

MC-709

Box 35

Folder

Corporate Ombudsman Association
1988 research

1984-1988

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CORPORATE OMBUDS PRACTITIONERS - JULY, 1984

1. Are you a full-time ombuds practitioner or complaint handler? _____
Or do you have other roles as well? _____ If so, please say what proportion of
your time is spent in what other roles?

2. Is your office in general supposed to be a confidential office, as long as your
visitor wishes you to keep the visit confidential?

3. Do you keep formal records of visits? _____ By the name of the visitor? _____
With some description of the visitor's concern? _____ Do you destroy these
records after a certain period of time? _____ If you keep records only part of
the time, under what conditions would you keep a record?

4. Have you ever worried about whether you should break the confidence of a visitor?

_____ Because I thought my visitor was or might be dangerous to him/
herself;

_____ Because I thought my visitor was or might be dangerous to another
(or to me);

_____ Because I learned someone else might be dangerous to self or others;

_____ Because I learned of unethical or dishonest behavior (theft, etc.)
which I thought should be addressed;

_____ Because I learned one of our managers was incompetent, intolerably
mean, racist, sexist, etc.

_____ Other

5. Are you (often or occasionally or never) sought out by people who might otherwise
become external whistleblowers? _____ That is, do people ever come to you want-
ing help on dealing with ethical and safety problems? _____ Comments?

6. Have you ever been leaned on, in-house, to break a confidence of your office? _____
Have you ever been told that you'd be subpoena'd? _____ Have you been subpoena'd?
_____ And, if so, did you testify? _____ Is this a subject worth more explora-
tion? _____ Would you be interested in:

_____ "Shield laws" in your state (to protect you from testifying);

_____ More help from professional associations, (for example, a Corporate
Ombudsman Code of Ethics), and/or the American Bar Association, to resist
subpoenas;

_____ More discussion with other practitioners about this topic;

_____ I believe I should testify if subpoena'd, and/or would rather leave
it up to the discretion of the judge;

___ If my employer's interests were at stake or were thought to be at stake, I would feel I should testify.

___ Other

7. Do you see yourself as an "advocate?" _____ If so, for what or whom?
8. Are you designated as an advocate?
9. Do you see yourself as (attempting to be) a neutral?
10. Are you designated as a neutral by your employer?
11. Are you often taken to be more (or less) of an advocate than you see yourself to be?
12. Is this subject of interest to you? _____ To explore with ombuds practitioners?
_____ To change how you are seen internally? _____
13. Do you report to the CEO or equivalent? _____ If not, to whom?
14. Are you expected to have oversight over others who also report to the CEO? _____
15. Are you expected to be readily available to others who report to the CEO?
___ Yes, I generally treat them as if I reported also to them.
___ Yes, I treat them as colleagues.
___ I have very little to do with them.
___ Depends on the people involved.
___ Other
16. Are you available as a conflict resolution practitioner to managers and professional employees?
___ Yes, the same as for other employees;
___ Yes, and I also do a lot of management consulting with and for them: they come in qua employees and come in also as supervisors seeking help with employees;
___ Yes, but only in their supervisory role;
___ No, not allowed to.
___ No, they could come in but they don't.

____ Comment?

17. If you are available to managers and professional employees, do such persons seek you out proportionately more often, less often or the same as other employees? Has this changed over time?_____ How?

18. Do you see people for any kind of (work-related) problem?_____ Is your purview defined?_____ If so, how?_____

(Do you think the definition, if any, is appropriate, or should it be wider or narrower?)

19. Do people come to see you with scientific and technical disputes?_____ Is this kind of problem of interest to you for discussion with ombuds colleagues?_____

20. Is your office seen as an "option," so that employees can choose either to go to you or choose another route?_____ Or are you (so to speak) singular in your role?_____ If the latter, what happens when you are away; is this a problem?

Would it help to have counterparts of different races and sex?_____ Comments?

21. Do you see yourself, and are you seen, as part of a "complaint (or grievance) system" for your company? _____ Is this explicit?

