

Course	ITM 6000 / JA / Final Project in Information Technology Management
Term	Summer, 2009 – Saturday #1 – 8:00 am – 5:00 pm 8/15, 8/29, 9/12, 9/26, 10/10 (8am-Noon)
Instructor	Name: Dr. James Ewing, Jr. Home Phone: (904) 645-3245 Work Phone: (904) 268-3037 Email: ewingjr@webster.edu
Catalog Description	This capstone project course is designed to give students the opportunity to synthesize, integrate, and apply the technical and management knowledge and skills acquired in other courses in the Information Technology Management (ITM) curriculum.
Prerequisites	Successful completion of all other core courses in the ITM program curriculum.
Course Level Learning Outcomes	After completing this capstone project course, students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have demonstrated the ability to integrate and apply</i> the important technical and various management concepts, principles, techniques, and practices needed to effectively manage people, information, information and communication technologies, and business processes in support of organizational strategic goals.
Materials	NO TEXTBOOK TO ORDER FOR THIS COURSE Instructor Will Provide a Detailed Course Guide Describing Integrated Studies Course Process as Attachment to the Syllabus

Grading	Assignments	Maximum Points
	• Term Project – Written Portion	35 Points
	• Passport Internet Proficiency / Bibliography	5 Points
	• Oral Presentation	25 Points
	• Contribution to Peers Project	20 Points
	• Research Proposal and Abstract	5 Points
	• Class Participation and Attendance	<u>10 Points</u>
	TOTAL	100 Points

Letter grades will be assigned pursuant to the following scores based on the percent of the total possible points (weighted according to the scale above) that you earned in the course.

Percentage of Total Points	Grade
95%-100%	A
90%-94%	A-
88%-89%	B+
84%-87%	B
80%-83%	B-
70%-79%	C
Below 70%	F

Activities	<p>Term Project – Written Portion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will present <u>two</u> bound copies of their written project during the final class session. • The written project must be in the format outlined in class. • Grammatical and spelling errors will result in scoring penalties. • The project should demonstrate strong conclusions and recommendations, which could be implemented with positive results. <p>Passports Internet Proficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The written project should be supported with a bibliography should have at least 20 sources. • At least five of the sources must be from Passports. <p>Oral Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will make a 15-minute oral presentation of their findings during
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the final class session.

- Power Point must be used as part of the presentation.
- The presentation must be well-organized and present findings, which if implemented will correct problems identified in the study.

Contribution to Peers Project:

- Students will work in small groups and provide constructive feedback.
- Students should receive constructive feedback in a positive manner.
- Students will provide formalized feedback at the end of class outlining the assistance they received from fellow students.

Research Proposal and Abstract:

- Five initial portions of the project must have signed approval from the instructor prior to advancing with the study. Situation Analysis / Premise / Disclaimers / Core Course Content / Methodology
- Students will present an Abstract of their project.

Class Participation and Attendance:

