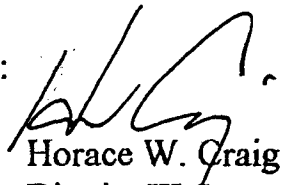


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A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR RESTAURANT PERSONNEL AT THE TABLE ROCK RESTAURANT THAT WILL ULTIMATELY BE UTILIZED IN EVERY RESTAURANT OPERATED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE PARK SERVICE

SUBMISSION DATE: October 28, 1997

AGENCY APPROVAL:


Horace W. Craig
District III Supt.

SUBMITTED BY: Joe L. Hambright Jr.
246 Table Rock State Park Road
Pickens, SC 29671

SOCIAL SECURITY:

AGENCY: SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism

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STATE DOCUMENTS

**PROBLEM
GOAL
&
PROBLEM
STATEMENT**

In 1986 the State Park Service assumed operation of the Table Rock State Park Restaurant. This full service restaurant had previously been leased to private vendors for sixteen years. This new venture was undertaken with a "we'll learn as we go" approach that has prevailed until now. With restaurant operations affecting a very small segment of the State Park staff, there has been little effort to formally train or to adequately define these employees' job functions. Even though the restaurant operation affects few employees, these employees are extremely vital to our success as they interact with more park visitors than any of our other employees.

Our agency has made great strides in developing training programs for most segments of the park staff, including operations; administration; maintenance; and interpretation. These programs have proven very successful in assisting staff members in establishing career development paths commensurate with their abilities and desires. This had led to an increase in customer satisfaction throughout our agency. Currently there are no standards by which restaurant employees' job performances are based, or any training available to assist them in skill development. The restaurant operation is plagued by low employee morale, job dissatisfaction, high employee turn over rate, and less than quality customer service.

The South Carolina State Park Service's "New Vision For The 21st Century" dictates that our agency focus greater attention to quality visitor service in every facet of our park operations. The agency has developed objectives to successfully meet this goal. These objectives include the setting of employee career development standards and the establishment of specific training programs for each specific area of operation. The impetus for development of this proposed project came about through discussions with restaurant supervisors, brainstorming sessions with restaurant employees,

utilization of The Performance Cycle Diagnosis Worksheet developed by the Covey Leadership Center and by consultation with agency leadership.

It is with the support and approval of our agency, that I propose to establish a comprehensive training program for restaurant personnel at the Table Rock Restaurant that will ultimately be utilized in every restaurant operated by the South Carolina State Park Service. This proposed plan will be submitted to agency directors no later than April 1, 1998 for approval with implementation to begin by July 1, 1998. The implementation of this goal will be results driven. Immediate improvements should be noted in employee morale and productivity. Higher customer satisfaction will be gauged by less complaints and increased repeat visits.

**IMPETUS
FOR
CHANGE**

"A New Vision For The 21st Century" developed to lead the SC State Park Service into the next century dictates that the agency can no longer continue to conduct business as it has in the past. In order for the SC State Park Service to meet the responsibility that has been entrusted to it, this new vision offers a creative, proactive approach that will be continually changing. This vision will require that close attention be given toward increasing the quality of life for the citizens of South Carolina, and improved economic development opportunities throughout the state. (Appendix I, Page 30)

The "New Vision" addresses several areas where change will be necessary if our restaurant operations are to meet the demands of quality customer service in the 21st century. Retail sales play an integral role in the operation and management of the state parks; not only from the revenue generated, but also because of the potential personal contact with park visitors that demands a high quality visitor service. Restaurants not only provide food service to park visitors, but are useful and necessary to allow increased contact time, complement other park facilities or programs, while also bringing visitors to the parks that normally would not visit the state parks. (Appendix I, Pages 85-86)

Another area involving restaurants that is impacted by the "New Vision", is in the area of employee training. As previously stated in the problem statement, training has been neglected in regard to our restaurant employees. New directives place emphasis on customer service training for all employees, whether full time or temporary, and specifically addresses the need for training programs in specific areas such as restaurant operations. (Appendix I, Pages 95-96)

As I began to look at the Table Rock restaurant operation as it relates to the SC State Park Service's vision for the future, it became apparent that we could no longer operate with a "learn as we go" approach. In order to meet the challenges dictated, a systematic approach to decide what actions to take had to be developed. Current situations at the restaurant indicated that problems existed, allowing me the opportunity to utilize skills developed through the Certified Public Manager curriculum to determine the actual causes of the problems and develop methods for correcting them. During discussions with restaurant management personnel, they felt that restaurant personnel were generally dissatisfied with their jobs. These observations were based on a high employee turnover rate, a lack of pride in fulfilling their job responsibilities, as well as an increase in customer complaints. It was decided that to start the process of change, we would bring the restaurant employees together for a brainstorming session. The following question was to be presented to the group: "What are factors that contribute most to job dissatisfaction in your position at the Table Rock restaurant?"

DATA
COLLECTION
&
ANALYSIS

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

"What are factors that contribute most to job dissatisfaction in your position at the Table Rock restaurant?" was the question presented to the sixteen current restaurant employees during a recent brainstorming session. This session was conducted utilizing skills learned in CPM classes "Introduction To Total Quality" and "Managing Change". Employee response was spontaneous, and their willingness to participate in this session exceeded my initial expectations. Complete information regarding responses are documented in Appendix II, Figure 1.

After the brainstorm session, the information gathered was transferred to a Cause and Effect Diagram. (Appendix II, Figure 2) All brainstormed responses were placed on the diagram, then I began to analyze the collected data by asking "Why does it happen?" As I analyzed the data for the true causes of our problems at the restaurant, it became clear that some of the causes were correctable, while others could possibly be minimized but not changed. Force Field Analysis was then utilized to determine whether the forces that were currently driving the restaurant operation could be changed to provide the desired state that would satisfy the restaurant goals. (Appendix II, Figure 3) Job dissatisfaction, low employee morale, a high turnover rate, and less than quality customer service were all being fueled by the causes identified during the analysis. After analyzing all the data collected, I concluded that by developing a comprehensive training program for the restaurant, that many of the restraining forces could be eliminated or changed so that the restaurant operation can meet agency goals.

ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN

