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Corporate Ombudsman Association -- "Corporate Ombudsman: An
Exploratory National Survey of Purposes and Activities" draft

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CORPORATE OMBUDSMEN: AN EXPLORATORY NATIONAL SURVEY OF
PURPOSES & ACTIVITIES

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- Preliminary Report -

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Several ombudsmen invited us to visit them personally. We appreciate their time. These visits were very helpful in validating first hand our survey work and in providing additional insights about the nature of ombudsman work.

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Executive Summary

This paper presents the results of the first national survey of Corporate Ombudsmen in private companies across the United States and Canada. In 1982 the Corporate Ombudsman Association was formed to identify and to link people within private companies acting in the role of ombudsman. The published research on the ombudsman in private business and industry is very limited. There are no firm data available on how many people are acting in this role, the nature of their activities and the results that they produce for the companies that employ them.

This survey was initiated by the Corporate Ombudsman Association in order to provide exploratory data on the nature and activities of the ombudsman role in private corporations and on the background and characteristics of those persons performing this function.

In 1986 a number of private corporations contributed funds to the Corporate Ombudsman Association to increase our knowledge and understanding of the work and the workers. Two researchers affiliated with the association were invited to collaborate with the Association's President, Mary Rowe, to develop the first survey.

The results of the first survey represent a sample of the companies that have been associated with the ombudsman organization. These companies were surveyed to gain their perspective on the role and function of the ombudsman. The survey includes information relative to titles of the function; background of the ombudsman; the nature of complaints; methods used; work activities; power and authority; case studies; and ideas for additional study.

The first national corporate ombudsman survey indicates that ombudsmen in general are functioning under many varied titles. Only half identified themselves by the title of ombudsman.

Practitioners tend to regard several types of complaints as critical in both importance and frequency. They engage in a wide range of activities. Ombudsmen rely on skills, knowledge, personality and organizational position for power and authority; they frequently have some responsibility for union member concerns. They identify the following types of complaints as their primary areas of interest: salaries, terminations, promotions and harassment.

The following major findings are summarized here and discussed in the report.

1. Only about half the ombudsmen use "Ombudsman" in their official title.
2. Ombudsmen most commonly describe their position as listening to and handling complaints, acting as unbiased third party in dissolving conflicts, and as a communication link.
3. Problems/cases of greatest importance are: "management practices" and "unfair treatment".
4. Key techniques/approaches include such actions as coaching, face to face meetings, and shuttle diplomacy.
5. Most clients first contact the office by telephone.
6. Almost all ombudsmen keep some kind of records, and use them for follow-up and problem pattern analysis.
7. Ombudsmen serve employee groups ranging in size from under 2500 to over 10,000.
8. Ombudsmen clients are most often exempt and non unionized employees and managers.
9. Few ombudsmen exclude classes or type of employees from their service.

10. Key referral sources include supervisors, personnel and former clients.
11. Ombudsmen use the following approaches and techniques most frequently: active listening, describing options, investigation, upward feedback, dealing with feelings and giving advice.
12. Ombudsmen typically distribute their work time in the following activities: complaint handling (56%); advising and consulting (17%); educational (5%); marketing-promotion (7%); and administration (8%).
13. Personal ability (and charisma) is the ombudsman's key power source; organizational position and direct access to and support from the CEO are also very important.
14. Ombudsman cases are varied, with few or no types of problems excluded.
15. Ombudsmen do not report high levels of burnout and are comparable to other work groups.
16. Ombudsman budgets are in the ranges under \$100,000 (19%); \$100-200,000 (39%); and \$200,000-350,000, (42%).
17. Ombudsmen are typically 6 or less years in their position (78%); have spent 10 to 20+ years with the company; come from a variety of educational backgrounds (most frequently business); and average about \$45-65,000 in salary, (median \$55-65,000).
18. Ombudsmen presented numerous case examples and suggested that further research should include studies of:
 - (1) relations with line managers
 - (2) career pathing
 - (3) training
 - (4) case type analysis
 - (5) effectiveness

In conclusion the ombudsman role and function within major private corporations is relatively recent but gaining very strong recognition. The activities appear to be significant in that they are addressing major problems for the companies in which they work, e.g. sexual harassment, sabotage,

employee-management conflict.

It appears that ombudsmen, although still relatively small in numbers as an identified group, have established a critical role and function in major private companies. They are dealing with significant issues which have the potential to impact very strongly on their respective companies. The Ombudsman appears to be gaining a significant position within private industry as a key element of a comprehensive problem resolution system.

Introduction

In the academic and professional practice literature there are significant writings about the role of the ombudsman in American and foreign organizations. However, the bulk of this academic and professional literature is directed toward public sector organizations and government agencies. There are very few articles that deal with the ombudsman in private industry. One article that stands as the classic reference piece for private sector ombudsman was written by Isadore Silver, appearing in the Harvard Business Review in 1967.¹² There have been few related articles in the following 20 years. In the last few years articles by Rowe^{9,10,11} Robbins^{7,8} and by Ziegenfuss^{13,14,15} have appeared. These are opening the topic for future discussion and development. It is obvious that there is a need for additional information regarding the role and function of the ombudsman in private business and industry.^{1,2,3,6}

The current study undertook to examine the role and function of the private sector ombudsman as defined by members of the Corporate Ombudsman Association. This association was formed in 1982 as a result of a meeting of private sector ombudsmen. There were several purposes for organizing. First, they wanted to identify colleagues in other companies performing the same kinds of activities. Second, they were interested in surfacing and identifying the exact nature and extent of ombudsman activities in companies across the United States. Third, they wanted an organization to support practitioners and their employers.

In 1982 there was an early study of ombudsmen in private companies by the Busch Center of the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Both

researchers and ombudsman practitioners have been interested in the number of ombudsmen working in private sector companies, either under the title "Ombudsman" or under specific titles like "Work Problems Counselor" or "Director of Personnel Communications." At the first national Corporate Ombudsman Association meeting in Cape Cod in 1984, several researchers were invited to assist in the development of this association. They were to provide research support to the group of practice-oriented members. There was increasing interest in developing a survey of the members of the association as the association grew. In subsequent years efforts were made to document the role and activities of ombudsmen as defined by the members of the emerging group. However, it was not until 1986 that the association decided a full national survey could be undertaken.

The current survey was developed as a result of these efforts over some three or four years and was specifically assisted by funding from several corporate members and the Corporate Ombudsman Association itself. Through September to December 1986 revisions were made to the corporate ombudsman survey questionnaire. This survey was pilot tested and reviewed by the research group, by ombudsmen and by members of the Penn State faculty in late fall 1986.

The purposes of this study involve the interests of individual ombudsmen, the Association and the greater field of organization and management research.

1. The study is intended to define the nature and characteristics of the ombudsman role in private sector company members of the Association.

2. The study was designed to provide a first description of the critical activities and the problems faced by ombudsmen and their companies.
3. The study was to collect case examples to contribute to a Corporate Ombudsman Handbook.
4. The survey was designed to identify topics for further research.

Methodology

This methodological section will describe the sample, survey procedure, questionnaire and research topics, and the analysis plan.

Sample. The sample included in this survey was developed from lists provided by the Association. It appears to represent the variety of ombudsmen quite well, in that there is diversity in size of employee group served, budget levels and duration of program. However the total number of respondents is relatively small so generalizations should be made carefully. At this stage of our research, the sample represents a good set of responses. We will expand the sample as we identify additional ombudsmen.

Procedure. The survey questionnaire was mailed to members of the Corporate Ombudsman Association and to attendees of any of the three annual Corporate Ombudsman Association meetings. Questionnaires addressed to persons who no longer were Ombudsman were passed on to the new ombudsman in the relevant company. For example, several ombudsmen have taken other positions within the organization. Other ombudsmen were identified as a result of the follow-up process and were subsequently sent questionnaires.

The questionnaire was mailed to 92 ombudsmen on the original list. Data from 28 questionnaires are presented here with another 7 also received. Along with the questionnaire was a memo describing the purpose of the study from Mary Rowe, President of the Corporate Ombudsman Association. Also enclosed was a post card addressed to the research group at Penn State University. On the back of the post card ombudsmen were to check off that they had enclosed their questionnaire in a self addressed stamped envelope and returned it. This

allowed researchers to identify which ombudsmen returned their questionnaires but did not allow identification of the questionnaires themselves. After a period of two to three weeks the members to whom the questionnaire was sent were called individually to increase participation. All replies to questionnaire items were confidential.

Instrument. A listing of the topics included in the questionnaire appears on the following page. The questionnaire is included in the Appendix. The topics were developed through individual interviews with ombudsman in 1986 and through surveys and inquiries at the annual conferences. A purposeful effort was made to include items specifically requested by the Association members.

Analysis Plan. The survey analysis was initiated with simple frequency of response counts. Tables which appear in the Appendix summarize the data in total. Open ended comments were listed as written, without editorial changes. The responses to the survey were then compared to interview data collected in 1986 and 1987 by the research team (Robbins, Rowe, Ziegenfuss). The interview data served as a second validating source of information.

