined success for the SDWT upfront.

Lencioni (2002) in his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* describes the five most common dysfunctions of any team and how to overcome them to be successful. He lists the five dysfunctions as follows (p. 94):

1. Absence of Trust
2. Fear of Conflict
3. Lack of Commitment
4. Avoidance of Accountability
5. Inattention to Results

Each one of these dysfunctions each can devastate a team and if team members' exhibit more than one of these dysfunctions, the team will not be able to work together to achieve any goal

as it apparently happened in the one call center that declined to be surveyed. Overcoming these dysfunctions can allow any team to truly be successful. “Great teams do not hold back with one another. They are unafraid to air their dirty laundry. They admit their mistakes, their weaknesses, and their concerns without fear of reprisal.” (Lencioni, 2002, p. 44).

Therefore, the team management model that Lencioni proposes in his book is quite positive and simple. He reverses the five dysfunctions and explains that a successful team does the following: (2002, p. 189).

1. They trust one another.
2. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
3. They commit to decisions and plans of action.
4. They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
5. They focus on the achievement of collective results.

For the purpose of this research, it is the idea that it would be this positive model that would be used to form the SDWT and would be the model used by the teams and supervisors to be effective.

Gautschi (1998) states “how well a group operates as a true team may be measured by how well it deals with conflict. Without conflict, teams lose their effectiveness. Members become apathetic, disengaged, and superficially harmonious. Low conflict levels are associated with poor decision-making.” (p. 208). A clue to having successful teams in an organization is presented by Norton (2005) when he claims, “it is not a question of whether something will go wrong, but only a questions of when. The only thing that makes a difference is how the musher [or leader] handles it. This is the difference between success and failure. Trouble is often the better teacher.” (p. 41). SDWT can not exist with the absence of a leader. As Whitmore (2002) describes, “the most productive teams will be

highly cooperative but will retain a degree of dynamic tension. The best team leaders preserve this sensitively.” (p. 149). These statements lead us to our second hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: Can a SDWT exist in an Inbound Call effectively if they overcome Lecioni’s five dysfunctions and move towards the result-oriented management as Kauffeld describes?

Work Environment and Culture

Work environment is simply the environment that is prevalent in the Incoming Call Center that CSRs experience on a daily basis. The ultimate goal of a positive work environment as it relates to an Inbound Call Center can be summarized by the following statement.

In some call centers, you can feel the energy as soon as you walk in the door. It takes many forms: pride of workmanship, a feeling of community, good planning and coordination. Everybody knows what the mission is and everybody is pulling in the same direction. The call center “clicks”.” (Cleveland & Mayben, 2005, p. 235).

While difficult to quantifiably measure the above statement, it is the opinion of this researcher, that this energy has been felt by many in their working career. Culture helps to form the work environment and they are intrinsically linked together. Merriam Webster defines culture as “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that character sizes an institution or organization. Cleveland and Mayben (2005) concur when they state that “culture is the inveterate principles or values of an organization, tends to guide behavior. Culture can either support and further, or, as some have learned the hard way, ruin the best laid plans for organizational change.” (p. 236). Perhaps work environment and culture can be combined to a more individual level as Hanson (1996) describes “a place to shine is a place where each individual is confirmed as a special person capable of making a unique and significant contribution to the whole in the presence of others who care.” (p. 30). His description of a place to shine leads to a positive definition of what a positive work

environment is. Belonging to a SDWT, as Knights and McCabe (2005) argue, is a step in the right direction to a positive work environment. "Team working is appealing to employees because it reflects and reinforces the human(istic) desire for autonomy. Employees welcome a sense of self-organization; for when individuals organize their own work it becomes more meaningful and therefore its intensification may be ignored or even denied." (p. 1587).

If a positive work environment is made up of individuals working towards common goals or values as Harris and Briner (2003) suggest that "the interaction between goal attainment and goal importance uniquely accounted [*sic*] for variation in pleasurable affect." (p. 407). Conversely "when an organization fails to give life to its values, they tacitly give employees permission to be apathetic." (Norton, 2005, p. 54).

Currently, "many call agents have low influence on one's own work in terms of work-related resources such as job control, not over work pace (i.e., decision possibilities over time frame of task conduct such as time point, succession, and duration of actions); but also with regard to planning and organizing one's own work." (Deary et al., 2002, Isic, Dorman & Zapf, 1999; Metz, Rothe, & Segener, 2001). Grebner, Semmer, Raso, Gut, Kälin and Elfering (2003) state that "job control was positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment and negatively associated with initiated reactions, psychosomatic complaints, resigned attitude towards the job, and intention to quit." (p. 342).

As discussed in the introduction, the role of a CSR is difficult. Not only does the work environment play an important role in satisfaction, the nature of the work also can influence well being. As Wilk & Moynihan (2005) state, "call center workers emphasized that they must express positive emotions and suppress negative emotions in their telephone interaction with customers." (p. 918). This is due to the fact that the random nature of the

incoming calls, a CSR has no idea what to expect on any given call. Their day can be spent on an emotional roller coaster. As Wilk & Moynihan (2005) explain, “work in call centers must continually field very different calls, interacting with different callers who may be, in quick succession, polite, angry and upset, frustrated, or friendly and chatty.” (p. 918).

Wharton (1993) describes the CSR role in more detail as, “a display rule may be to convey warmth and friendliness at all times, as in the case of a counselor. Another may be to take a placating tone and manner when serving an angry or rude customer, as in the case of a service representative. The basic proposition of the emotional labor literature is that workers in emotionally demanding occupational roles, that is, roles with greater intensity of interpersonal demands, experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion than worker in less emotionally demanding roles.” (p. 210). This leads us to our third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Would the introduction of SDWTs into an Inbound Call Center environment positively effect the work environment because CSRs would have more control over their work day?

Literature Review

This literature review will include a summary and critical analysis of five empirical research studies and one case study published between 2000 and 2006. The literature review will be divided into two main categories: Team Management Theory and Work Environment and Well-Being. While many factors can affect the work environment and those factors have been researched, this researcher has yet to find a study that identifies how SDWT and team management affect the work environment specifically within an Inbound Call Center.

Team Management Theory

Kauffeld (2006) investigated the impact of self-directed group work on team competence. (p.1). In this study his ultimate goal is to “provide empirical evidence regarding

the impact of self-directed work on competence at the group level of analysis.” (p.2). He does this by comparing traditional work groups with self-directed work groups. He evaluates four specific competences in this study to see if self-directed teamwork is beneficial in all: professional competence, methodological competence, social competence and self-competence (p.4). The results were mixed depending on the specific competence measured as to whether that competence was stronger on a self-directed work group or on a traditional work group. His research concluded that his “hypotheses for methodological competence, partially supported for professional and self-competence and not supported for social competence.” (p.12).

The limitations in this study are found in the methodology of the study. For his research, Kauffeld, started with 140 companies who had “participated in a management survey on enterprise flexibility” (p.6); however, only “20 medium sized established enterprises from the automotive supply industry, the metal, electrical and packaging industries as well as utilities agreed to participate. (p.6). While this sampling does present a nice cross section of companies, the sample size is too small to make generalized statements of all self-directed work groups in all industries. In addition, since four competencies were used to measure self-directed teams, the results in this study are murky. For each competence there were mixed positive and inconclusive results. Kauffeld agrees that future research is needed in this subject (p.16)

Another facet to Team Management is the communication style that management uses in a team environment, which is the fundamental question, posed in the study by Douglas, Martin & Krapels (2006). “The study described here was concerned with how workers perceived changes in the influence tactics of their former managers (now called team

leaders) as an organization moved from a bureaucratic management system to a model of increased employee participation using self-directed work teams (SDWTs).” (p.296). As Douglas et al.state, much of the research available for self-directed teams is focused on the entire management of SDWT, not specific to communication styles and the influences those styles have on the employees. “This study also found the connection between communication form and team development to be strong.” (p. 316). While this study does a thorough job of exploring communication styles and their influences, it is limited to the fact that the fundamental study is based on employee’s perception. Additionally, this study is more of a case study of one company’s transition from a bureaucratic management environment to a SDWT environment. Since this study was done entirely within the same organization, another limitation is that upper management determined the sampling group. In that scenario, it is unclear to this researcher if the data was not biased.

Sengupta & Jacobs (2004) did a case study on two configurations of teams working on differently organized assembly cells verses a conventional assembly line. They define the two separate assembly lines as follows, “workers in the cellular systems are capable of helping their co-workers in the same cell. Therefore, workers may shuffle between their own assigned tasks and the other tasks assigned to the cell.” (p. 4173). Assembly cells are commonly used in Europe and in Japan. On a traditional assembly line “a worker is normally responsible for a single task, and he or she performs this task without assistance from co-workers.” (p. 4174). This is a common assembly method found in the United States. They conclude that there are compelling reasons for adapting assembly cells in production work. Sengupta & Jacobs specifically researched a TV manufactures which limited the research. Also, this article was a case study and not an empirical study. The primary method

of research was observation. This case study is included in this literature review because it does show a positive effect of having workers trained on many tasks with the team meeting productivity goals. An empirical study conducted in the same industry with the same company would help validate the findings of Sengupta & Jacobs, but the preliminary work done studying a positive team model should not be overlooked.

Work Environment and Well-Being

The fundamental research question for the study by Holman, Chissick and Totterdell (2002) is “What are the relative effects of performance monitoring characteristics and work context variable on well-being in a call centers environment?” (p. 65). The conclusion of this study is that

 this study has further illuminated the relationship between performance monitoring, work context, and well-being. In particular, it has shown that performance monitoring as an important antecedent of well-being and one that has both a positive and negative impact on well-being. However, the exact mechanisms by which this occurs requires further research. This study has also demonstrated that the work context can moderate the relationship between the intensity of monitoring and well-being, although the effect of work context may be relatively small. (p. 78).

While the significance of Holman et al. research question is a legitimate question due to the increased prevalence of call centers, it is important to note that this study’s findings are limited due to the methodology used. Holman et al. used two call centers from the same United Kingdom bank. A total of 347 questionnaires were returned to the researchers by the CSRs equaling a response rate of 79%. (p. 65). Only 347 questionnaires in a research study are not enough data to effectively determine correlations especially when they are from employees from two call centers from the same financial institution in the U.K. These two factors are flaws in the study. It is highly unlikely that the sampling size represents the opinions of the general call center population. Further any reference to job satisfaction

should be suspect because performance monitoring may be just one factor in the total employee experience at a company.

A study by Grebner, Semmer, Faso, Gut Kälin and Elfering (2003), researched 234 call center agents with 572 workers in traditional jobs in Switzerland and Germany. The ultimate objective of this study was to investigate if the well-being of the employee suffered due to the working conditions in a call center. These researchers also suggested that both social and task-related stressors have a direct impact on the call center employee. The method used in this study was a questionnaire. The correlations of the variables in the data were strong and the researchers used a variety of methods to prove their data. These researchers concluded that in many call centers where the task is repetitive and low level, the attitude of the employee is low. In these cases, Grebner et al. concluded the entire working condition would need to change to make any improvements. In this study, the management role was one of many factors that affected the employee and fell into both stressor categories. A limitation to this study was that Grebner et al. based this research on a field study using the call center employees in one company. Just like in Holman et al.'s study, this limited sample size draws suspect to any generalities concluded for the industry. The strength of this study is with the comparison sample size. 572 workers from five different occupations were studied.

Deary, Iverson, & Walsh (2002) state that call center work typically requires high levels of sustained interpersonal interaction with customers, which can lead to burnout and employee withdrawal. This study drew survey data from 480 telephone service operators from five call centers in the telecommunications industry in Australia. Deary et al. (2002) state that "call center work tends to involve extensive employee monitoring and surveillance

with little job discretion or variety of tasks.” (p. 471). The research concluded that in call centers where employees felt high levels of management involvement which included the focusing on the quantity of calls answered verses the quality of customer service provided and increased after call work monitoring, they would experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion and job burnout. Part of the research included using the personnel records of the service operators to see how many times each employee was absent. The premise of this study is that “the frequency of one and two day absences is generally regarded as the most reliable measure of discretionary or voluntary absence.” (p. 477). While the study did suggest some statistical problems with using the number of absences as a measure of job burnout and made efforts to make the measure more accurate by adding dummy variables, job burnout may not be the only reason an employee would need to take an unplanned day off. Overall, the sampling size of this study was varied and broad enough to be able to make generalized statements.

Conclusion

While this literature review included a summary and critical analysis of five empirical research studies and one case study published between 2000 and 2006, the fact that only five empirical research studies were used shows that this topic needs more research. While the two studies on Team Management Theory are relevant to the positive affect that SDWTs have on the employee and the company, no study directly shows identifies how SDWTs and team management affect the work environment specifically within an inbound call center

Methodology

A total of 72 surveys were sent out to managers, supervisors and CSRs in two call centers within Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN and one call center in Kansas City, MO during the

month of November, 2006. This researcher works in one of the call centers in Minneapolis, MN and has a working relationship with the call center that was surveyed in Kansas City, MO. Both of these call centers are in the banking industry. These two call centers were chosen partly due to that relationship and partly because they have the same management structure. The primary difference between them is the culture and work environment. The other call center in St. Paul, MN is managed by an acquaintance of this researcher. This call center is a smaller center and is strictly a consumer retail call center. The results of this research are color coded and labeled as yellow call center, green call center, and blue call center. Each of the call centers surveyed staff between twenty-five and fifty CSRs. Of the 72 surveys sent out, 36 surveys were returned giving a response rate of 46.15%.

Table 1:

	Number of Surveys Returned	Number of Employees in Area	Response Rate
Yellow Call Center	17	33	51.52%
Green Call Center	12	28	52.17%
Blue Call Center	7	17	41.18%
TOTAL:	36	78	46.15%

Eleven men and twenty-four women completed surveys. One survey was received without the last page completed. The age of the participants ranged as follows:

Table 2:

Call Center	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	Not answered
Yellow	2	4	7	3		1
Green	4	3	3	2		
Blue	3	2	1	1		
Totals:	9	9	11	6		1

Fifty percent of those surveyed have worked in an Inbound Call Center for more than five years.

Each Supervisor and Manager within each Call Center chosen received a letter explaining the study and asking for his or her participation. Direct reports of each of these Managers and Supervisors were also asked to participate in this study via a letter. A letter of consent was received by each company and manager allowing the staff to be surveyed. Participation in this study was voluntary for all participants and informed consent received from all participants who were interviewed.

The survey used was created by this researcher and was not independently validated. The survey contained a total of eight questions that asked about SDWT and CSRs' feelings of their work environment. The survey was made up of a variety of questions, some of them asking participants to rate statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 equaled strongly disagree and 5 meant strongly agree. One question gave participants the opportunity to rank various statements on scale from 1 to 6 where 1 was least important to 6 was most important. One question aimed at truly understanding both the frequency and the tolerance to Lencioni's five dysfunctions of a team. The survey was sent to each supervisor, manager and direct report with specific instructions to complete the survey and return it using the enclosed return envelope within a set time frame. Confidentiality and anonymity was achieved by color-coding each survey based on the call center it was sent to. All observation notes and questionnaires are secured in a locked file cabinet. All material will be destroyed one year after the study is completed and published.

This researcher also conducted two individual interviews with supervisors who have worked in call centers that have used some form of SDWTs. The goal of these interviews

was to gather what went well, what did not go well, where there is area for improvement or best practices.

Results

This results section will include a critical analysis of the data gathered from the surveys and a summary of whether the hypotheses presented in the research were proved. It is divided into two main categories: the survey results and the hypotheses. See appendix two for the complete survey results.

The Survey Results

The first question in the survey asked the respondents to choose a definition of a SDWT. 88.9% of the respondents chose the definition of a self-directed work team as a team that self manages, self-regulates or is autonomous.

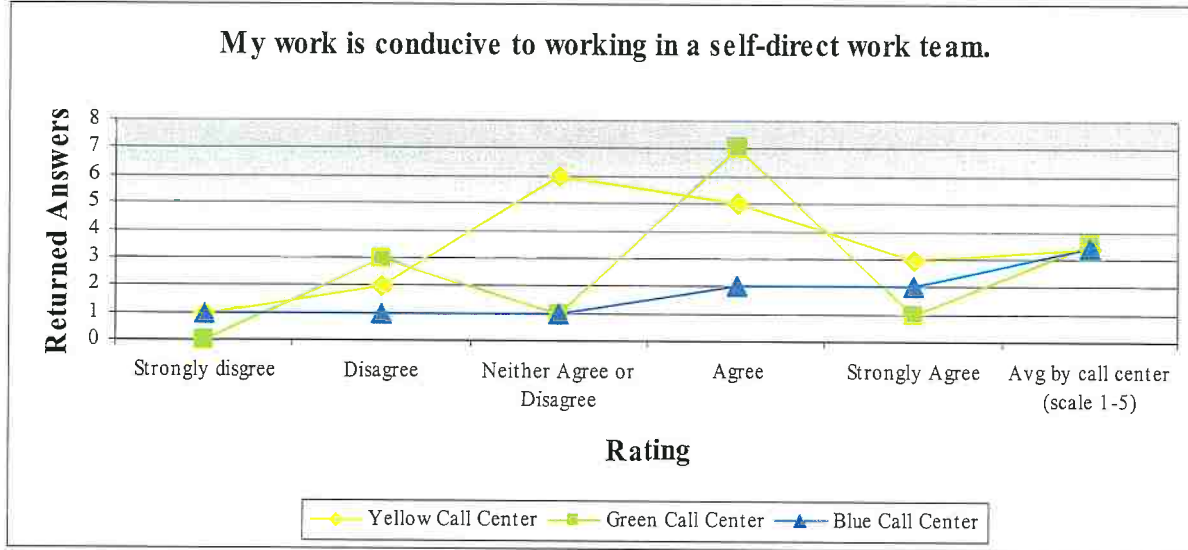
The second set of questions focused on employee’s perspective on SDWTs in general as well as some questions about working on a team. These questions asked the respondents to rate the statement using a scale of 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. There were 36 responses for this question. Currently, 44.4% of respondents stated that they are working on a SDWT and 69.4% responded that they had previously worked on a SDWT. A surprising 94.4% responded that they agree or strongly agree that they enjoy being part of a team. The median answer for each center as well as the combined centers answers is shown in Table 3.

Table 3:

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Neither Agree or Disagree	0	0	1	1
Agree	5	5	3	13
Strongly Agree	11	7	3	21
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	4.47	4.58	4.29	4.47

Of the thirty-six surveys received 55.6% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their work was conducive to working on a SDWT as shown in Table 4.

Table 4:



Hypothesis 1a is supported by the answer to this specific question shown in Table 4. This group of questions continues by asking specific questions about team work. 58.3% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement they enjoy providing feedback to their peers. The answer provided to the question “I trust my co-workers with information about my personal life” is inconclusive as 25% strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, 36.1% neither agree nor disagree and 38.9% agree or strongly agree. Providing personal information to co-workers can also have specific legal and company policy liabilities which could explain the inconclusive response. When respondents were asked if their co-workers made mistakes that they in turn needed to fix, 80.6% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The median answer for the combined group of respondents was 4.36 which translate to agrees with the statement that I always ask for help when I need it.

Question three on the survey was intended to get an understanding of first the frequency of Lencioni’s five dysfunctions of a team in the various work experiences of the respondents and secondly to get an understanding to the degree of tolerance the respondents had to these same team dysfunctions. There were 36 responses to this question. In general, each respondent group showed a low frequency of experiencing these five dysfunctions as well as a low tolerance for those dysfunctions as it shows in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5:

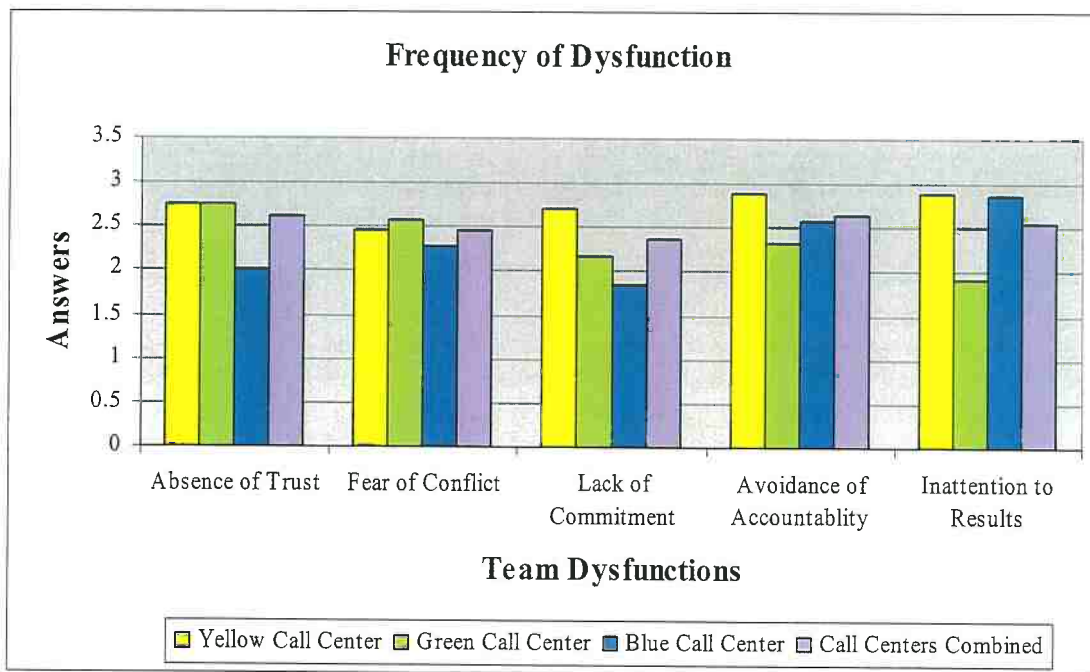
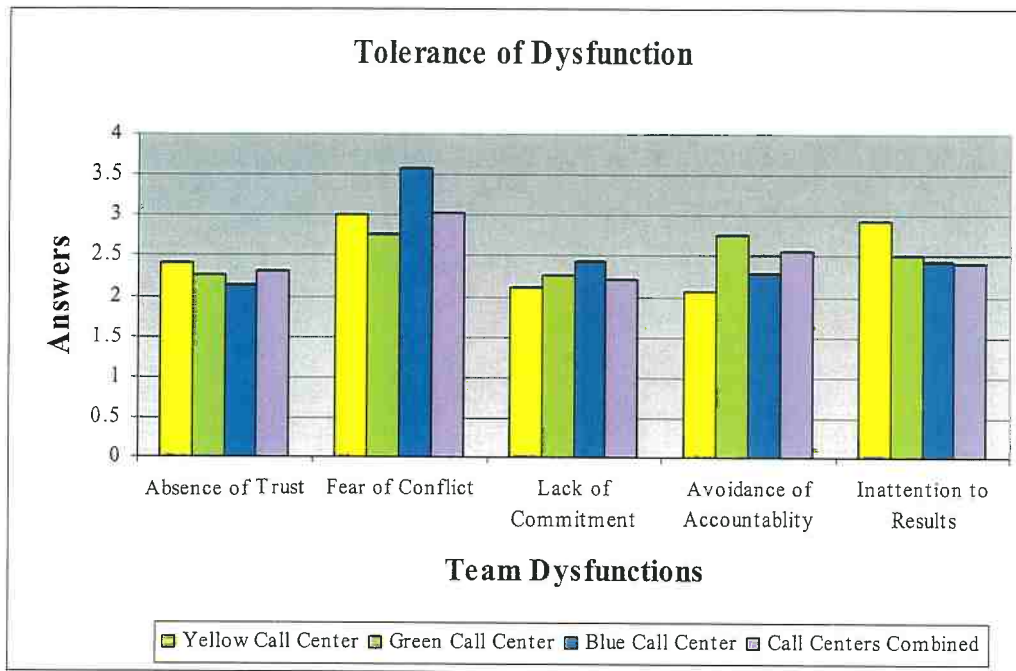


Table 5 shows that Inattention to Results was the most frequently experienced dysfunction by the respondents with Avoidance of Accountability and Absence of Trust tied for second. In Table 6, Fear of Conflict is the most tolerated of the five team dysfunctions. As one of the survey participants stated, “Absence of Trust is the root of group dysfunction and causes most of the other issues.”

Table 6:



Based on the responses to question 3, while positive in the sense that it seems that respondents do not experience the five dysfunctions of a team regularly, the results are inconclusive to support hypothesis 2.