- Students are expected to attend all class sessions of every course for the full 36 contact hours. In the case of unavoidable absence, the student must contact the instructor. The student is subject to appropriate academic penalty for incomplete or unacceptable makeup work, or for excessive or unexcused absences. Generally, a student who misses more than one four-hour course period (per course) without a documented military or medical excuse and advanced permission of the instructor should withdraw from the class. The University reserves the right to involuntarily drop enrolled students from classes, which they do not attend. **PLEASE BE ADVISED: Students who do not attend the first class session, who have not made prior arrangements with the instructor for being absent, will be dropped from their courses.**
- Attendance the last day of class is mandatory to ensure that all work is completed and to be awarded a passing grade. An Incomplete will not be acceptable without documental proof (Death Notice, Doctor's Letter, etc.) as to absence relating to non-completion of class work. These must be faxed 904-262-1459 or dropped off to Webster University by the Monday after the term ends.
- Participants are expected to arrive on time and be actively involved in the learning experience. Each student should desire to learn, participate, and proactively contribute to the learning of others during each discussion and exercise.
- Students are to participate in classroom discussions. The discussions are an opportunity for students to reveal their understanding of the assignments made for the current and previous classes.
- Assignments are given to prepare the student to participate in class discussions; therefore, it is imperative that reading assignments and associated questions for discussion be completed prior to class.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A maximum of 10 points will be awarded based on the level and quality of participation and preparation. • Failure to turn in an assignment within one week will result in a grade of "0" for that assignment. In addition, failure to submit an assignment will lower the final grade by an additional two points. • All assignments are due as detailed in the Course Schedule. • Late assignments will be accepted, if they are turned in <i>no later</i> than one week later, but will be penalized one letter grade. Furthermore, late assignments will lower the student's final grade by an additional one point. • Late assignments will not be accepted for the final assignments the last week of the course to allow timely completion and grades to be submitted.
<p>Policy Statements:</p> <p>University Policies</p>	<p>University policies are provided in the current course catalog and course schedules. They are also available on the university website. This class is governed by the university's published policies. The following policies are of particular interest:</p> <p>Academic Honesty</p> <p>The university is committed to high standards of academic honesty. Students will be held responsible for violations of these standards. Please refer to the university's academic honesty policies for a definition of academic dishonesty and potential disciplinary actions associated with it.</p> <p>Drops and Withdrawals</p> <p>Please be aware that, should you choose to drop or withdraw from this course, the date on which you notify the university of your decision will determine the amount of tuition refund you receive. Please refer to the university policies on drops and withdrawals (published elsewhere) to find out what the deadlines are for dropping a course with a full refund and for withdrawing from a course with a partial refund.</p> <p>Special Services</p> <p>If you have registered as a student with a documented disability and are entitled to classroom or testing accommodations, please inform the instructor at the beginning of the course of the accommodations you will require in this class so that these can be provided.</p> <p>Disturbances</p> <p>Since every student is entitled to full participation in class without interruption, disruption of class by inconsiderate behavior is not acceptable. Students are expected to treat the instructor and other students with dignity and respect, especially in cases where a diversity of opinion arises. Students who engage in disruptive behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the course.</p>

	<p>Student Assignments Retained</p> <p>From time to time, student assignments or projects will be retained by The Department for the purpose of academic assessment. In every case, should the assignment or project be shared outside the academic Department, the student's name and all identifying information about that student will be redacted from the assignment or project.</p> <p>Contact Hours for this Course</p> <p>It is essential that all classes meet for the full instructional time as scheduled. A class cannot be shortened in length. If a class session is cancelled for any reason, it must be rescheduled.</p>
<p>Course Policies</p>	<p>Cheating and Plagiarism</p> <p>Of course, students are expected to do their own work. Students who claim that someone else's work is theirs may face disciplinary action. Plagiarism can be avoided simply by the use of quotation marks when quoting and citation when paraphrasing someone else's work.</p> <p>Absenteeism</p> <p>Students who miss more than one class will have to make up additional work. Students who miss two or more classes may be advised to drop the course or may have their grade lowered commensurately.</p> <p>This syllabus may be revised or changed without prior notice by the instructor.</p> <p>Make-Up Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each class hour missed, a one (1) page, double-spaced, typed paper, with one (1) reference will be submitted by the end of the term. The instructor will assign the topic. A four (4) hour class will require four (4) pages supported with (4) references from popular or academic press. • This paper will be graded and incorporated in the class participation grade. If the make-up work is not submitted, the student's final grade will be reduced one (1) letter grade. • Students are responsible for any class material presented during their absence, and any assignments due should be submitted prior to the absence, if possible.