A "second opinion" on the analysis will be generated by soliciting comments from ombudsmen attending the Fourth Annual Corporate Ombudsmen Conference in May. During the presentation and at the conference attendees will be asked for their comments and views of the analysis. This "interactive" review will insure that a collective perspective emerges which will serve to further strengthen the report.

FIGURE 1.

OMBUDSMAN SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE TOPICS

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>Question Subject</u>
1.	Ombudsman title
2.	Position description
3.	Problem importance
4.	Innovative techniques or approaches
5.	Client contact methods
6.	Record keeping
7.	Record information use
8.	Total number of employees
9.	Percent employees exempt vs non-exempt
10.	Unionized vs non-unionized employee percents
11.	Exempt-non-exempt employees who contact office
12.	Non-exempt clients union members/not union members
13.	Employee types or classes excluded
14.	Referral sources
15.	Approaches and techniques used by Ombudsman
16.	Work activity/time distribution
17.	Power Sources to solve problems
18.	Types of cases
19.	Types or classes or problems excluded
20. - 44.	Burnout scale
45.	Budget size
46.	Years in ombudsman position
47.	Number of years worked at company
48.	Educational background
49.	Salary level
50 - 51.	Case description
52.	Additional information needs

The burnout scale was chosen purposely because it has been employed in other research efforts of human resource managers, (see Golembiewski and Munzenrider 1986).⁴ Analysis of the burnout data was conducted with normative comparisons in mind, i.e. how do burnout levels among ombudsmen compare to other groups.

Suggestions for future research topics were solicited in order to insure that future ombudsman research is practitioner oriented and practical. Future research topics will be identified at the conference and priorities requested.

Results & Discussion

The results are discussed question by question. Tables presenting all responses to the questions appear in the Appendix.

The general strategy for this first analysis of the data was to examine the responses to each question independently and in straightforward fashion. As the survey sample numbers increase (through continuing follow-up and contacts at the conference) additional analyses will be added, e.g. comparisons of new/old program characteristics; separations by company size and type of business etc. In short, the analytical intent here was to initiate the study, not to develop and present final conclusions based on an exhaustive data set. We view the analysis as evolving and ongoing, consistent with our gradually emerging understanding of ombudsman work.

Titles. Question 1 inquired about the title of the position. Sixty percent of the group of working ombudsmen have the word "ombudsman" in their title. There was no consistency in the other titles listed, which tended to relate to the program concept and label in a particular company e.g. Alternative Communications Channel, Franchise Liaison Manager. The data reinforce the belief that the term "ombudsman" is not the exclusive identifying label for this type of work. There are fully one half of the respondents replying to the survey working under another identifying title. Nevertheless during the five year period in which members of the research team have been working with this group, the percentage using the ombudsman term in their titles has expanded greatly from the initial 12%. We think this indicates a

growing self-consciousness of their profession by both corporate ombudsmen and their employing organizations.

Position Description Descriptions of the positions (Question 2) are as diverse as the titles. However, there seem to be some common themes including: listening to and handling complaints and concerns of employees; acting as an unbiased third party; acting as a communication and reporting link between employees and management.

The key words in defining their response to these issues are "handle" or "manage" implying activity beyond "hearing complaints". Complaint taking is viewed as a core activity but it is only necessary not sufficient. Beyond the role signified by passive listening, ombudsmen play an active role both in handling the needs of their client, and alerting the organization and its management to policy issues. From the descriptions it is clear that listening with an action follow up are the key activities.

Problem Importance. There was keen interest in finding out which type of cases and problems ombudsmen considered of greatest importance (Question 3). But this question was actually three questions - important to whom: ombudsman, client or corporation. Ombudsmen were asked to differentiate between the interests of the three.

To ombudsmen the most important problems involve management practices (accountability, deficiency, styles for example) and unfair treatment (termination, inconsistency). There are few points of consensus on problem importance, as responses range from job security to addictions to harassment and communication.

To clients (as reported by ombudsmen) the most important problems were: fear of job loss and actual terminations, harassment, and general fairness. Almost half (45%) could be classified as career concerns (pay/benefits, terminations, transfers). The second largest grouping (40%) was management practices. Clients also value a demonstration of caring, some career guidance and assistance with understanding and interpreting personnel decisions and policies.

To the corporation, the most important problems seem to be waste, fraud and abuse, performance appraisals and termination management. These problems are potentially costly and certainly troublesome in a major way.

Clear differences did not seem to emerge from the responses. However ombudsmen appear to report that they focus more on management practices as leading problems. It is important to note that the importance rankings for clients and the organization is from the perspective of the ombudsman. A different ranking might be found if clients and management were asked the same question.

Techniques. Many ombudsmen have an interest in the successful techniques of colleagues. Question 4A asked for approaches to problems that were successful and about publicity which is addressed next.

Table 4A identifies the approaches cited by the ombudsmen. Several illustrative ones are:

- coaching hostile meetings
- describing who we are
- employee writes down the story
- face to face meetings
- letter writing to harasser
- shuttle diplomacy
- observe employee/supervisor meetings
- avoid confrontations

These approaches involve advising, confrontation, mediation-negotiation and participant observation - a nearly full range of third party/clinician/counselor approaches. Notably absent is "judging who's right" or "making and enforcing decisions".

Publicity. One critical task for ombudsmen is informing both management and employees about the program (Question 4B). What techniques and methods do ombudsmen use to get the word out? Ombudsmen identified the techniques they use in a variety of media as follows:

- articles
- brochures
- video
- poster
- presentations
- orientation with new managers and employees
- desk to desk notes
- newsletter

None are particularly unusual but as a group they represent a variety of "marketing methods." The ratio of relatively standard methods to more informal

means appears to be increasing in comparison to earlier studies.

Client Contact Methods. There are only three main ways to make contact with the ombudsman office - phone, mail or in person. Question 5 asked which is most frequently the method. Close to 70% of the ombudsman estimated that 50-100% of their clients made their first contact by telephone. Nearly 60% suggested 25% fewer of their clients use the mail. And 72% felt that fewer than 25% contacted the office in person.

These estimates suggest that the initial contact method of choice for clients is the telephone. Relatively few apparently "walk in" to the office. This is relevant to the question of whether the ombudsman's office must be in a key place that is accessible to walk in clients. Most clients it seems, succeed in contacting the ombudsman by telephone initially. Many must do this because they are located in another city.

Several programs operate almost exclusively by telephone. The ombudsmen feel that the anonymity and the security of confidentiality offered by telephone access are significant contributors to a willingness to present a complaint. It certainly eliminates the fear of being seen going to the ombudsman office.

Record Keeping. Question 6 inquired about the degree to which records are developed, beginning with contacts. Some two thirds of the ombudsmen replied that the "office keeps a list, by name of all contacts to the office." Few restrict their list to only those clients who go beyond the initial contact.

About 40% say they keep information on the particulars of certain cases. About one third of the ombudsmen do keep information on cases but do not retain identifying names. Only two ombudsmen indicated they keep no records at all.

The data suggest that ombudsmen feel the need to keep some data on contacts and cases but they are reluctant to retain identifying material into the future. In open discussions ombudsmen relate real fears of misuse of case detail and identities. However they seem to handle the data retention need in practice quite well. There were few reports (none-one) of data requested for litigation, or for use by the company for "inappropriate reasons."

Record Use. Question 7 asked how records were used? Ombudsmen use data for policy reports to management, for their own reference in case handling, and for reports on their worth. Not all ombudsmen use the data available to them for all of these purposes.

Employees - Numbers In Total. Question eight sought information on the number of employees in the division of the company served by the ombuds office. The responses were distributed between "under 2500"; 2500-5000; 5000-7500 and over 7500. The distribution does not give us a sense of how large an employee group one ombudsman can serve. Further investigation is needed. It is clear from those numbers that the ombudsman office is designed to exist in a corporate environment that also provides other channels for handling employee conflicts and concerns.

The number of employees who can be served by an ombudsman program varies with program design. An ombudsman program model that requires personal

investigation, significant formal report write up and feedback can serve fewer employees per year than one with much less formality, and which is telephone based.

Employee Types. This next set of questions (Questions 9-12) was designed to address the uncertainty around the relationships between ombudsmen and unions. Do ombudsmen operate in unionized companies and how many union members are served?

Unionized vs. Non-Unionized. Ombudsmen tend to provide service more often to non-unionized employees. Only a small number of unionized employees are currently served either because the entire organization is non-union or because union members are excluded either as a class or for many types of problems, (most frequently those which could be classed within the contract's grievance procedure). No joint union-management designed ombudsmen offices are currently known to have been attempted although some ombudsmen offices do serve some union members without union objection.

Exempt - Non Exempt. Most ombudsman clients are non-exempt employees.

Non-Exempt With Union Linkage. Fewer of the non-exempt employees have a union linkage.