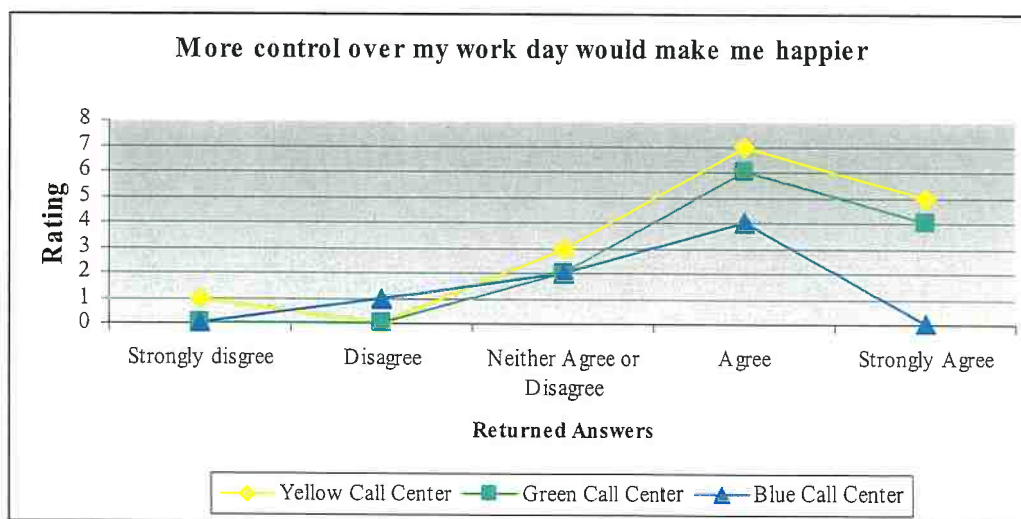
Respondents were asked to rank a list of six behaviors which team members could exhibit on a SDWT using a scale of 1 (least important) to 6 (most important). It is important to note for this question four answers were not ranked correctly and were removed from the results leaving only 32 responses. Table 7 shows that the most important behavior that team members should display is working as a team, not as an individual. The second most important behavior is setting realistic goals.

Table 7:

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	All Centers
Encourages poor performers to improve performance	3.73	3.40	2.71	3.41
Ask for help when it is needed	3.80	4.20	4.29	4.03
Down plays any politics in the group	2.33	2.10	3.43	2.50
Have exciting meetings	2.40	1.90	1.85	2.13
Sets realistic goals	4.20	4.50	4.29	4.31
Works as a team, not as an individual	4.53	4.90	4.43	4.63

The fifth set of questions focused on employee’s perspective on more general questions about SDWTs, work environment, and individual behaviors. These questions asked the respondents to rate the statement using a scale of 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. There were 35 responses for this question due to one answer sheet not being completed correctly. Of the 35 respondents to the question, “feeling like I have more control over my work day would make me happier”, 74.3% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Table 8:



Conversely, 57.1% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they enjoy being told what to do. Both of these questions start to scratch at the surface of work environment and based on the empirical research already presented, the answers to these questions state to support hypothesis 3; however, there needs to be further research completed to support hypothesis 3 conclusively. The median answer for the question, “I dream to work in a SDWT” was 3.31 which is neither agree nor disagree. While this answer could possibly conflict with the conclusion that hypothesis 1a was supported, it probably is more realistic to conclude that this question was too vague for the respondents to provide a correct answer. The answer to the question, “My work environment is controlling” is inconclusive. Based on the empirical evidence presented, the response to this question was expected to be overwhelming agree or strongly agree, but that was not the case. In fact, the break down was as follows: 40.0% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, 17.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 42.8% agreed or strongly agreed. Not surprising since the majority of the respondents are not in management, when asked if they wanted to lead a SDWT, the median answer to this question was 2.80 or disagree as shown in Table 9.

Table 9:

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	2	3
Disagree	5	5	2	12
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	3	3	10
Agree	6	3	0	9
Strongly Agree	0	1	0	1
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	2.94	3.00	2.14	2.80

The last question in this set of questions asked the respondents if they enjoyed working alone and the response was also inconclusive. Of the 35 respondents, 17.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, 40% either agreed or disagreed and 42.8% agreed or strongly agreed.

The Hypotheses

Based on the results presented, some of the hypotheses presented in this research were proven and some were not.

Hypothesis 1a: Is the work done in an Inbound Call Center conducive to being completed by a SDWT?

It is clear from this research that hypothesis 1a was supported based on the direct answers provided by the respondents to the survey.

Hypothesis 1b: Can the set metrics for the Inbound Call Center be attained with the same critical level of importance as when supervisors micro-manage if CSRs are in a SDWT?

Hypothesis 1b was not. None of the questions on the survey provided to the respondents could be used to measure an answer to this question. Based on observation and empirical data already presented, by implementing a SDWT with clearly defined goals which state that metrics for the call center that needed to be met and by including supervisor involvement where the supervisor is an integral member of the SDWT the hypothesis could be inferred as a positive yes.

Hypothesis 2: Can a SDWT exist in an Inbound Call effectively if they overcome Lecioni's five dysfunctions and move towards the result-oriented management as Kauffeld describes?

Further research is needed to support hypothesis 2 because there is inconclusive evidence to support. In order to truly answer hypothesis 2, a SDWT would need to be implemented in

one or more of the call centers surveyed to see if first the dysfunctions mentioned were present and second that they could be overcome. It is proposed with greater supervisor or manager involvement on the teams that would set clear goals and hold members accountable as functioning members on the team, hypothesis 2 would be supported.

Hypothesis 3: Would the introduction of SDWTs into an Inbound Call Center environment positively effect the work environment because CSRs would have more control over their work day?

There are two questions that start to support hypothesis 3; however, many factors contribute to a positive work environment so there needs to be further research completed to support hypothesis 3 conclusively including a study that links happy employees lowers their stress levels and increases their energy.

Limitations

There are clear limitations to this study. First, the sample size of only 36 returned surveys is not large enough to make clear generalities regarding implementing SDWT in all Inbound Call Centers. This study surveyed three call centers, two of which were in the same company although in two separate locations which made the respondents answers from these call centers similar as the only difference between the centers appears to be the observed work culture. The biggest limitation to this study is clearly that no Inbound Call Center was surveyed that currently uses a SDWT as described in this study as a way of managing the call center. As mentioned previously, an attempt was made to survey one call center that had implemented SDWTs, that implementation failed and the center reverted back to a traditional, hierarchical controlled environment. The research for this study would be stronger had this call center agreed to be surveyed.

Perhaps a larger limitation to this research is that the survey used for this study was not independently validated for errors. It was created by the researcher. Additionally, there were no questions on the survey that were asked to support or not support hypothesis 1b.

