Benchmarking and Metrics for Ombuds Programs

or

Of what use are we, anyway?

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Cost Effectiveness Equation

Value Added + Cost Control – Mistakes

Costs of the Ombuds Function
Compliance Functions

- HR
- EO/AA
- Ethics
- Quality Assurance
- Inspection/IG
- Safety
- Audit
- Security
- Fitness for duty
- Waste/ environmental hazard
- Human subjects
- Animal care
- Intellectual property/patents
- Mortality and morbidity
Stakeholders

- Shareholders
- Directors
- Senior management
- Managers
- Employees
- Former employees
- Compliance officers
- Customers
- Trainees
- Students
- Families
- Society
- Neighbors
- The Organizational Ombuds
Evidence for Stakeholders

- Federal Sentencing Guidelines
- Statistics: issues
- Any general analyses
- Fewer problems which escape the organization
- Evidence of referrals to compliance offices
- Managerial time saved
- General attitude surveys
- Visitor satisfaction evaluations
- Unsolicited feedback
- Use rates and demographics
- Committee review
Evidence cont.

- Changes in policies, procedures, structures, morale
- Gifts, recruits, customers
- Public recognition
- Service to managers as selves and supervisors
- Self evaluation
- Self scrutiny
- Professional recognition
- Writing articles for others
- Teaching/training
Value Added

• Providing a confidential channel
  – The value of listening
  – For every member of the organization
  – Zero barriers, so zero tolerance will work
  – It is simply important that the office exist
Value Added cont.

- Helping People Help Themselves
  - Some people prefer this option - control
  - May be only reasonable option - lack of evidence
  - May be most effective - direct, timing
  - May be most fair - prevents mistakes
Value Added cont.

• HPHS cont.
  – May be least likely to provoke reprisal
  – May save time and money - most efficient
  – Wide variety of next steps
  – Teaches skills and methods
  – Preserves privacy and saves face
Value Added cont.

• Providing supplemental MIS
  – Focus on small work groups
  – Broad sweep across organizations
  – Continuous, informal feedback
  – Available on flexible, instant basis
• Surfacing emerging issues
• Contributing to the image of the company
  (FSG, H/D laws require safe & credible place to go)
Value Added cont.

• Catching new opportunities
• Providing information to management about things going well
  – Helps spread innovation
  – Helps surface good ideas
  – Helps inform others about new best practices
  – Helps communicate internal information
Value Added cont.

• Helping especially good people get recognition and reward
• Supplementing mentoring programs
• Attracting gifts, customers, recruits
• Teaching negotiation and conflict management skills one on one
• Bringing together human services staff - leading a systems approach
Cost Control
($, Time, Image and Morale)

• Reducing rights and power based costs
  – Formal grievances
  – Time of managers working on a case
  – In-house lawyers
  – External legal interactions
  – Agency complaints
  – Court suits and settlements
  – Insurance costs
Cost Control cont.

• Preventing the loss of valued people
• Getting to disputes early
• Listening to whistleblowers very early
• Providing early information to management about things going badly
• Dealing with fear and humiliation
Cost Control cont.

- Dealing with especially delicate complaints or chronic complainers (stepping stone)
- Filling in for parts of a system that are not functioning well
- Filling in where no system exists
  - Union employee to union employee
  - Intra-team
  - Manager to manager
Cost Control cont.

• Catching new problems
• Following up
• Preventing sabotage and theft of property and ideas
• Catching unsafe working conditions
• Dealing with false malicious allegations
• Dealing with harassment of all kinds
Cost Control cont.

- Preventing violence to self
- Preventing violence against others
- Triaging very serious cases
Statistics

- Statistics need to capture value added and cost control
New Problems
Compare to the Practice of Others

• Contacts and cases (see handout)
• Ratio of contacts to cases
  – range .05-14
  – mode 2.0
  – median 1.5
  – average 1.9
Compare Practice cont.

- 136 ombuds report how evaluated
  - 10% no official evaluation
  - 1% external assessment
  - 6% periodic review by committee
  - 14% annual performance review
  - 8% solicit feedback
  - 13% employee attitude survey
  - 35% questionnaires
  - 4% review of annual report
  - 9% other
Compare Practice cont.

• Cases ombuds report save the most money
  – Sexual Harassment and discrimination
  – Keeping valuable people
  – Race, culture and disability
  – Other discrimination
  – Misconduct, fraud, abuse and crimes
  – Managerial abuse and mistreatment
  – Violence against self or others
Compare Practice cont.

• 1996 survey - 166 ombuds reported 258 “highest potential cost” cases
  – 40% dealt with harassment, discrimination or interpersonal violence
  – 20% dealt with otherwise illegal or criminal behavior
  – 40% were not obviously illegal or criminal - implicated co image and mgmt practices (1/4 = retention of valuable people)
• 50% of the ombuds report spending time as follows:
  – 60% in counseling and complaint handling
  – 20% in advising management - informing management and working for systems change
  – 10 % in education and training
  – 10% in administrative duties
  – Largest other area is professional development
Functions Requested by Constituents

- **I** Intervene as a neutral party
- **SC** Raise employee issues to upper management
- **HP** Provide confidential individual counseling
- **HP** Generate ways to improve work relationships with supervision
Functions cont.

• **HP** Help clarify and resolve conflicts
• **HP** Provide a sounding board
• **R** Refer employees to appropriate internal resources
• **I** Provide for mediation between 2 or more people
Functions cont.

- **I** Informally investigate situations
- **HP** Generate options to improve work relationships with peers
- **SC** Consult with employee groups
- **HP** Clarify company policy
- **SC** Conduct exit interviews
Functions cont.

- **SC** Influence organizational policy or practice
- **SC** Work for systems change
- **SC** Provide for continuous employee input of ideas and concerns
- **HP** Help individuals to build their interpersonal skills
Functions Grouped

- Helping people help themselves 44%
- Systems change 27%
- Intervention 22%
- Referral 7%
Is the Ombudsman Useful?

• Marketing and visibility of function
• Availability to constituents
• Adherence to and understanding of applicable standards
• Attendance at professional activities
• Continuous training
Useful? cont.

- Use by constituents
- Demographics of constituents
- Response time to inquiries
- Effectiveness of statistics
- Connection to other parts of the system
Useful? cont.

- Referrals to and from compliance offices
- Skills that need improvement
- Timeliness and usefulness of feedback to management
- Hear and resolve some bad cases
- Pick up some new problems
Useful? cont.

- Examine whether outside complaints went through the Ombuds
- Look at systems change as a result of visits to the Ombuds
- Look at changes to policies and procedures as a result of visits to the Ombuds
Self Scrutiny

• Am I as effective as I could be?
• Did I handle this case as well as I could?
• What can I learn from new problems, worst cases, mistakes, successes?
• Did I follow through on problems?
• Did I follow up with visitors?
• Did I highlight systemic problems?