The data presented here regarding union members served is to be followed with a study specifically directed at the ombudsman/union relationship. This study is now underway.

The data suggests that union members are infrequently found among ombudsman clients, more because few ombudsmen have been located in unionized firms than because union members are an excluded class.

Excluded Employees. Question 13 inquired whether any types or classes of employees are excluded. About 20% of the ombudsmen noted that they exclude certain types, (usually union members).

With regard to employees, whether unionized or not, it appears that few are excluded from ombudsman service. Any fear that an ombudsman service would not be successful with certain classes or types of employees is inconsistent with our data. However in the interviews several ombudsmen noted that they did not serve senior management e.g. other executives or division Vice Presidents who complained about colleagues.

Five ombudsmen noted that union employees were excluded. The data suggest a cooperative relationship between ombudsmen, management, and other internal sources of assistance.

Referral Sources. Question 14 sought information on types of referral sources and estimated frequency. Approximately 60% of the ombudsmen checked that they received referrals from supervisors, personnel departments, former clients and friends. Only about 25% checked that they received referrals from shop stewards or other union officials. However, in view of the low level of unionization of the firms surveyed (Table 10), this figure implies a strong level of shop steward acceptance. EAP personnel were noted as referral sources by only 38% of the ombudsman. This may be accounted for by the lack of EAP programs in some corporations.

Referrals are generated by successful resolution of cases. Ombudsmen noted that those who referred cases with successful outcomes became strong sources for follow up referrals.

Approaches & Techniques Used. What approaches and techniques do ombudsman most frequently use during their work? Question 15 offered the respondents a list of approaches and techniques on which they could note the frequency. The highest frequencies checked were the following:

- Active listening
- Describing options
- Investigation
- Dealing with feelings
- Giving advice
- Upward feedback

The distribution again indicates a wide diversity of techniques - a "full set of tools" for resolving complaints.

At the bottom of the list were arbitration/adjudication (lowest mentioned item), mediation, and turning the case over to others.

The two sets of rankings support the view of ombudsmen helping clients take an active, effective role in solving their own problems rather than utilizing the high ranking of decisions made and imposed by others. "Upward feedback" and "Making recommendations to management for resolution" implies that the organization itself and management are also treated as clients of the ombudsman office.

The surprisingly low rank of mediation can be explained by the comment of one ombudsman, "My first rule is never embarrass anybody. Bringing disputants together in front of me might one might create embarrassment and make resolution more difficult".

Work Activity-Time Distribution. Question 16 inquired about the distribution of ombudsman work activity. How much time is spent in five major work categories? In effect how are the work days spent? The following averages were noted:

<u>56</u> %	- Complaint handling
<u>17</u> %	- Advising and Consulting (upward feedback)
<u>7</u> %	- Marketing - Promotion
<u>8</u> %	- Administration
<u>4</u> %	- Other

The data indicate that ombudsmen spend much of their time in complaint handling. The advising and consulting time, although more limited may have stronger ultimate impact. However, the unique ability of the ombudsman to obtain unfiltered uncondensed data which is not "slanted" for the purpose of influencing policy or personnel evaluations, may be dependent upon individual complaints remaining the primary focus of the office.

Power. Question 17 asked ombudsmen to identify the sources of their power. How is the ombudsman able to assist in problem resolution? Approximately 40% of the ombudsmen cited their personal ability as a primary source. This means power is a derivative of personal characteristics in their view. However organizational positions and/or linkage to the CEO was also cited by the vast majority of respondents. It seems clear that there is not one power source-but at least two - personal ability and organizational position (often including CEO linkage). Convergence of these sources provides the total power base for ombudsmen. Ombudsman effectiveness is a function of

both individual abilities and organizational design.

The current data are consistent with the model outlined in other research whereby power is both internal to the person and provided by the organizational context in which he or she works.¹⁴

Case Type Frequency. Question 18 inquired about the relative frequency of different types of cases e.g. terminations versus transfers versus personnel policies. The most frequent cases (checked "frequently" or "very frequently") were:

- hierarchical conflicts (supervision/subordinate tensions)
- performance evaluation
- promotion
- termination
- salaries/benefits
- general "meanness" and psychological problems
- transfers/work assignments

These could be conceptualized as fitting into two general classes: Career concerns and inter-personal conflicts.

The importance of the second group is a reminder of the findings of other research that employees exist in the corporation as whole people, not just as producers of outputs and recipients of material rewards.

Types of Cases & Exclusions. Ombudsmen are interested in knowing whether similar types of cases are handled by all ombudsmen, or whether significant differences exist. (Question 19). There is also some question as to whether ombudsmen specifically exclude certain types of cases.

From the responses it appears that the following case types are sometimes or always excluded by some practitioners:

- cases handled by other office
- franchise agreement interpretation
- formal grievance/privileged legal
- government contract compliance issues
- grievance arising under a union contract
- pensions
- discrimination - referred to EOP
- sexual harassment - referred to EEO
- union contractual issues

The implication is that the ombudsman office excludes only those problems that are forbidden to them by the rules of the corporation or the legal strictures of society.

Burnout. At previous conferences the stress involved in ombudsman work was cited. Discussions of stress management and coping mechanisms suggested that some ombudsmen handle stress well, while others "burnout". Survey items were included to determine whether a particular burnout problem exists in this group (Question 20-24). The data indicate that:

- ombudsman as a group do not perceive themselves as highly stressed, and are not moving toward burnout
- this may be a select sample of ombudsman with high abilities to cope with stress

This study utilizes Maslach's Burnout Inventory, or MBI, which has been used widely to study burnout (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Maslach, 1982).⁵ The MBI consists of twenty-five items which, in turn, break out into three major subscales, including:

Depersonalization - high scores on which indicate that a person distances self from others, objectifies and regards them as things;

Personal Accomplishment (Reversed) - low scores on which indicate that a person considers self to be doing well on worthwhile tasks;
Emotional Exhaustion - high scores on which imply that a person is experiencing strain beyond comfortable coping limits.

Continuing research is demonstrating the usefulness of generating a "Phase Model" of burnout based on subscale scores. The subscales are assumed to be dominant in the order given above, with Depersonalization characterizing the onset of psychological burnout and Emotional Exhaustion in the most advanced stages (Golembiewski, Munzenrider and Stevenson, 1986). Phases are defined by eight possible combinations of high vs. low scores on each of the three subscales, using the median scores in a large population (N = 1572) as the cutting-points. The dominance generates this 8-phase model:

	Phases of Burnout							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Depersonalization	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi
Personal Accomplishment (Rev)	Lo	Lo	Hi	Hi	Lo	Lo	Hi	Hi
Emotional Exhaustion	Lo	Lo	Lo	Lo	Hi	Hi	Hi	Hi

The first three phases (Phases I through III) are considered to reflect low levels of burnout, or good coping with the demands of the job. Phases IV and V indicate moderate levels of stressful coping, and the three advanced phases, Phases VI through VIII, are thought to represent increasing inability to cope.

Table 20 reports the Burnout Phase scores for the ombudsmen who responded

to the survey. The data show that the most respondents (88 %) score in the low-stress Phases I - III. While these data indicate healthy coping for the respondents, we would caution against interpreting them as showing low stress levels for ombudsman generally. An entirely plausible explanation of the data is that the low response rate for the survey represents only data from less-stressed ombudsmen, ones with the time and the psychic energy to complete the survey form.

Budget and Ombudsman Numbers. Question 45 asked ombudsmen for an estimation of their budget levels. The figures presented by ombudsmen indicate that the typical budget (median) is \$100,000. The range began at \$5000 with a high of \$350,00. Nine ombudsmen cited budgets from \$75,000-125,000 while another nine had budgets in the \$180,000 to \$350,000 range. Approximately 60% are between \$75,000 and \$350,000.

Also noteworthy is that the vast majority (92%) of ombudsman offices surveyed were small in size (1-2 ombuds).

Length of Tenure at Company. Question 47 addresses the issue of whether ombudsmen are "new to the company" or whether they are in part selected because they have long and successful experience with the company. From the responses it appears that most ombudsmen have 10 to 20+ years with the company. Only a small proportion (4%) have less than 5 years with the company. This suggests that ombudsman familiarity with the organization and personal contacts are very important factors in the functioning of existing ombudsman offices.

Education. Question 48 inquired into the educational background of ombudsmen. The purpose was to examine the extent to which ombudsmen come from

similar educational preparation. From the data presented (see Table) business is the most frequent educational preparation with fully 50% citing a business education. No particular focus or educational background in the helping professions was found.

Salary. Question 49 inquired about base salary for the ombudsman position. The estimates ranged from \$25,000 to over \$100,000 with \$75,000 being the median figure. This does not include benefits and bonus. Salary will differ according to the organizational level of the ombudsman - how close to senior management-and to the size of the ombudsman function. Salary is also affected by the nature of the organization and by the salary level of the person entering the position i.e. whether they were already in senior management and/or an engineer-scientist etc.

Case Example-Topics. Questions 50 and 51 requested case descriptions to expand the pool of case examples for training and development use at conferences and for inclusion in the ombudsman handbook. Many problem examples were provided. The following topics were written up and appear in the Appendix.

1. Vacation benefits
2. Fire System design
3. Termination after probation
4. Poor evaluation
5. Fake data
6. Sexual conduct
7. Poor supervisor communication
8. Promotion
9. Sexual advances
10. Employee hospitalization
11. Sexual harassment
12. Job loss fear
13. Harassment
14. Leave without pay

15. University training cost recovery
16. Departmental stress
17. Future promotion blockage
18. Improper classification
19. Sexual harassment
20. Employee threats
21. Termination
22. Non receipt of promised increase
23. Bad health insurance reimbursement
24. Franchise sale problem
25. Sexual harassment
26. Passed over for promotion
27. Blasting damage
28. Co-worker fraud
29. Child custody
30. Threat to life
31. Transfer refusal

Each of the cases were to include information relating to the nature of the problem; job category; referral source; purpose for using the ombudsman; steps followed in the case; outcomes; satisfaction; time required and other comments.

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APPENDIX 1

TABLES

TABLE 1.
Responses to Q. 1:
"What Is Your Title?"

Alternative Communications Channel
Assistant to Secretary for Citizen Affairs
Corporate Ombudsman
Employee Problem Resolution Officer
Exempt Compensation Program Manager
Franchise Liason Manager
Liason Programs Manager
Manager, Employee Relations
Manager, Human Resources
Mgr, Work Problem Counseling
Ombuds Assistant
Ombudsman
Ombudsman
Ombudsman
Ombudsman
Ombudsman
Ombudsman
Ombudsman
Ombudsman
Ombudsman
Ombudsperson
Ombudsperson
Ombudsperson
Principal Staff Engineer - Ombudsman
Special Asst to (CEO)
Vice President
Vice President - Ombudsman

TABLE 2.
Responses to Q. 2:
"Briefly Describe Your Position."

Avenue for upward communications by employees
Classic ombudsman role
Communication link between upper mgt & all employees
Confidential resource to emps & mgt concerns
Corporate ombudsman
Currently developing ombuds office
Dispute resolution
Franchise & management liason
Handle concers & report to v.p-g.m.
Handle confidential employee concerns
Handle internal personnel problems
Help deal w/work-related problems
Help resolve safety & other employee concerns
Liason & consultant for resolving problems
Manage wrk problem counseling to approx. 100 companies
Mediation/Conciliation activities, ident work life quality
Neutral corp member to assist employees in resolving concerns
Neutral source to resolve problems
Neutral, informed counselor, sometimes fact-finder
Pgms to maintain & enhance work environment
Receive & assist employee concerns and complaints
Receive & respond to policy violation allegations
Responsible for all compensation matters, also ombudsman
Self explanatory
Staff to general mgr- MDAC- Houston
Take/handle complaints & inquiries pertaining to DOT
To hear concerns of employees
Unbiased 3rd party review
Unrestricted ombuds activity

TABLE 3 - 1.
 Responses to Q. 3(1):
 "Two Most Important Problems, From Perspective of Ombudsman."

Benefits administration	Unfair treatment
Communication	Unjust terminations
Communication	Unposted contamination
Communication	Use of human resources
Company benefit application	Very strange problems
Company policy	Waste, fraud & abuse reports
Credibility	
Disparate treatment	
Drug dependence	
Employee confidentiality	
Employee morale problems	
Fairness	
Financial assistance	
Fraud/waste/abuse	
Fraud/waste/abuse	
Harassment	
Health	
Human relations	
Inconsistent mgt practices	
Insensitive bureaucracies	
Interpersonal problems	
Involuntary termination	
Job Security	
Mgr/sub relationship prblms	
Mgt accountability	
Mgt deficiencies	
Mgt practices	
Mgt practices	
Mgt practices	
Mgt style	
New problems	
Nuclear safety violation	
Overseeing discipline	
Performance	
Personnel problems	
Personnel related	
Policy interpretation	
Poss unioning activity	
Progressive mgt styles	
Reassignment	
Relationship & attitude	
Separation	
Services provided	
Sexual harassment	
Sexual harassment	
Supervisor/Emp performance	
Supervisor/Emp relations	
Systemic problems	
TimeUnfair removal from job	

TABLE 3 - 2.
 Responses to Q. 3(2):
 "Two Most Important Problems, From Perspective of Client."

Autocratic manager	Transfers
Benefit questions	Unfair process
Benefits	Unfair removal from job
Benefits administration	Vacation entitlement
Career advancement	Work relationships
Career development	Zero energy checks
Career development	
Communication	
Communication	
Discrimination	
Disparate treatment	
Facing job loss	
Feeling unfairly treated	
Financial assistance	
Harassment	
Harassment	
Harassment	
Harassment by supervisor	
Job evaluations	
Job Security	
Lack of sprvsory response	
Mgr/sub relationship problems	
Mgt practices	
Mgt practices	
Mgt practices	
Need to be heard	
Pay	
Pay/compensation	
Perceived reappraisal	
Performance	
Performance appraisal	
Performance evaluation	
Personnel attitude/prod.	
Personnel related	
Policy issues	
Promotions	
Personal, financial, family, stress	
Reassignment	
Relationships	
Secure employment	
Separation	
Services provided	
Sexual harassment	
Someone who cares	
Someone who will listen	
Sup/Emp relations	
Terminations	
Terminations	
Transfers	

TABLE 3 - 3.

Responses to Q. 3(3):

"Two Most Important Problems, From Perspective of Company."

Achieving objectives	Unjust terminations
Alignment of mgrs	Unposted contamination
Benefit administration	Very strange problems
Benefits	Waste, fraud & abuse
Building focus on human resources	Waste, fraud & abuse rpts
Communication	Work environment
Communication	
Company Policy	
Conflict w/ co-workers	
Consistency of failures	
Corporate security	
Credibility	
Cultural change	
Discrimination issues	
EEO related	
Effective dispute resolution	
Fraud, waste & abuse	
Fraud/waste/abuse	
Fraud/waste/abuse	
Harassment	
Harassment	
Identifying issues	
Mgr/sub relationship problems	
Mgt deficiencies	
Mgt performance problems	
Mgt practices	
Mgt practices	
Mental health, drug dependence	
New problems	
Nuclear safety violation	
Payroll concern	
Performance	
Personnel performance	
Personnel related	
Policy interpretation	
Possible unioning activity	
Potential legal situations	
Problems which affect	
Product integrity/safety	
Productivity	
Relationships	
Separation	
Staff morale	
Sup/Emp relations	
Systemic problems	
Termination for cause	
Timely mgt decisions	
Training managers	
Unfair removal from job	

TABLE 4 - A.
Responses To Q. 4(A):
"Briefly Describe ... Case-Handling Approaches."

Active listening
Ask relevant questions
Avoid confrontations
Bring in training pgm
Coach hostile meetings
Counseling expertise
Describe who we are
Direct to mgt
Discuss options
Dont publicize results
Emp writes down story
Emp/Mgt neutral advocate
Face-To-Face Meetings
Follow up appropriately
Get client & mgt together
Get mgt involved early
Lettr-wrtng to harasser
Listen
Networking
Nothing unique
Obsrve emp/sprvsr meetngs
Peer review board process
Part-Time Work-protects anonymity
Refer dysfunctional emp to EAP
Seek out areas of concern
Shuttle diplomacy
Start at lowest level
Tell what we do & dont do
Too new to comment well

TABLE 4 - B.
Responses To Q. 4(B):
"Briefly Describe ... Publicizing The Ombuds Function."

Articles in newsletter, hotline
Articles in paper, video
Articles, pamphlets, team talks
Brochures
Brochures, articles
Face-to-Face Annual Presenttions
Interviews, desk-to-desk notes
Mentioned at team talks
Mgt videotapes, posters
Newsletter
Newsletter, meetings
Newsletter, trade shows, referls
Nothing but posters
Nothing unique
Posters
Posters & presentations
Posters, articles, presentations
Part of orientation for new employes
Referrals by clients
Reports, talks to new employees
Report to staff, meetngs
Talks, appearances at functions
Word of mouth,
Writing about ombudsmanny

TABLE 5.
Responses to Q. 5:
"How Have ... Clients Made Initial Contact...?"

<u>Contact Method</u>	<u>Average Initial Contact Percentages:</u>
Phone	68
Mail	12
In Person	19

TABLE 6.
Responses to Q. 6:
"How Is Record Keeping ... Performed?"

<u>Number Respondents Checking</u>	<u>Provision:</u>
<u>18</u>	A. Office keeps list, by name, of all contacts.
<u>3</u>	B. Office keeps list, by name, of only cases that go beyond initial contact.
<u>12</u>	C. Office keeps particulars of some cases, including names.
<u>11</u>	D. Office keeps information for statistical purposes, but does not retain names.
<u>2</u>	E. Office keeps no records.