Conclusion

The goal of this research project is to show the positive and direct correlation of creating a SDWT environment using team management theory like Lecioni's model to create successful teams within the structure of an Inbound Call Center that successfully meets all quality measures while maintaining a positive work environment.

Lecioni's model for successful teams is described as the reversal of the five dysfunctions of the team. (2002, p. 189).

1. They trust one another.
2. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
3. They commit to decisions and plans of action.
4. They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
5. They focus on the achievement of collective results

This is the model that this study is using as a guide for measuring a successful team. A successful SDWT embodies those qualities and it also moves the management style to a result-oriented style.

Implementing SDWTs in an Inbound Call Center has great potential to revolutionize the work environment by changing the monotonous and stressful routine that the CSR experiences. Also, by implementing a SDWT in an Inbound Call Center, the supervisor would be able to use different leadership styles opposed to the micro-managing, hierarchical style that they are expected to use. Imagine an environment where CSRs are given control of their work day and for example, are allowed to set their own hours to staff the center.

Perhaps the SDWT decides together how to set breaks and lunches so that the phones are always manned during the periods the center is open. Imagine that the SDWT same CSRs are held accountable to the set metrics of the center and forced to make changes when for whatever reason the metrics are not achieved. The SDWT is motivated to take ownership of meeting or exceeding those goals. As the data supported, 74.3% of the respondents answered that they would be happier with more control over their work day and 94.4% of respondents enjoyed being members of a team.

As research and observation has shown, work in an Inbound Call Center can be called stressful due to the controlling nature of supervision that most centers employ. Additionally, CSRs must work in an environment where random calls come in and they need to be handled with quality and with excellent customer service. It is no wonder than that the latest ICMI annual report on staffing and retention noted in the top five reasons for [CSR] turnover includes handling complaints all day. (Cleveland, 2002, p. 57). The call center industry also supports this researchers finding. Team management has been implemented in the auto industry as well as in other industries. As Cleveland and Mayben (2005) state, “new management techniques coupled with new capabilities in call center technologies are changing call centers dramatically. A notable example in recent years has been the shift from bull-pen style call factories to multi-skilled team building and [CSR] empowerment.” (p. 219).

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Appendix 1: The Survey

The Positive Effect of Team Management in an Inbound Call Center.

1. I define a self-directed work team as:

- a. A team that self-manages, self-regulates or is autonomous.
- b. A team that is created for a specific purpose, for a specific time frame.
- c. A team that never gets any work done because team members do not work well together.
- d. A team that never really gets any work done, but is fun to be a part of.

2. Please use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree nor Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

- _____ a. In my current position, I work on a self-directed work team.
- _____ b. I have worked on a self-directed work team in a previous position.
- _____ c. I enjoy being part of a team.
- _____ d. My work is conducive to working in a self directed work team.
- _____ e. I enjoy giving feedback to my peers.
- _____ f. I trust my co-workers with information about my personal life.
- _____ g. My team members always make mistakes that I need to fix.
- _____ h. I ask for help when I need it.

3. Patrick Lencioni in his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* describes the common dysfunctions in most work teams. This question would like to uncover your understanding or experience with these common dysfunctions of a team. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is most often, first rate the frequency of the listed dysfunction to your experience in a team. Then rate your tolerance of this dysfunction using a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is most tolerate. (Lencioni, 2002)

Frequency					Team Dysfunction	Tolerance				
1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
					Absence of Trust					
					Fear of Conflict					
					Lack of Commitment					
					Avoidance of Accountability					
					Inattention to Results					

For all sources that you gave a tolerance rating of 1 or 2, please tell us why you find this dysfunction so intolerable.

For all sources that you gave a tolerance rating of 4 or 5, please describe why you are able to tolerate this dysfunction.

4. Following is a list of behaviors for which team members could exhibit on a self-directed work team. On a scale of 1 (least important) to 6 (most important), please rank them in the order of their importance to you. (Use each number only once.)

- _____ Encourages poor performers to improve performance
- _____ Ask for help when it is needed
- _____ Down plays any politics in the group
- _____ Have exciting meetings
- _____ Sets realistic goals
- _____ Works as a team, not as an individual

If you have other suggestions, please list them here.

5. Please use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- 1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree nor Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

- _____ a. Feeling like I have more control over my work day would make me happier.
- _____ b. I like to be told what to do.
- _____ c. I dream to work in a self-directed work group.
- _____ d. My work environment is controlling.
- _____ f. Leading a self-directed work group is a goal of mine.
- _____ e. I enjoy working alone.

6. I am:

- Male
- Female

7. My age is:

- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69

8. I have worked in an Inbound Call Center for:

- less than 6 months
- 6 -12 months
- 1 -3 years
- 3-5 years
- more than 5 years

I encourage your comments!

Questions I wish you had asked and how I would have answered them:

Other comments:

Thank you for your candid feedback – it is sincerely appreciated!

Appendix 2: The survey results.

Color coding: The color coding represents the three different calls centers surveyed and keeps the results separate.

1. I define a self-directed work team as:

a. A team that self-manages, self-regulates or is autonomous.	b. A team that is created for a specific purpose, for a specific time frame.	c. A team that never gets any work done because team members do not work well together.	d. A team that never really gets any work done, but is fun to be a part of.
14	2	1	
11	1		
7			

Question 2a: In my current position, I work on a self-directed work team.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	2		3
Disagree	6	1	1	8
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	3	1	9
Agree	4	4	2	10
Strongly Agree	1	2	3	6
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	2.88	3.25	4	3.22

Question 2b: I have worked on a self-directed work team in previous positions.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	2	0	0	2
Disagree	5	4	0	9
Neither Agree or Disagree	0	0	0	0
Agree	7	5	3	15
Strongly Agree	3	3	4	10
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	3.24	3.58	4.57	3.61

Question 2c: I enjoy being part of a team.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Neither Agree or Disagree	0	0	1	1
Agree	5	5	3	13
Strongly Agree	11	7	3	21
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	4.47	4.58	4.29	4.47

Question 2d: My work is conducive to working in a self-directed work team.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	1	2
Disagree	2	3	1	6
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	1	1	8
Agree	5	7	2	14
Strongly Agree	3	1	2	6
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	3.41	3.58	3.43	3.44

Question 2e: I enjoy giving feedback to my peers.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	2	1	1	4
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	3	1	10
Agree	5	6	4	15
Strongly Agree	3	2	1	6
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	3.41	3.75	3.71	3.58

Question 2f: I trust my co-workers with information about my personal life.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	3	1	0	4
Disagree	4	1	0	5
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	6	3	13
Agree	6	3	3	12
Strongly Agree	0	1	1	2
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	2.76	3.17	3.71	3.08

Question 2g: My team members always make mistakes that I need to fix.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	3	1	1	5
Disagree	11	8	5	24
Neither Agree or Disagree	2	2	1	5
Agree	1	1	0	2
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	2.06	2.25	2	2.11

Question 2h: I ask for help when I need it.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Neither Agree or Disagree	0	0	0	0
Agree	9	7	3	19
Strongly Agree	7	5	4	16
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	4.24	4.42	4.57	4.36

Patrick Lencioni in his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* describes the common dysfunctions in most work teams. This question would like to uncover your understanding or experience with these common dysfunctions of a team. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is most often, first rate the frequency of the listed dysfunction to your experience in a team. Then rate your tolerance of this dysfunction using a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is most tolerant. (Lencioni, 2002)

Question 3a - Rate the frequency of the listed dysfunction to your experience in a team. (scale 5 = most often; 1 = not often)

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Average answer for all Centers
Absence of Trust	2.76	2.75	2.00	2.61
Fear of Conflict	2.47	2.58	2.29	2.47
Lack of Commitment	2.71	2.17	1.86	2.36
Avoidance of Accountability	2.88	2.33	2.57	2.64
Inattention to Results	2.88	1.92	2.86	2.56

Question 3b - Rate your tolerance of the listed dysfunction to your experience in a team. (scale 5 = most tolerant; 1 = least tolerant)

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Average answer for all Centers
Absence of Trust	2.41	2.25	2.14	2.31
Fear of Conflict	3.00	2.75	3.57	3.03
Lack of Commitment	2.12	2.25	2.43	2.22
Avoidance of Accountability	2.06	2.75	2.29	2.56
Inattention to Results	2.94	2.50	2.43	2.42

Question 3 - All Summarized (5=high; 1=low)

	Yellow Call Center			Green Call Center			Blue Call Center		
	Freq.	Tol.	Diff.	Freq.	Tol.	Diff.	Freq.	Tol.	Diff.
Absence of Trust	2.76	2.41	-0.35	2.75	2.25	-0.50	2.00	2.14	0.14
Fear of Conflict	2.47	3.00	0.53	2.58	2.75	0.17	2.29	3.57	1.28
Lack of Commitment	2.71	2.12	-0.59	2.17	2.25	0.08	1.86	2.43	0.57
Avoidance of Accountability	2.88	2.06	-0.82	2.33	2.75	0.42	2.57	2.29	-0.28
Inattention to Results	2.88	2.94	0.06	1.92	2.50	0.58	2.86	2.43	-0.43

Comments for question 3 – first tell why you gave a tolerance rating of 1 or 2, please tell us why you find this dysfunction so intolerable. (Direct quotes from surveys.)

Yellow Call Center:

The purpose of work teams is to accomplish goals, or results. If there is no attention to results, the team is useless & a waste of time. Avoidance of accountability can cause unfair treatment of members or unfair distribution of work.

There should always be trust within the team. If there is any disagreement it should be settled. We should have a common goal and should all work together to achieve it.

These dysfunctions need to have a low frequency: low tolerance on a team because I feel they are critical to a teams success and well being. The opposite of each of these – high trust, willingness to deal with conflict, high commitment, accountability and focusing on results – should be present in each team member – granted, they might be at different levels.

People need to take responsibility & be accountable.

I see an extremely committed staff in order to reach our goals not to many conflicts and some one who doesn't want to own up to their mistakes some time.

Absences of any trust would be irritating – someone constantly checking your work/not trusting/ isn't productive use of time/energy. Fear of conflict in a good team/workplace seems senseless, unless it could result in physical conflict, which is usually unlikely at work, so why worry.

We're all at work for some specific period of time each day, week, month, life – why not commit yourself to the best possible job. Accountability – we learn from mistakes, we all make them, accept them, learn, and move on.

Because in my opinion working as a “team” you have to be able to trust each other, with very minimal conflict and everyone being committed to getting the job done. Everyone is accountable and you want great results.

I would like to work on a team, there must be accountability. And if a person is inattentive to results, it causes customer dissatisfaction and more work for co-workers. It's a matter of character and integrity.

Lack of commitment from any team member leads to problems with the team member leads to problems with the team environment. You need to be accountable to the team shows commitment builds trust/credibility /cohesion no attention to results lacks commitment and splits the team.

Since trust is earned there is slight room for initial mistrust by beyond it hinders access to resources/productivity. Lack of commitment hinders teamwork & productivity. Accountability is important so problems can have timely resolution rather than passed along. There is slight room for not paying attention to results since not everyone is always results – driven, but it is none the less very important to measure the teams performance in offering services.

Absences of trust = I don't believe you can have a healthy work environment without being able to trust your coworkers, who want to work in a place where you constantly have to watch your back. Fear of conflict = same line as absence of trust; no one wants to work in a place where you are afraid of your coworkers or conflict with them. Lack of commitment = bad customer service. Avoidance of accountability = this should not be tolerated b/c if there is a problem the customer is going to want to work with 1 person rather than 50, its bad customer service if a customer has a problem & no one wants to take responsibility for the call.

reen Call Center:

- Absence of Trust, avoidance of accountability, inattention to results these are the 3 most important items for working in a call center.
- It is difficult to work in a team environment when you have a member who has the ability to do a good job, but lacks the commitment to try and reach the goals and objectives you have set.
- These people ruin it for the ones that are working hard to meet goals. Luckily we don't have anyone like that on our team.
- Absence of trust is the root of group dysfunction and causes most of the other issues (avoidance of accountability, fear of conflict, lack of commitment) Inattention to results makes the whole team appear incompetent.
- Absence of trust will cause one to create artificial roadblocks up, resulting in the job becoming more inefficient, tedious and aggravating to the customer. Avoidance of accountability and inattention to results will also cause inefficiency and also bring customer aggravation (and more calls to clear up the problem.)
- Absence of trust – no sharing of information would take place. Fear of conflict – allows bad practices to keep happening. Lack of commitment – no follow through results in poor performance. Avoidance of accountability – no one takes ownership.
- Trust – trust is the #1 factor of a successful team. Conflict – if there is conflict it needs to be positive to derive at a good outcome or better result. Commitment – People in teams need to be committed or they will bring down the team. Accountability – all team members need to be held accountable.
- Absence of trust is not tolerable b/c if you can't trust your peers/team, you can't depend on them. Fear of conflict – conflict isn't always bad, so if you fear it, you may have problems growing as a team. Lack of commitment – everyone in a team needs to be committed to the team or it is dysfunctional. Avoidance of accountability – if a person won't take accountability for things then they can't improve.