22. Do you work together with in-house or out-of-house legal counsel?_____ Would you say you call them rarely?_____ Occasionally?_____ Often?_____

*23. What proportion of your time do you spend in:

____ information and/or referral;

____ counselling on work problems and grievances, (e.g. helping people help themselves);

____ formal fact-finding with? or without? making formal recommendations to someone else;

____ conciliation (seeing first one disputant, then another);

____ mediation (seeing disputants together);

____ adjudication, or joining an adjudicative committee;

____ giving upward feedback; working with managers on preventing work problems; working on committees, etc.;

____ Other

*(If you have other duties beyond dispute resolution and work problems, please answer Question 23 as if these responsibilities were 100% of your job.)

24. Do you see being an ombudsman as a profession?_____ Or as one step in career development?_____ If this is a profession, should there be special training for it?_____ Comments?

25. Has your office ever done a cost/effectiveness analysis of the office?_____ Should a sub-committee of ombuds practitioners work together on how to do this? _____

26. Do you keep aggregate records of your most frequent problems?_____ Do you have a sense of what are your most difficult problems?_____ Should ombuds practitioners try to keep formal or informal track of these questions among ourselves?_____ Would you want future practitioners' meetings (if any) to offer specific training on any questions?_____ Would you be interested to write (or use) case studies?

27. Here is a list of problems for you to consider. Would you mark each problem?

Here's the code:

N=never (My company never has this problem or if they do, I don't see it.)

O=occasionally (This comes in once in a while.)

F=frequently (This comes in a lot.)

T=this would be a good topic for training ombuds practitioners, or for discussion at a group like this.

CS=this is an area where we need case studies.

(Whether the problem comes in rarely or often need not of course affect whether a group like ours should address it. If you see it all the time, you may be bored with it.....or want a new perspective.)

- ___ unjust dismissal/wrongful discharge complaints;
- ___ salary equity complaints;
- ___ performance evaluation complaints;
- ___ promotion/posting system complaints;
- ___ supervisor/supervisee tension;
- ___ harassment problems (all kinds, or specify);
- ___ other EEO/AA problems, (specify if you wish to);
- ___ scientific/technical disputes;
- ___ other health, safety, ethical problems;
- ___ problems with seriously emotionally disturbed people;
- ___ dealing with specific difficult managers;
- ___ dealing with specific difficult employees;
- ___ dealing with difficult employee groups;
- ___ dealing with irate relatives of someone at the company;
- ___ keeping the Bureaucracy moving (parking spaces, pay advances, red tape);
- ___ Ombudsman stress/burn-out;
- ___ Other:

28. In general, if you were ever to come back to a conference like this, would you prefer organized discussion among colleagues, or formal training sessions, or lectures, or role playing, or films or skits on the problems that interest you?

29. What other questions should we have asked?

CORPORATE OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete this survey, place it in the enclosed envelope, and mail to: Professor James Ziegenfuss, Corporate Ombudsman Research Coordinator, Graduate Programs of Public Administration and Management, Penn State University, Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057.

Enclosed with this survey form you will find a preaddressed postcard. Please sign and mail the post card separately to inform us that you have completed your questionnaire.

In describing cases/incidents, change the particulars in whatever fashion you feel necessary to avoid identifying the individuals or company involved. All company-specific information derived from personal, phone and mail surveys is confidential. No identified information will be shared in any way beyond the members of the Corporate Ombudsman research committee compiling the survey results. Only aggregated information will be shared with your colleagues at the Corporate Ombudsman conference and in research publications.

Please take the time to complete the survey form. Sharing your experiences can be helpful to all the members of the Association.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

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1. The approximate total number of managers and employees served by the ombudsman office is _____.

2. Which case or which kind of case that you handled in the last year saved your company the most money?

2a. Total Estimated Savings \$ _____

2b. Please describe the case (for example, "We retained an extremely valuable scientist who had been in serious conflict.")

3. Please make rough estimates of the numbers of contacts and cases you see in a year.

Contacts _____ per year - Contacts are informal, brief (often 15 minutes or less, one-encounter and done).

Cases _____ per year - Cases are more formal, often taking an hour or more.

II. LEGAL ASPECTS OF OMBUDSMAN FUNCTION

4. If a former employee/client sued your company and you were subpoenaed by that person's lawyer, do you believe that your company would be willing to attempt to have the subpoena quashed in order to protect the confidentiality and neutrality of the ombudsman office? ___ Yes ___ No

5. If you had written a formal, fact-finding report about a case which subsequently had become a lawsuit against your company, should the plaintiff (presumably a former client) be able to subpoena you and/or the report?

___ No ___ Yes, the report ___ Yes, me ___ Yes, both me and the report

6. Do you have an agreement with your company that, in order to protect the confidentiality and neutrality of the ombudsman office, you will not be asked to testify against a former client? ___ Yes ___ No

7. If you do not have an agreement with your company that you will not be asked to testify against a former client, do you believe that you should have such an agreement? ___ Yes ___ No

8. Should the Ombudsman Association develop position papers or policy proposals concerning the role of the ombudsman in legal proceedings? ___ Yes ___ No

9. Has your ombudsman office ever been involved in a legal proceeding in which issues about the confidentiality and neutrality of the ombudsman function has been an issue? ___ Yes ___ No

III. OMBUDSMAN WORK

10. About what proportion of your working time is devoted to each of the following activities?

- a. ___% Counseling and Complaint Handling -- Listening, helping to frame options, processing complaints.
- b. ___% Management Advising and Consulting -- Providing upward feedback about issues, which may lead to policy and/or systems changes.
- c. ___% Education -- Helping to train managers, supervisors and others.
- d. ___% Administration -- Budgeting, general management, marketing, writing articles for company newsletters or similar media.
- e. ___% Other _____

(= 100%)

IV. OMBUDSMAN APPROACHES

11. Below is a list of approaches and techniques that ombudsmen use when working with clients and dealing with issues. Please indicate how frequently you use each of these approaches or techniques. Indicate the frequency by writing the appropriate number next to each item using the following scale:

About
Never Occasionally Half The Time Usually Always
1 2 3 4 5

Please mark the appropriate scale value next to each item.

- a. ___ Giving a hearing to feelings -- (e.g., defusing rage, providing sympathy.)
- b. ___ Active listening -- listening to the client's concerns and assisting the client to formulate the problem clearly.
- c. ___ Developing options with the client.
- d. ___ Immediate Referral to other offices/people/helping resources.
- e. ___ Coaching -- training in the use of company rules or procedures and/or role playing a situation with the client.
- f. ___ Shuttle Diplomacy -- working back and forth between clients or groups.
- g. ___ Informal Mediation -- seeing disputants together in your office.
- h. ___ Codification -- preparing formal written agreements between parties.
- i. ___ Fact finding -- to determine the facts of the case.
- j. ___ Making recommendations to management for resolution.
- k. ___ Turning the case over to others at a later stage.
- l. ___ Arbitration/adjudication -- making a decision about a dispute which is binding on the parties concerned.
- m. ___ Generic intervention -- working towards a general solution rather than raising a particular incident in order to deal with a specific incident.
- n. ___ Upward feedback regarding general policy problems or systems change.
- o. ___ Other technique/action _____

12. How frequently do certain kinds of cases/contacts occur in your organization? Below is a list of issues that occur in organizations. For each issue area, please indicate (1) whether the **ISSUE** is handled by the ombudsman office; (2) the **APPROXIMATE** number of contacts/cases in this area that your office handled last year; and (3) the **TYPICAL** manner in which your office responds.

As above, we define Contacts as informal, brief (15 minutes or less) and typically one-encounter and done. Cases, in contrast, are more formal and take longer.

We recognize that some cases will fall into multiple categories (e.g., termination because of drug problems). Use your best judgement about the appropriate category.

If the ombudsman office in your organization does not handle a particular type of complaint, mark the "No" category in the Issue column and then go on to the next item. If you do handle some issue but had no contacts or cases in that area in the last year, mark the "Yes" category and then skip on to the next item. **ESTIMATES RATHER THAN EXACT NUMBERS ARE OK.**

	<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>INCIDENCE</u>		<u>TYPICAL DISPOSITION (CHECK ONE)</u>		
	Handled By	APPROXIMATE		Handle Alone	Work With	Refer
	Ombuds Office? No/Yes	Number Last Year	Contacts Cases	With Client	Another Office	Immediately
A. DISCRIMINATION						
Terminations	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Sexual harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Racial harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Sex discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Racial discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Reverse discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Other EEO/AA (e.g. Handicapped, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
B. CAREER/WORK CONCERNS						
Hours of work	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Location of work	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Transfer/Job Posting	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Work assignment	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Termination	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Promotion	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Performance evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Salary/benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Deliberately unfair/illegal allocation of benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Deliberately unfair/illegal denial of benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Safety problems	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—

V. ACTIVITY PROFILE, Cont'd.

	ISSUE		INCIDENCE		TYPICAL DISPOSITION (CHECK ONE)		
	Handled By Ombuds Office? No/Yes		APPROXIMATE Number Last Year Contacts	Cases	Handle Alone With Client	Work With Another Office	Refer Immediately
<u>C. PERSONAL HEALTH</u>							
Health (Not drug/alcohol-related)	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
AIDS concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Drug problems	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Alcohol problems	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Smoking problems	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
<u>D. INTERPERSONAL/EMOTIONAL</u>							
Assisting subordinate- supervisor relations	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Serious emotional disturbance	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Meanness	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Dangerous coworker/subordinate	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
<u>E. ETHICS</u>							
Waste of money/resources	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Theft/misappropriation of property	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Client/customer/vendor complimentary benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Financial wrongdoing -- favoritism, bribery, kick-backs, insider trading	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Fraud, misrepresentation of products or results	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Leak, sale or theft of proprietary ideas, design equipment, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Product substitution, or other failures to meet contract specs	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
False time cards or record keeping	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Misuse of company/government property	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Shoddy quality/performance	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y		—	—	—	—	—

	<u>ISSUE</u>		<u>INCIDENCE</u>		<u>TYPICAL DISPOSITION (CHECK ONE)</u>		
	Handled By		APPROXIMATE		Handle Alone	Work With	Refer
	Ombuds Office?		Number Last Year	Cases	With Client	Another Office	Immediately
	No/Yes						
<u>F. MISC.</u>							
Suggestions for change in company policy	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—	—
Privacy Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—	—
Drug Testing	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nepotism or favoritism on a personal/sexual basis	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—	—
Environmental hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Y	—	—	—	—	—	—

G. EMERGING ISSUES

Have you encountered any new or unusual problems in the last year? If so, please describe.

VI. OMBUDSMAN TECHNIQUES

13. Many Ombudsman network members have expressed an interest in hearing about unusual or innovative techniques that their colleagues use to handle cases and publicize their functions. Briefly describe below any particularly effective approach or technique you use.

VII. GENERAL

14. What are the sources of your power to resolve problems?

15. Please indicate the size and estimate the annual budget of your Ombudsman office.

Number of Ombudsman _____ Estimated Annual Budget _____

16. How many years have you served in the ombudsman position in this company? _____ Years.

17. How many years have you worked at your company? _____ Years.

18. What is your educational background? Please check degrees obtained and indicate fields(s) of study.

___ Bachelors (Major) _____

___ Masters (Area of Study) _____

___ Doctorate (Area of Study) _____

19. Please estimate your salary within one of the following ranges:

- ___ \$25 - \$35,000
- ___ \$35 - \$45,000
- ___ \$45 - \$55,000
- ___ \$55 - \$65,000
- ___ \$65 - \$75,000
- ___ \$75 - \$85,000
- ___ \$85 - \$100,000
- ___ \$100 - \$125,000
- ___ Over \$125,000

20. Please briefly describe one successful and one unsuccessful case that you have handled recently.

A. Successful -- A case that was professionally satisfying (e.g., an early warning about a possible unsafe practice in the workplace permitted a production manager to make changes before anyone was hurt.)

B. Unsuccessful -- A case that defies resolution (e.g., Despite meticulous and continuous effort, we have been unable to confirm or disaffirm the truth of a sexual harassment complaint, and we still do not know who is lying.)

THANK YOU COMPLETING THIS SURVEY FORM. PLEASE MAIL IT TO US IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE AND WE'LL SHARE THE FINDINGS AT THE NEXT MEETING.



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