Other Procedures Mentioned

Complete files kept.
Confidential notes kept.
Destroyed after 6 months.
Don't keep subpoena'd cases.
List & folders
List case seriousness
Offsite namekeeping

TABLE 7.

Responses to Q. 7:

"If Office...Keeps Records...How Is...Information Used?"

Activity reports, documentation of significant issues
As memory refresher, for statistical purposes
As resource only- confidentiality not big factor w/franchises
By ombudsman to report to mgt on issues
By ombudsmen only
Confidential, for aggregate reports & case mgt
Continuous log of actions, & debriefing of client
Feedback to managers & community groups on a steady state basis
For ombudsman use- some cases resurface after time
For statistical purposes
Give mgt breakdown of complaints/inquiries/problems
Log of ombud actions, base for generic quarterly case reports
Only for recall purposes
Presentations to mgt & emps on shared concerns
Reference, statistical
Reports, statistical purposes
Shared w/union president & mgt
Spot trends, feedback to decision makers
Statistical analyses, feedback to mgt, spot trends, etc.
Statistical data
Statistical purposes
Statistical purposes & references on other cases
Statistical purposes, trends, show productivity of ombuds office
Statistical report to general mgr
Statistical reports, background for office only
To analyze for trends, referred to, potential use in law suits
To follow for close-out & reports to oversight committee
Used to track employee concerns

TABLE 8.
Responses TO Q. 8:
"What Is the Approximate Total Number of Employees
...Served By The Ombuds Office?"

<u>RANGE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
UNDER 2500	7	25
2500 - 5000	8	29
5000 - 7500	5	18
OVER 7500	8	29

MEDIAN SIZE = @ 5000

TABLE 9.
Responses to Q. 9:
"Of All Employees, Approximately What Percentages Are?"

1. Exempt -- Median = 47

2 Non-Exempt -- Median = 50

TABLE 10.

Responses to Q. 10:

"Of Non-Exempt Employees, Approximately What Percentages Are?"

1. Unionized -- Median = 0

2 Non-Union -- Median = 88

TABLE 11.

Responses to Q. 11:

"Of Employees Who Contact Your Office, Approximately What Percentages Are?"

1. Exempt -- Median = 43

2 Non-Exempt -- Median = 50

TABLE 12.
Responses to Q. 12:
"Approximately What Percentages of Your Non-exempt Clients Are...?"

1. Union -- Median = 01
- 2 Non-Union -- Median = 99

TABLE 13.

Responses of Q. 13:

"...Types or Classes of Employees Excluded from Your Involvement?"

Yes -- 25%

No -- 75%

Types Excluded:

Contract employees

No union members

Union employees

Union employees

Union members

Employees appointed as county reps.

TABLE 14.
 Responses to Q. 14:
 "Which Of The Following Make Referrals To You?"

<u>Number Checked</u>	<u>Source of Referral</u>
27	Supervisors
25	Personnel
15	EAP
11	Shop Steward / Union Official
26	Former Clients of Ombud Office
25	Personal Friend of Client
14	Other

Others Mentioned

Career Counselors
 EEO Office
 EOP
 Executives
 Mgt, Franchise Assn
 Staff associates and counselling service
 Medical/religious counsellors, lawyers
 Occupational Health Dept
 Employees outside division
 Concerned employees
 Self-referrals
 Self-referrals
 Hourly emps, individual contributors
 Parents, not part of company

Table 15.

Responses To Q. 15:

"Below is a list of approaches and techniques that ombudsmen use when working with clients and dealing with issues. Please indicate by number how frequently you use each of these approaches or techniques. Use the following scale:"

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

Average (Mean) Responses:

- a. 3.4 Dealing with feelings -- (e.g.) Defusing rage, providing sympathy.
- b. 4.5 Active listening -- listening to the client's concerns and assisting the client to formulate the problem clearly.
- c. 4.0 Describing options to the client.
- d. 3.4 Giving advice about the general approach the client should take to solve the problem.
- e. 2.8 Referral to other offices/people/helping resources.
- f. 2.6 Coaching -- training in the use of company rules or procedures and/or role playing a situation with the client.
- g. 2.6 Shuttle Diplomacy -- working back and forth between clients.
- h. 1.8 Mediation -- seeing disputants together in your office.
- i. 3.7 Investigation to determine the facts of the case.
- j. 3.1 Making recommendations to management for resolution.
- k. 2.1 Turning the case over to others.
- l. 1.1 Arbitration/adjudication -- making a decision about a dispute which is binding on the parties concerned.
- m. 2.2 Generic intervention -- working towards a general solution rather than raising a particular incident.
- n. 3.4 Upward feedback regarding general policy problems.
- o. 3.0 Other technique/action _____

Other Techniques Given:

- Organizational intervention (Code 2 - Occasionally)
- Pocket veto (Code 2)
- Training, lectures, reports (Code 2)
- Conciliation (Code 3 - About half the time)
- Short-term counselling, referral (Code 3)
- Followup to insure satisfaction (Code 4 - Usually)
- Feedback of nature to mgt (Code 5 - Always)

TABLE 16.

Responses To Q. 16:

"About what proportions of your working time are devoted to each of the following activities?"

Average (Mean) Response:

- a. 56% Complaint Handling -- Processing complaints identification, investigation, and resolution.
- b. 17% Advising and Consulting -- Providing upward feedback about issues which may lead to policy and/or structural changes in the organization.
- c. 5% Education -- Helping to train managers, supervisors and others.
- d. 7% Marketing-Promotion -- Making contacts/attending functions to publicize the services available from your unit.
- e. 8% Administration -- Budgeting, general management, writing articles for company newsletters or similar media.
- f. 4% Other _____

100% (Approx.)

Other Responses:

Case-related contacts
Duties for other departments
Handling personal conflict
Providing statistical data
Participation in Action Research Group
Self education/updating
Self improvement

TABLE 17.
Responses To Q. 17:
"What Is The Source Of Your Power...?"

Ability, CEO linkage, Organizational position
Ability, credibility, linkage to CEO
Ability, Credibility, linkage to VP
Ability, linkage & position
Ability, linkage to CEO, linkage to organization
Ability, linkage to CEO, past successes, good associates
Ability, Org pos, linkage to VP-GM, long tenure, well-known
Ability, patience & reputation as fair & knowledgeable
Ability, reputation, organizational position
Ability, reputation, Organizational position
Ability, respect, confidence in function
Ability; Linkage to corp dec-makers; advocate skills
CEO linkage, organizational pos, desire of management
Experience, reputation, friends in right places
Linkage to CEO, Reputation, Acquaintances
Linkg to CEO, know where to get answers, Intuitiveness
Mgt commitment to Ombuds role
Org pos, Ability, Linkage to CEO
Org pos, Access to all mgrs, reputation & trust
Org pos, Credibility, Location, Ability
Org pos, Reputation, Formal responsibility for grievance process
Org pos, Credibility w/mgt
Org pos. & personal ability, supported by mgt
Personal Credibility, Report to Exec Director
Report to CEO
Reputation, conflict skills, independent status, favor of gen mgr
Respect, well-known, on vp-gm staff
Stature, office status, linkage to CEO

TABLE 18.

Responses to Q. 18:

" How frequently are certain kinds of cases handled by the ombuds function in your organization? Using the following scale, please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which your office handles each type of problem.

	Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5
<u>Average (Mean) =:</u>					
Terminations				3.3	
Sexual harassment			2.7		
Racial harassment		2.2			
Other EEO/AA			2.5		
General "meanness" & psych problems			3.1		
Salaries/benefits			3.3		
Performance evaluation				3.5	
Health and safety		2.4			
Hours of work		2.3			
Location of work		2.0			
Transfers			3.0		
Work assignments			2.9		
Promotion/job posting				3.4	
Tension between super- visor & subordinate				4.0	
Serious emotional disturbances			2.6		
AIDS concerns	1.6				
Other		2.0			
<u>Other Comments:</u>					
Career & personal planning					
Drug/Alcohol use					
Employee work habits					
Family concerns					
Financial concerns					
New problems					
Personal problems					
Poor Communications, attitudes					
Rehire requests					
Smoking					
Staff Benefits					
Work schedules					

TABLE 19.

Responses To Q. 19:

"Are There Some Types or Classes of Problems Excluded From Your Work?"

NO -- 11 (41%)

YES -- 16 (59%)

Types of cases/problems excluded:

I have exclusion option...

Abuse of organizational structure
Cases handled by other offices
Franchise Agreement Interpretation
Formal grievances
Govt contract compliance issues
Grievance by union
Initial grievances
Pensions
Privileged legal procedures
Racial disagreements - referred to EOP
Sexual harassment - referred to EEO
Things under union contract
Union grievance issues
Union Matters
Union-Contractual issues

TABLE 20.
Phase Levels of Burnout

<u>Level</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Percent of Cases</u>
Low Job Stress/ Burnout	I	69 %
	II	15
	III	4
Moderate Job Stress/ Burnout	IV	—
	V	8
High Job Stress/ Burnout	VI	—
	VII	4
	VIII	—

TABLE 21.
 Responses to Q. 45:
 "Please Indicate the Size and ... Annual Budget of Your Ombuds Office."