ue Call Center:

- Results receive a 1 because if you are not focused on ensuring specific results throughout the course of the project you are destined to fail. Trust and commitment are not tolerated and go hand in hand. If you do not trust a person's dedication you automatically lower their willingness to participate and show commitment. Avoidance of accountability is almost as intolerable as results; if you cannot be held accountable you can not resolve your own mistakes or be rewarded for positive actions.
- They all make the work load more difficult for others on the team.
- Cannot understand spending so much time working with a group of people you don't trust.
- Because if you do not have all of the above you really are not an effective working group – then it becomes 1 or 2 people doing all the work of others.

Comments for question 3: For all of the sources you gave a tolerance rating of 4 or 5, please describe why you are able to tolerate this dysfunction. (Direct quotes from surveys.)

Yellow Call Center:

- In my experience, I have been able to work around these problems.
- I rated all as 1 or 2 – changing some of the dysfunctions might be possible – particularly if open communication exists on the team (which it must) – but then my tolerance might be higher – but I honestly don't see it at a 4 or 5 for very long. I am willing to help others and have others help me – if improvements are needed, but if not effort is made then true cohesiveness is challenging.
- I can tolerate just about anything, especially if it doesn't happen very often.
- I am confident in myself so I would not have an issue with conflict. My commitment to my team and my area of work.
- We're humans and do mistakes, if you're prompt to judge, sooner or later it will come to you too.
- Because trust and fear of conflict stems more from people's personal lives, than their professional lives. Fear of conflict is very natural today given political correctness, societies love obsession with lawsuits and many people in the news who over-react violently when conflict arises.
- Conflict can cause problems, but there is also healthy conflict, of discussion, debate. Diplomatic.
- Because it gives focus or attention back to the team member that is doing a good job and opens the doors for more responsibility for me. Gives me the feeling of doing a better job. I just know not everyone can or will pay attention to details like I do, because we are all different.

Green Call Center:

- I tolerate it because it is not an issue.
- Inattention to results – no scorecard results means no one knowing if progress is being made to get better.
- Because of my work ethic, I tend to move beyond the dysfunction to complete the task, move towards the goal, etc.
- Inattention to results – if a team can focus on the things that get results you are still functioning. NOT everyone looks as far as the end result.

Blue Call Center:

- Fear of conflict – I tend to dislike conflict I feel uncomfortable with it so I can tolerate it well if others don't want conflict.
- I can tolerate fear of conflict more because conflicts can and many time do, arise in group or team settings – fear of conflict is an unnecessary emotion, it it's the fear of not resolving the problems that holds a team back.
- No one is going to get fired, so I'm better off putting up with it then getting bent out of shape.
- Bad day – Sometimes mean lack of commitment it happens.

4. Following is a list of behaviors for which team members could exhibit on a self-directed work team. On a scale from 1 (least important) to 6 (most important), please rank them in the order of their importance to you. (Use each number only once.)

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	All Centers
Encourages poor performers to improve performance	3.73	3.40	2.71	3.41
Ask for help when it is needed	3.80	4.20	4.29	4.03
Down plays any politics in the group	2.33	2.10	3.43	2.5
Have exciting meetings	2.40	1.90	1.85	2.13
Sets realistic goals	4.20	4.50	4.29	4.31
Works as a team, not as an individual	4.53	4.90	4.43	4.63

*NOTE: 4 surveys were removed from the results of this question due to inaccurate answering. 2 from the Yellow Call Center and 2 from the Green Call Center.)

Other comments:

Set a common goal.

Usually politics creates problems

Each team is different. Set up & establish roles when team is set & reevaluate from time to time.

Question 5a: Feeling like I have more control over my work day would make me happier.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	0	0	1	1
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	2	2	7
Agree	7	6	4	17
Strongly Agree	5	4	0	9
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	3.94	4.17	4.86	3.91

Question 5b: I like to be told what to do.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	3	1	5
Disagree	8	4	3	15
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	4	3	12
Agree	2	1	0	3
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
avg by call center (scale 1-5)	2.50	2.25	2.29	2.37

Question 5c: I dream to work in a self-directed work group.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	1	0	2	3
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	9	4	19
Agree	6	1	1	8
Strongly Agree	2	2	0	4
avg by call center (scale 1-5)	3.44	3.42	2.89	3.31

Question 5d: My work environment is controlling.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	3	0	1	4
Disagree	3	2	5	10
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	2	1	6
Agree	5	7	0	12
Strongly Agree	2	1	0	3
avg by call center (scale 1-5)	3.00	3.58	2.00	3.00

Question 5e: Leading a self-directed work group is a goal of mine.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	2	3
Disagree	5	5	2	12
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	3	3	10
Agree	6	3	0	9
Strongly Agree	0	1	0	1
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	2.94	3.00	2.14	2.80

Question 5f: I enjoy working alone.

1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree or Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

	Yellow Call Center	Green Call Center	Blue Call Center	Total
Strongly disagree	1	0	2	3
Disagree	1	2	0	3
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	4	1	14
Agree	4	4	3	11
Strongly Agree	1	2	1	4
Avg by call center (scale 1-5)	3.19	3.50	3.14	3.29

te: 1 answer sheet was not completed from the Yellow Call Center and therefore the number for that group will be 16 for exercise.

I am:

all center	Male	Female	Not answered
Blue	1	6	
Yellow	5	11	1
Green	5	7	

My Age is:

all Center	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	Not answered
Blue	3	2	1	1		
Yellow	2	4	7	3		1
Green	4	3	3	2		
Totals:	9	9	11	6		1

**. I have worked in an Inbound
Call Center for:**

Call Center	Less than 6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3-5 years	more than 5 years	Not answered
Blue	1		1	1	4	
Yellow		2	1	3	10	1
Green			3	5	4	