Weekly Schedule		<p>Pre-Assignments for Sessions 1 & 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the first class meeting, students will have read the attached samples taken from previous students' abstracts, situation analysis, and premise statements. • Each student should use these to develop a brief oral presentation for the first class, which should describe the proposed project, and method to be employed. • A written description of the industry, agency or organization to be studied, including a working statement of the situation analysis and premise should also be provided, with enough copies for all class members. • Set up your Blackboard Vista Connections Id. Please contact the Webster University Help Desk at (314) 968-599 / (866) 435-7270 or support@webster.edu.
	Session 1	<p>A.M. Session (8-NOON) THEME: Introduction Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed overview of the project will be discussed • Students will present drafts of their Situation Analysis and Premise. Presentations should describe the project and methodology to be employed. The industry, agency or organization to be studied should be briefly described in writing • Adequate copies should be provided for class
	Session 2	<p>P.M. Session (1-5PM) THEME: Work Plan Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised drafts of the Situation Analysis and Premise will be reviewed • Discussion in class will be held on the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work Plan – Research Methodology, Disclaimers or Limitations ➤ Work Plan - Core Course Content ➤ Scope of the literature review will be covered <p>Assignments for Sessions 3 & 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Premise, Situation Analysis, Disclaimers, and Core course – Content and Methodology into established format with complete content

	Session 3	<p>A.M. Session (8-NOON) THEME: Premise / Situation Analysis Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premise and situation Analysis will be finalized and approved • Each student will present drafts of their: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work Plan – Research Methodology, Disclaimers or Limitations ➤ Work Plan – Core Course Content • Discussion will be held in class on questionnaire development
	Session 4	<p>P.M. Session (1-5PM) THEME: Questionnaire Development Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will develop their secondary research portion of their project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Formatting of the literature portion of the project will be reviewed ➤ The number and types of sources will be discussed • Individual time will be spent with the instructor for Status review of individual projects <p>Assignments for Sessions 5 & 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring final copies of Situation Analysis and Premise to class for final approval • Present final copy of questionnaire • Present secondary research list in class and to Mentors
	Session 5	<p>A.M. Session (8-NOON) THEME: Secondary Research Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools for use in giving presentations will be discussed – Power Point • A review of presentation skills will be outlined for use in presentations • Each student will give review of progress on projects • A discussion of the required Abstract will be given. The Abstract will be submitted during session four

	<p>Session 6</p>	<p>P.M. Session (1-5PM) THEME: Mentors Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will provide a detailed work plan, table of contents and bibliography at the beginning of class • Academic Mentors – Department Chairpersons - from each discipline represented in the class will be present to review progress and to provide feedback • Review of survey questions and approval of implementation will be given <p>Assignments for Sessions 7 & 8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prepare a fifteen-minute presentation of their literature review. This presentation will be done in class using PowerPoint or similar tool to emphasize the presentation • Students will submit a written draft of their literature review • Students will develop a presentation for the final class using PowerPoint
	<p>Session 7</p>	<p>A.M. Session (8-NOON) THEME: Presentation Tools Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student will present their abstract in class • Each student will give a ten to fifteen minute review of the literature • Assistance will be given with problems experienced in the project
	<p>Session 8</p>	<p>P.M. Session (1-5PM) THEME: Literature Review Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the project status and requirements will be done • Any portions of the project that have not been approved should be finalized <p>Assignments for Session 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will turn in 2 bound copies of their written project

	Session 9	A.M. Session (8-NOON) THEME: Final Presentations Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each individual will do an oral presentation. Audio and visual aids are appropriate • Final written copies of the project will be handed in • Academic Mentors as well as other faculty members will be invited to presentations
Additional Information	None	
Reviewed by: Job Title: Date:		

Revised 12/2/07

COMBINED 6000

COURSE

PLANNING GUIDE

Updated January 2006

Combined 6000

Overview

The purpose of the Combined 6000 course is to provide an opportunity to integrate all of the information that you have studied in the core courses of your major during your Webster University experience. A prerequisite of this course is completion of all the courses in your major curriculum.

During this course you will be required to integrate all of the material in your previous major courses and complete a high quality academic project. You will implement an established applied research model in identifying a problem/premise and developing a research tool to gather data. This data will be reviewed and analyzed. Detailed conclusions and recommendations will be developed and described.

This handout provides the information you will need to implement the applied research model. You will develop, distribute and analyze data from a questionnaire.

Tertiary Research: This is a third level of research which is not a preferred method of gathering data while doing a high quality research project.

Applied Research: This is a type of research that is emphasized in the Webster academic experience. This methodology synthesizes, integrates and applied knowledge from your core courses. This information is used in conjunction with primary and secondary research undertaken during this course.