1. Size of Office

<u>No. Ombuds</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>
1	19	73%
2	5	19
3	1	4
5	1	4

Median = 1

2. Budget of Ombuds Office

<u>Range</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>
Under \$100 K	4	19%
\$100 - 200 K	8	39
\$200 - 350 K	9	42

Median = \$125 K

TABLE 22.
Responses to Q. 46:
"How Many Years in Ombuds Position?"

<u>No. Years</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>
1 or Less	10	36%
2	6	21
3	6	21
4	2	7
5 - 10	3	10
14 Years	1	3

Median = 2 years

TABLE 23.
Responses to Q. 47:
"Number of Years Worked At Your Company."

<u>No. Years</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>
Under 5	1	4%
5 - 10	1	4
10 - 15	9	32
15 - 20	8	29
Over 20	9	32

Median = 17.5 years

TABLE 24.
Responses to Q. 48:
"What Is Your Educational Background?"

BACHELOR'S (N = 13)

BSEE
Bus Adm
Business
Business
English
Engineering
Engr phys
Lib Arts
Pol Sci
Psych
RN
Sociology
Business/Psychology

MASTERS (N = 8)

EE
Eng Admn
LLM
Math
MBA
MBA
Theo/App Mechanics

DOCTORATE (N = 5)

Economics
Economics
Law
Law
Philosophy of Education

TABLE 25.
Responses to Q. 49:
"Please Estimate Your Salary Within One of the Following Ranges."

<u>Range</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>
Under \$25 K	1	4%
\$25 - \$35 K	1	4
\$35 - \$45 K	3	11
\$45 - \$55 K	7	25
\$55 - \$65 K	5	18
\$65 - \$75 K	2	7
\$75 - \$85 K	2	7
\$85 - \$100 K	1	4
Over \$100 K	6	21

Median = \$55 - \$65 K

TABLE 26.

Responses to Q. 52:

"What Other Kinds of Information Would You Like To See Us Collect?"

Any chance of regional ombuds meetings- several times a year?

Are people getting meaner over the years?

Breakdown of types of problems raised

Career planning for ombuds

Data on degree of accediance ombuds enjoy by organized line, project structures, and the personnel & human resources depts.

Does organization have employee assistance program?

How does ombuds deal with mental health/chem. dep. problems?

Does organization have formal policies/procedures? esp. formal grievance process? What sets rules/regs for how emps shd be trtd?

Good questionnaire- pretty complete. Would like to get together with you at Marina Del Ray.

How do people assess their productivity? What do their mgrs say?

How do you build good relations with mgt who have never heard of you?

How far should the issue be carried if challenged at all levels- I believe to the CEO- at least it would work once

How is ombud service "advertised" in organizations?

How ombudsman interfaces with other functions and line mgt

How people got into their job- when a position is vacant, how best to fill it- what qualifications to look for?

Info on "whistle blower" cases- protection of employee who reports violations and how the ombud deals with the offenders

Info on any substance abuse related cases

Is there tension between you and line or staff mgrs?

More info on reporting relationships- who are ombuds working for? VPs? Dept heads? Personnel directors?

Need & results of advertising ombud program. Perceived as soliciting problems? More professional to maintain low profile? Balance?

Ombud function is so styled by individual ombuds and their organizations.

Once out of organization mainstream, how do you get back in? Is this built into position in other organizations?

Pct of cases where changes in mgt decisions occur because of ombudsman intervention.

Percentage of time on various cases- individually, not grouped

Political- need for more conservative candidates elected on all levels- people should be informed- they affect people we help

Something on typical case loads

Upwards communications methods

Where do I take my acquired "people skills"? Know too many secrets to be in Personnel. Where do you go after being an ombudsman?

Where do ombuds go for relevant training & professional growth?

-- Lengthy list of effectiveness priorities. Likes the case studies

-- Lengthy note about behavior modification method

APPENDIX 2.

CASES

Ombudsman Survey Case Description File

ID: 01

Case: 1

Problem: Failure to earn vacation benefits while classed as a temporary employee.

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Poster

Reason: Unsuccessful in going through line management or human resources.

Steps: Gathered facts involved in case; Determined when and why practice changed; Convinced management change was arbitrary and inconsistent with written policy and with offers made at time of hiring.

Outcomes: Convinced president that withholding of benefits was not justified and that company would lose case if it were adjudicated.

Client: Vindicated (affected approx 150 employees)

Others: Satisfied that justice prevailed.

Time: 40 hours

Comment: No log kept- estimate only.

Days/weeks: 8 weeks.

Comments: "Do right voluntarily" principle drove me throughout the case.

ID: 01

Case: 2

Problem: Fire system line designed improperly (real problem was that he was fired).

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Friend

Reason: He indicated he was unable to get satisfactory answers to his questions through channels.

Steps: Each of three safety concerns were addressed in detail using consultants in one of the three. The real problem could then be addressed on its own merit.

Outcomes: The reasons for his firing were researched in depth-fact/fiction were reviewed with client. So far client has not filed a suit against company nor gone public with his safety concerns.

Client: Hasn't filed suit or gone public with safety concerns.

Others: So far so good.

Time: 30 hours

Days/weeks: 4 weeks

Comments: May not have heard last of this one.

ID: 02

Case: 1

Problem: Failure to be confirmed at end of probation period.

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Other staff

Reason: Had gone to personnel, but felt they had not been helpful.

Steps: Had staff member carry his case to highest supervisory level, which resulted in extension of probation period, then helped staff member to find a new assignment in different unit.

Outcomes: Staff member demonstrated he deserved confirmation and this was done.

Client: Grateful but appalled that it was such a drawn-out process

Others: Supervisor resentful his judgment was not supported, continued to "bad mouth" staff member privately.

Time: 100+ hours

Comments: Much of this listening, advising

Days/weeks: 50 weeks elapsed time

Comments: Problem was resolved properly, but the elapsed time was unduly long because managers were extremely risk averse, even after staff member had "proved himself".

ID: 02

Case: 2

Problem: Poor evaluation due to attendance problems- potential termination.

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Referral by EAP

Reason: Felt other sources (EAP, personnel) were not resolving problem.

Steps: Determined staff member had serious medical/emotional problems which caused attendance problems- arranged for extended sick leave and medical care.

Outcomes: Health restored and staff member reassigned to sensitive manager- work skills always rated high and performance now excellent.

Client: Pleased at outcome, but still has difficulty meeting former colleagues/managers.

Others: Former managers inclined to minimize whole innocent.

Time: 60 hours

Comment: Lengthy recovery process.

Days/weeks: About one year

Comments: Illustrated some managers' inability to consider that performance can be affected by health and/or other factors outside the work place, but it seems doubtful the managers in this case were sensitive enough to learn from the experience.

ID: 03

Case: 1

Problem: Supervisor inventing data; careless in research approach; careless about safety.

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Friend of former client

Reason: Terribly afraid of retaliation.

Steps: I got permission to talk it over with another senior professional who reviewed the case (very quietly) for (technical) misbehavior.

Outcome: Supervisor (offender) took another job elsewhere just before outcome of investigation.

Client: Wishes we had fired the alleged offender.

Others: Offender feels defamed, investigator finds whole topic extremely distressing.

Time: 10 hours

Comment: Mostly w/angry client, 2 hrs w/technical investigator, 1 hr with alleged offender.

Days/weeks: 16 weeks.

Comments: No one feels good about it.

ID: 03

Case: 2

Problem: Many employees upset by alleged sexual relations between their two top supervisors.

Category: Union & non-union

Learned through: Friends of former clients.

Reason: Fear of retaliation

Steps: I got permission to go to a senior manager. An internal investigation was done. The situation was whitewashed. Employees were furious. They continued to complain. I went up higher.

Outcomes: Senior male- encouraged to resign; Senior female- transferred; Manager who whitewashed- encouraged to find another job.

Client: The whole thing was too slow, but finally OK.

Others: Managers affected- very angry.

Time: 8 hours.

Comment: Mostly with angry employees

Days/Weeks: 1 year

Comments: We were too slow.

ID: 06

Case: 1

Problem: Supervisor won't talk to him, and blocks access to others.

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Past association

Reason: nothing else had worked.

Steps: 1) Listening interview with client showed confusion and fear. 2) Listening interview with supervisor showed frustration and anger. 3) Listening interview with program manager showed disbelief and rage. 4) Facilitated, joint meeting with client, supervisor, and program manager demonstrated client had massive defense mechanisms and could not hear criticism. 5) Client referred to EAP counselor. 6) Client referred to psychiatrist for behavior modification.

Outcomes: Client now in outpatient psychotherapy. Mgt coaching client and allowing three months to see noticeable change in behavior.

Client: Confused, but without resentment

Others: Somewhat embarrassed, but grateful

Time: 11 hours

Comment: 6 hrs client, 3 hrs mgt, 2 hrs joint

Days/weeks: 40 days

Comments: Client sought my help to change behavior of his supervisor, but ended up working on his own problems. Outcome of client's behavior modification program not yet known.

ID: 06

Case: 2

Problem: Felt mgt unethical to promote a man from another group, in lieu of her, to replace her retiring boss.

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Friend

Reason: Afraid to approach her mgt.

Steps: Listening interview with client. 2) Listening interview with mgr. 3) Facilitated/coached joint meeting with client and mgr to exchange feelings and be assertive. 4) Left parties to work out their own conclusions.

Outcomes: Outside man declined new assignment. Mgt then appointed client to fill position.

Client: First skeptical, then comfortable, then ecstatic.

Others: Stressed & resentful, then comfortable, then aware of new options.

Time: 4 hrs

Comment: 2 hrs client, 1 hr mgr, 1 hr joint.

Days/weeks: 2 days

Comments: Fast, clean, win/win case

ID: 07

Case: 1

Problem: While attending an off-site training class, was approached sexually by a co-worker. Unsolicited advances made. Nothing occurred but made employee uncomfortable.

Category: Union

Learned through: Brochure

Reason: Co-worker, not mgr; wasn't sure what to do with problem, did not want publicity. Wanted confidentiality.

Steps: Employee put co-worker on notice she would not tolerate behavior. Followed up by generic memo to all employees by management so employee knew someone else knew of incident.

Outcomes: Employee felt good she did not passively let incident go by without saying and doing something. Would not have done so on her own.

Client: Asserted her rights and felt good about confrontation.

Others: Mgt & other employees heightened awareness that sexual harassment not just mgr/worker

Time: 4 hours

Comment: Most of that time spent writing letter for mgmt's signature

Days/Weeks: 5 days from incident to confrontation, 3 weeks from incident to letter distribution.

Comments: Glad EPRO available. EEO would have publicized and so would union with no confidentiality offered either client or other party. I do not even know who other party was!

ID: 07

Case: 2

Problem: Employee hospitalized. Wife at home invalid, no family, needed help in coping with entire situation.

Category: union

Learned through: Supervisory referral

Reason: Supervisor asked me to contact spouse to see if we could be of assistance

Steps: Contacted wife via phone- followed up by house visit. Could not get out to cash check, provided a social worker and home health care while employee hospitalized. Visited employee in hospital and spouse at home until situation stabilized.

Outcomes: Became personal friends, provided needed assistance and support when needed on a person-to-person level.

Client: Recuperation eased knowing spouse had care.

Others: Co-workers realized organization took personal interest in wellbeing of worker and family.

Time: 14 hrs

Comment: Personal visits to hospital, home, provided transportation and social work.

Days/weeks: 3 weeks from hospitalization to worker's return home.

Comments: On this one I made a difference. I spent my own personal time once involved and it left me drained. But once committed, could not pull out.

ID: 10

Case: 1

Problem: Sexual harassment

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Previous contact with staff member

Reason: Fear of retaliation.

Steps: 1) Counselling- acknowledge feelings of fear, anger, victimization. 2) Advise of corp policy & complaint process. 3) Strongly encouraged & supported client taking action. 4) Continual followup.

Outcomes: Client did file complaint with EOP Dept. It was investigated and disciplinary action was taken (eg. mgr removed from position)

Client: appreciated support

Others: EOP- glad of involvement counselling of employee.

Time: 6 hrs, 5 in person, 1 hr -phone (with client, followup with EOP)

Days/weeks: 4 weeks

Comments: Client was very reluctant to take formal action. Only after direct communication with the mgr failed to stop behavior and after much counselling and coaching did she agree to contact EOP.

ID: 11

Case: 1

Problem: Fear of job loss due to a continuing problem with attendance.

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Co-worker

Reason: Frustrated in attempts. Had "severe" personal difficulties. Limited funds would not allow seeking legal help or emotional support. Had no one to turn to.

Steps: Discussion of problem. Presented options. Referred through Employee Assistance Pgm. Provided on-going support. Acquired a personal leave.

Outcomes: After provided all supportive services, employee returned to full productivity. Perfect attendance record for 2 years. Life has returned to normal.

Client: Very positive, grateful.

Others: Mgt quite happy to have resolved the issue & salvaged a good employee.

Time: Don't recall, maybe about 4 hours

Days/Weeks: About 3 weeks

ID: 12

Case: 1

Problem: Harassment

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Friend

Reason: Unable to talk comfortably w/others about problem (my grey hair helps.).

Steps: Listened, listened again- obtained agreement on problem, defined it carefully and agreed on definition. Outlined steps to be taken and time frames- did it as agreed. Reported to ee

Outcomes: Offender warned after investigation

Client: Relieved and happy

Others: Wary, concerned, but agreed it was fair.

Time: 20 hours

Days/weeks: 2 weeks

Comments: Sticky, good impact on surrounding area, positive reaction from female staff.

ID: 13

Case: 1

Problem: Placed on leave without pay. Extended illness; possibly job related; possibly psychological (partly@

Category: Non-union

Learned through: Other staff

Reason: Apparently frustrated, befuddled in other contacts

Steps: Interviews; review of case history; review of applicable policy and procedure. Memo to Personnel calling for revision of action on leave without pay.

Outcomes: Leave without pay revoked, client put on extended sick leave with reduced pay pending disability retirement and/or workman's compensation.

Client: Pleased

Others: Ombudsman was fair in insisting on proper procedure

Time: 10 hrs, 2 with client, 4 with Personnel, 4 in research

Days/weeks: 8 weeks

Comments: Client's physical/mental state means long term outcome uncertain.

ID: 13

Case: 2

Problem: Staff member resigned; Accounting director sought to recover sizable sums spent on university training from final pay and other funds due staff member on termination

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: Staff manual

Reason: Needed help in challenging Accounting Director

Steps: Research; consultation with general council's staff; meeting with Accounting Director

Outcomes: Accounting Director convinced he lacked authority to take action proposed. Final pay and other funds released.

Client: Victorious

Others: She got away with robbery

Time: 4 hrs

Days/weeks: 2 days

Comments: With both facts & law on my side, and case thoroughly researched, only problem was convincing Accounting Director to give up fight.

ID: 14

Case: 1

Problem: A small department was completely "stressed out" and involved in petty "back-biting" and other negative behavior- 10 individuals

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: Personal acquaintances & company communication

Reason: Manager requested intervention. They had tried to find causes in group meetings- didn't know what was causing the difficulties- blamed it on work load and age differences.

Steps: All employees were interviewed; manager interviewed; physical setup studied; job expectations studied; chronology of problem development reviewed; feedback to all individuals & management.

Outcomes: Suggested physical changes (where people sat, where mgr located), change in work schedule, break up of "warring factions"., change in some managerial activities & "style", new communications & meeting schedule.

Client: Grateful for intervention & problem solving.

Others: Pleased to be able to maintain quality staff & keep up productivity.

Time: 24+ hrs

Days/weeks: 3 weeks

Comments: An interesting problem analysis. Will use it as a model for similar situations.

ID: 14

Case: 2

Problem: Blocked from future promotion or placement; history of workers comp. Problem only tangentially a disability at this time ("damaged goods?")

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: Employee Relations Representative

Reason: Had tried other channels and couldn't get anywhere.

Steps: Thorough debriefing of client (tape of all prior, very complicated, history); documentation of unfair treatment by current mgt; presentation of case to top mgt, who agreed on a resolution.

Outcomes: The client has a new job with the company at a new location using her education & experience fully.

Client: extremely pleased

Others: Relieved that we solved the problem- avoided potential litigation & "did the right thing".

Time: 45+ hrs

Days/weeks: 12 weeks

Comments: A frustrating but finally rewarding situation.

Involved heavy negotiation & advocacy.

ID: 15

Case: 1

Problem: Client complained of improper classification 10 yrs ago upon joining this company, which resulted of only 8 yrs of credit toward pension plan vesting. Records classified him as temporary for the first 2 yrs.

Cat: non-union

Learned through: Brochures & company newsletter

Reason: Efforts to get help through Human Resources failed.

Apparently no one had time or incentive to struggle it through.

Steps: I took it to corporate pension plan people, who after long delay denied client's appeal. Had client write own letter expressing his own "facts" and emotions as to the unfairness of the company. Solicited support of local CEO and human resources mgr.

Outcomes: Corporate human resources agreed with us that client's case was valid, and agreed to retroactively restore all lost benefits as well as to consider him fully vested.

Client: Highly satisfied

Others: Pleased that justice was done. Reconciled that the company was in error.

Time: 32 hrs, spread over total period; letters, calling, phone calls

Days/weeks: 8 months

Comments: Much of the difficulty had to do with lack of records dating back 10 yrs. Personnel mgr had long left the company who

originally processed and classified this client. He was an oriental male who was in the process of becoming a citizen when initially employed.