- Applied research is not used to develop or seek new theories.
- The management of organizations to assist decision-making uses applied research.
- Applied research findings usually are implemented much more quickly than the results of pure scientific model research.
- Applied research deals with business reality.

There are approaches to research, which you will use while developing your Combined 6000 project.

- Quantitative Research
- Qualitative Research

Basics of Research

Research: Webster defines research as “a careful and diligent; studious examination or inquiry; investigation or experimentation arrived at the discovery and interpretation of facts; revision of accepted theories or practical application of new/revised theories obtained; the collection of information about a particular subject.

Primary Research: Collects data/information from original sources. Collecting data first hand or interview knowledgeable persons may do this. Primary research can include observation as well as simulations. Interviewing methodologies may be personal interviews, survey interviews or telephone interviews.

Secondary Research: Is developed from the primary research that has been already done by others. This type of research involves researching literature such as scientific journals, magazines and other literate sources. This research can be done in libraries, the Internet, company documents and other qualified sources. Some examples of other sources of secondary literature are:

- Libraries
- Government
- Trade/Professional Associations
- Private Companies
- Chamber of Commerce

Uses of Applied Research

Objective of Applied Research:

- a. Provide management with an intelligent input to better understand the environment where new business decisions will be implemented.
- b. Provide a process to evaluate programs and procedures that have been implemented as a result of the study.

Example of Applied Research:

- 1) Market Share Potential
- 2) Sales Analysis
- 3) Distribution Channel Studies
- 4) Test Markets
- 5) Competitive Research
- 6) Customer Satisfaction Research

Applied Research Model

1) Define Business Problem

2) Situation Analysis

3) Estimate a Budget

4) State Premise

5) Constraints and Limitations

6) Devise Methodology

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7) Development of survey instrument

8) Conduct a pretest

9) Plan the sample

10) Collect the raw data

11) Analyze the results and development of conclusions

12) Prepare findings and recommendations

****Approval is needed before progressing beyond this point****

1) Business Problem

This is a very general / basic concept. A basic idea to initiate the study.

2) Situation Analysis

The Situation Analysis sets the stage and describes the organization that is being studied. It will discuss the type of industry or business that the organization is part of. The Situation Analysis will describe the service or products being made. Stating the quantity of products made, number of employee's etc will identify the size of the organization. Background information about the history of the organization and industry should be included. While there is no standard it will take approximately three pages to accomplish this task adequately.

The Situation Analysis should start from the macro and progress to the micro. This section should start with a discussion of the industry from the national/international level and then move to a geographic area close to the site of study area then progress down to the unit that is being studied.

3) Budget

You do not need to be concerned with incurring a large financial output while working on your project. Budget also identifies time. Time is a major concern that you must consider when developing the scope of your study. Be careful not to define your study so large that you will not be able to do a complete and thorough job.

4) Premise

This will be one of the shortest sections of the entire project. However, while it will be a short section it is likely the most difficult portion of the paper to be written. It is a **requirement** that the premise be quantifiable and measurable.

5) Constraints and Disclaimers

Every study will have some constraints and limitations. Some of the limitations may not be evident until late in the study. Typical considerations limiting the study are the length of the academic term and scope of the study.

6 – 7) Methodology

While a limited number of studies will not require a survey instrument as the primary source of gathering data to validate the premise all students will develop a questionnaire. On some occasions primary data will be collected in other ways but in these instances a questionnaire will be used to support this primary data. The questionnaire will be distributed to the SME's involved in the study.

8) Pretest Questionnaire

Before a questionnaire will be distributed for the gathering of primary data a pretest will be done. The purpose of the pretest is:

- Ensure the questionnaire is all inclusive of the data needed for the study.
- Check the readability and ease of completion of the questionnaire.

Statistical Tests

Chi Square:

Measures if there is a significant change in the mix of historical proportions.

Correlation Coefficient:

Identifies whether there is any relationship between two variables.

Decision Tree:

Displays the consequences of a decision choice given different probabilities of decision options.