Ombudsman Survey Case Description File

ID: 17

Case: 1

Problem: Sexual harassment

Cat: Union

Learned through: Staff bulletin

Reason: Felt more comfortable in my office

Steps: Investigation, interview with employees, referral to
investigative unit.

Outcomes: Dismissal of perpetrator

Client: Very good, encouraged that something was done

Others: Perpetrator felt was dealt with unfairly

Time: 12 hrs, Investigative office spent much more time

Days/weeks: 6 months

ID: 17

Case: 2

Problem: A non-supervisory employee threatening other employees.

Cat: Union

Learned through: Posters, word of mouth

Reason: Felt most comfortable with my office, wanted confidentiality

Steps: Talked w/a nuber of employees & the threatening employees supervisor

Outcomes: Emplyee delivering threats has been fired

Client: Good that employee is gone but still afraid of possible retaliation.

Others: same

Time: 12 hrs

Days/weeks: 3 months

ID: 21

Case: 1

Problem: Termination

Cat: non-union

Learned through: corporate headquarters

Reason: Wrote to corporate and case was redirected to this office

Steps: Data gathering, research files, payroll records, phone logs, interviewing 16 people.

Outcomes: Termination supported

Client: Disappointment- but knew a fair review was given

Others: Pleased with outcome, felt too much time was involved.

Time: 80 hrs

Days/weeks: 10 weeks

Comments: 20 yr employee previously well thought of. Over a 6 yr period performance deteriorated to the point of insubordination. Given ample opportunity to improve and did not respond.

ID: 21

Case: 2

Problem: Not receiving an increase after being told it was approved

Cat: non-union

Learned through: Friend

Reason: Went thru normal channels first- when nothing happened came to the ombudsperson.

Steps: Research personnel folder for performance appraisals.

Talk with current and previous mgt & relations.

Outcomes: Received a salary, action retroactive to original planned date (9 months previous)

Client: Pleased

Others: Mgt at first resented, however did not have a clear resentment of problem. When clarified, they were also pleased.

Time: 6 hrs

Days/weeks: 12 days

Ombudsman Survey Case Description File

ID: 22

Case: 1

Problem: Felt the franchise group health insurance not reimbursing properly for catastrophic illness- also cited lack of concern on part of local mgt

Learned through: Referred by CEO

Reason: Claims tried local channels, unresponsive- wrote to our CEO

Steps: Contacted franchise, reviewed information with insurance company, met personally with insurance company & franchise.

Investigated all claims, found minor discrepancies

Outcomes: No major discrepancies found- local mgt more attuned to situation

Client: Probably unhappy he was wrong for the most part.

Others: Glad OBD could assist

Time: 100 hrs

Days/weeks: 4

Comments: Many of the problems stemmed from fact that franchise used outdated insurance card. Claims went to old address, re-routing by P.O. delayed & confused processing of claims. Fr. receive new cards each year- many don't read information- again communication. Modified our claim forms to show correct address.

ID: 22

Case: 2

Problem: Franchise wants to sell franchise. Unhappy with company's handling of process

Reason: Unhappy with local mgt

Steps: Talked w/franchise to determine facts- called field coordinator- alerted her to situation- she took from there- called franchise, talked to prospective franchises- smoothed out a potentially poor situation.

Outcomes: Franchise OK now

Client: Good

Others: Good

Time: 1.5 hours

Comments: Again- communication.

ID: 26

Case: 1

Problem: Sexual harassment of female supervisor by her dept head

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: Knowing me personally

Reason: 1) Problem was her boss, 2) Wanted advice & support to escalate to mgt.

Steps: 1) Both parties were interviewed by mgt with ombud present, 2) Other supervisors were interviewed as potential witnesses, 3) Higher mgt informed & given recommendations by ombud.

Outcomes: Dept. head received week's suspension w/o pay, was transferred to different organization, received smaller raise treatment, & was encouraged to seek counselling. Female remained in old dept, but within 6 mos. transferred to new organization.

Client: Felt treatment not severe enough; did not trust mgt to handle situation

Others: Offender believed he got fair treatment

Time: 40 hrs, higher level mgt approx. 10 hrs each.

Days/weeks: 5 weeks

Comments: Case was compounded by the fact that the female was having an affair with another dept. head and her current head was investigating whether they were misusing company resources (extra meetings, trips, etc) to continue relationship. He also thought this entitled him to "hit" on her. This led to several issues.- 1) Other supervisors were aware of problem & didn't

follow through, 2) The other dept head may have had some responsibility to stop harassment, 3) Raised question of whether female & her dept head raised sexual harassment complaint to keep affair from becoming known.

ID: 27

Case: 1

Problem: Was passed over for promotion

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: Employee's congressman

Reason: He should have come to me, but wrote to his congressman in Washington. Believe he was coerced into complaining by NAACP.

Steps: Personnel records were studied

Outcomes: He had been promoted & salary increases given at all proper times. He falsified his application and had to be terminated.

Client: Dissatisfied

Time: 4 hrs

Days/weeks: 1

ID: 27

Case: 2

Problem: Blasting damage done to structure of real property

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: Call to governor

Reason: Was denied settlement by local officials

Steps: On-site visit and inspection

Outcomes: Claim paid

Client: Satisfied

Others: Unknown

Time: 4 hrs

Days/weeks: 2 days

Comments: Local officials may have felt they did not have authority to settle or did not want to have to admit fault.

ID: 28

Case: 1

Problem: Fraud by co-worker

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: Previous visit and knowledge that ombuds office is focal point for fraud, waste & abuse reporting

Reason: Perception that a case of such gravity should have attention of ombuds in addition to supervision

Steps: Ombuds informed VP per his standing direction. Security informed to verify info given to ombuds and conduct investigation. Mgt (functional) worked with ombuds and security. Employee admitted falsification of records and was subsequently terminated

Outcomes: Employee terminated

Client: Feels that process is effective and matters handled with discretion.

Others: Case handled confidentially so knowledge of others is limited.

Time: 7 hrs

Days/weeks: 5 days

Comments: Considered to be one that, if unresolved, could have had a major impact on corporation.

ID: 28

Case: 2

Problem: Removal of child custody from mother following father's incestual relationship with daughter(s).

Cat: Union

Learned through: Brochure, company newsletter, supervisor

Reason: Other channels, i.e. litigation, HRS, etc had not worked

Steps: Acquired total information from all sources, met with co. EAP personnel and HRS caseworkers and supervisors. Contacted state HRS mgt at suggestion of U.S. Senator. Counseled the client on a continuing basis in consonance with other parenting, family and trauma counselors.

Outcome: Child custody restored, client has complied with all conditions, and her productivity has greatly increased.

Client: Extremely pleased (as can be imagined)

Others: Agencies very impressed with the attention and help provided them by a company and their organizations (ombuds) established for such a purpose.

Days/weeks: Approx. 8 weeks

ID: 29

Case: 1

Problem: Employee was confided in by another who threatened the life of his supervisor

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: Knowing me personally

Reason: Problem was far off from normal type found in an organization

Steps: Info from client showed the person in question was receiving professional counselling. That counselor was alerted and embarked on an evaluation program to determine the actual probabilities of the threat being carried out. Also, company medical counselling was alerted to keep track of the situation.

Outcomes: The contacting employee has been released from the burden of being the only holder of this information; the company is alerted and monitoring the situation, the professional counselor defused and is evaluating the situation, the threatening person is receiving specific help probably without knowing exactly why. The only bad side is that the supv. doesn't know his life was threatened, but will if the threat is evaluated as serious.

Client: Satisfied and relieved

Others: Satisfied so far, but the case is not yet complete

Time: 3 hrs, all by phone

Days/weeks: 1 week for my part

Comments: This was a case from out of my organization. Therefore

I was sort of a "lame duck". Therefore I acted mainly as the
alerter and catalyst toward effecting a solution.

Ombudsman Survey Case Description File

ID: 29

Case: 2

Problem: Employee was told to leave an organization within the company and then refused a transfer to another organization in the company who wanted him

Cat: Non-union

Learned through: His friends

Reason: His mgt completely refused to change their position because of the client pleadings.

Steps: I looked into the situation to find if there was any sponsorship for the client from his present mgt. It turns out that his supervisor there was only a skill mismatch, but two levels higher the director was in a "kill" program.

Outcome: After finding out the new mgt was genuinely interested and knew of the mismatch condition, I presented the arguments to the director and got him to change his mind. The employee was transferred and not fired.

Client: Satisfied

Others: Satisfied except maybe for the director. Part of the argument though was satisfying the director that the new mgt had full cognizance of the employees past performance.

Time: 4 hrs, all by telephone

Days/weeks: 2 weeks

Comments: Another case from out of my organization. However, the

mgt involved, especially the director, heard of me and were willing to be influenced. His subordinate mgrs did not think he would change his mind.