Probability:

This statistical tool calculates the odds of possible results and improves the chances of success in the future.

T Test:

This test measures the difference between the means of two groups to identify if there is a significant difference.

Trend Analysis:

This can be used to forecast over a period of time. It will show the trend of a variable even when the raw data may not initially indicate one.

Z-Test:

Determines if differences between proportions / percentages are significant.

PREMISE DEVELOPMENT

- 1) An American employee is committed to the organization for which he works.
- 2) The XYZ Corporation will reduce costs by obtaining delivery for its product from a freight carrier rather than operating leased trucks.
- 3) Helping to provide an affordable alternative day care plan for sick children can significantly reduce the use of sick leave time by parents.

Definitions:

Affordable: The employee should not be paying out more per day in day care services than he or she will earn.

Significantly: A reduction of between forty and fifty percent.

- 4) New shelf positioning, packaging and marketing strategies will increase sales for Borateen Bleach in the Kansas City market.
- 5) The premium positioned, premium priced Eagle Brand potato chip will generate sufficient sales volume to become a major competitor in the potato chip category.

Definitions:

Major competitor: Based on observable competition, major competitor would have at least 5% market share.

Sufficient sales volume: \$160 million based on secondary research.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Approval of Instructor

Date

PREMISE

Definitions

Approval of Instructor

Date

Disclaimers or Study Limitations

Approval of Instructor

Date

Work Plan – Applied Research Methodology

Secondary:

Primary:

Approval of Instructor

Date

Work Plan – Core Course Content

Course #1 – 5000

Course #1 – 0000

List of all courses in the students major

Approval of Instructor

Date

**AN ANALYSIS OF FAMILY AND WORK-RELATED STRESS
AT THE FLEET AND INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY CENTER
JACKSONVILLE**

This project is approved and accepted as partial requirement for a Masters of Arts Degree in Human Resource Development

INSTRUCTOR

DATE

Abstract

Human Resource Development is a set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organization to provide its members with the necessary skills to meet current and future job demands. The Human Resource Professional's role in decreasing stress in organizations is to teach employees and employers how to prioritize and streamline tasks to reduce stress in the workplace. Industry spends \$150 billion annually on health insurance, burnout, absenteeism, lower productivity, poor morale, and higher employee turnover. Studies show that employees lead unbalanced lives, complain of more stressful jobs in recent years, and work longer than a standard forty-hour workweek. Workers feel stressed every day and are willing to work fewer hours for less pay. Some feel stressed but are unable to change anything and some feel they must work longer hours to get promotions or even keep a job. Surveys in the area of family-related stress revealed again, that individuals were willing to reduce their income by 20% to work fewer hours and some have made voluntary lifestyle changes to reduce stress. Men and women both report stress and conflict between work and family. A Berry and Rao study revealed that fathers reported the greatest stress from the family Microsystems.

This paper is an analysis of family-related and work-related stress events at the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center Jacksonville (FISC Jacksonville). The premise was that employees of FISC Jacksonville would report higher stress from family than job-related stressors. The respondents reported on a dichotomous scale with a value of 1 given to 'yes' responses and 0 to 'no' responses. The premise will be validated if the mean score of the family stress survey items is greater than 7 and the mean score of the job-related stress survey items is rated below 7.

The family-related stress events' n score were 6.79%, while the work-related stress events' mean score was 18.36%. The premise that respondents would report greater family stress than work-related stress was not validated. The family-related stress mean score was below 7 and the mean score for work-related stress was over the mean score of 7. In fact, those mean score of work-related stress events was significantly higher than the mean score predicted.

I Chapter One

Situation Analysis

In the United States, medical costs are estimated over \$1 billion per year on stress. Stress in both the workplace and among families is a significant concern for employees today. An employee's family life is affected by stress because each member of the family is interdependent upon one another. The inter-relatedness of families causes each member to be touched by another's action or a single event such as marriage, parenthood, or sending a child to college.

Industry spends over \$150 billion per year on health insurance, burnout, absenteeism, lower productivity, poor morale, and higher employee turnover, mistakes in the workplace and alcohol and drug-related problems. A 1996 Gallup poll revealed that one fourth of the employees surveyed reported they felt stressed at work every day.

Northington (1997) reports that budget constraints and the need to modernize the Navy's force structure has compelled the Department of Defense (DOD) to resort to infrastructure reduction to free up funding for modernization and readiness. DOD downsizing efforts in the support services area mean fewer personnel, since reducing labor costs achieves the highest savings. According to Larabee and Barr (1994), implementing downsizing plans is stressful for employees and management. The stress increased as the actual movement of people and equipment begins.

The Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Jacksonville along with other DOD activities is pressured to reduce its infrastructure. FISC Jacksonville has experienced outsourcing feasibility studies, studies for commercial contracting-out of government functions, and is now in the process of consolidation efforts. Certain functions will be centralized into one office to achieve savings through economies of scale. In addition, the FISC will be assigned to a different Department of Defense agency on October 1, 1998.

FISC Jacksonville was established as the Naval Supply Center in 1982 due to a dramatic increase in the number of aviation units, ships, supporting facilities and personnel. The Supply Departments of Naval Station Mayport and Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Navy Fuel Depot were consolidated to form the Center. In 1993, the Chief of Naval Operations changed the name from the Naval Supply Center to Fleet and Industrial Supply Center. This change was the result

of a number of studies that revealed a single FISC is the way to efficiently maintain and manage consumer inventory and Fleet needs in a downsizing environment.

FISC Jacksonville provides quality support for Naval ships, aircraft squadrons and shore commands including fuel, regional inventory management, customer services, household goods for relocating military personnel, contracting support and hazardous material minimization services. FISC Jacksonville has a main site at Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville; a fuel Department located in the city's north side; the Fleet Support Center at Mayport Naval station and detachments at Pascagoula Naval Station, NAS Cecil Field, Kings Bay and Charleston. In 1997, FISC Jacksonville provided regional support to 37 ships, 502 aircraft and six industrial activities.

FISC Jacksonville currently employs 283 civil servants. The average age of the FISC employee is 48 with 17.6 medial years of service (M. Perry, personal communication, September 8, 1997). During the last year, seven employees of the organization were unable to work or died due to health problems such as cancer or heart problems. DeVito (1994) states that research has identified a direct casual relationship between stress and illness.

Stress is an important consideration for FISC Jacksonville. Determining where the stress originates will help the organization evaluate options that can help FISC employees as well as the organization.

Premise

The employees of the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center will report higher stress from family-related than job-related stressors. The respondents will report on a dichotomous scale with a value of one given to 'yes' responses and zero to 'no' responses.

The premise will be validated if the mean score of the family stress survey items is greater than 7 and the mean score of job-related stress survey items is rated below 7.

CIRCLE COMPLETE:

THE 360 DEGREE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

This project is approved and accepted as partial requirement for a Master of Arts Degree in Human Resources Management.

Instructor

Date

ABSTRACT

This study is designed to measure the opinions of employees at Blue Cross Blue Shield's Claims Processing Department in the Jacksonville Headquarters Office, regarding the 360-degree performance appraisal system. The current Single Rater system regarding the 360-degree performance appraisal system appears not to be suitable to evaluate employees working together in a team based organization such as Blue Cross Blue Shield. Blue Cross is in the midst of structural decentralization and reorganization from three claims processing centers in Tampa, Orlando and Pensacola to one center located in Jacksonville, Florida. Each claims processing department is comprised of self-directed teams of at least 30 employees, each lead by one Claim's Supervisor and one Claim's Manager. The challenge arises when a busy manager has to perform a semiannual or annual appraisal for each of the employees individually when there is very little interaction for the manager to base their observation on.

The premise is that at least 90% of the employees will favor the 360-degree system over the current single rater system. The premise will be proved or disproved through a survey questionnaire, which asks the respondent to rate how they perceive the 360-degree appraisal and whether or not they would prefer this as their primary form of evaluation. The results indicated that a little less than 90% of the employees that participated in the survey would prefer the 360-degree performance appraisal system.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Blue Cross Blue Shield is a Healthcare Insurance company, which provides telephone service and claim's processing services for thousands of members. The company is currently involved in a transition from three claims processing centers to one main claims processing center. Each office is comprised of a minimum of 5 autonomous teams, consisting of 25-30 employees. Claims Examiners provide claims examining functions via a LAN network installed on a desktop personal computer. Currently, all claims are processed in the Tampa, Orlando and Pensacola offices. Review Coordinator's are Registered Nurses that perform medical reviews and in patient hospital pre-authorizations. They also serve as medical consultants in claim matters and they provide approvals on medical equipment and are actively involved in Case Management for potentially high dollar cases. One other position found on each team is a Service Assistant. The Service Assistant's function is a technical capacity; they correct provider records and keep supplies stocked for the Claim's Examiners and the Registered Nurses.

SITUATION ANALYSIS (continued)

A Claims Examiner Manager ultimately governs every team; however, their roles are basically administrative project management. Although the teams are self-directing, each employee is rated on his/her individual accomplishments; the Claims Examiner Manager is responsible for evaluating employee's performance and delivering the appraisal. Since the Claim's Examiner Manager cannot possibly observe each Claim's Examiner efficiently enough to evaluate their performance for an annual review, the idea of having peer reviews has come up as a new way to provide constructive feedback.

The review system that would most likely accommodate Blue Cross Blue Shield's needs is that of a 360 degree appraisal wherein each employee gives input to the Claims Examiner's Manager on the employees' performance. The Claims Examiner's Manager along with the employee being appraised would complete an evaluation. The peer reviews would be gathered and combined to give the employees a total picture of their performance. Each peer review would hold equal weight when compiling comments and ratings to prevent a slanted performance appraisal.

SITUATION ANALYSIS (continued)

Currently, there are a few peer review systems in place, for example, Claim's Examiners perform "claim's processing functions" wherein they sit with another Claim's Examiner and observe claims being processed, and then complete an evaluation sheet on how the Claim's Examiner handled the functions. This system of checks allows peers to review each other's performance to give them adequate feedback. The Claims Supervisor has the capability to "review" claims being keyed by an examiner without the examiner knowing the Supervisor is reviewing a batch being keyed. This type of review provides a truer picture of the Claims Examiner's performance, since they never know when the Claim's Supervisor is monitoring the processing of one of their claims.

Both of these methods provide constructive feedback for performance, Claim's Examiners also receive an annual appraisal on the anniversary of their start date. Because of the availability of the Claims Examiner's Manager (or lack of), the peer review system can be a more attractive method of employee evaluation.

As each of the regional offices' close, the claims processing departments is undergoing multiple changes in procedures.

SITUATION ANALYSIS (continued)

Their 'newness' allows them to try different routes to see which better suits both the employee and company's needs and goals.

As a former supervisor, I recognize the difficulties an appraisal can present when having to observe and record an employee's performance over a period of a few months. Many problems can arise when the appraiser is not directly working with the employee on a daily basis.

Rater bias wherein the appraiser gives the employees that he / she likes the most the best evaluation, the Halo effect in which everyone receives a good evaluation are just two of the disadvantages to single rater performance appraisal, and there are many more. A 360-review system would help to eliminate the subjectively commonly associated with the "typical" performance appraisal systems. How do the employees feel about the 360-appraisal process? That is exactly what this study is determined to find out.

PREMISE

At least 90% of the employees at Blue Cross Blue Shield in the Claims Processing Department will prefer a 360-degree performance appraisal system to the current system of single rater performance evaluation.

DEFINITIONS

Employees---those employed at Blue Cross Blue Shield in Jacksonville, Florida

360 Performance Appraisal System---system of employee evaluation wherein those peers directly working with or around the employee being evaluated obtain input of an employee's performance. Each review is given equal weight when compiled into a single evaluation tool to be delivered by the Claims Examiner Supervisor.

Single Rater Performance Evaluation---system of employee evaluation wherein the supervisor rates the employee's performance based on periodic observation and review of randomly selected cases.

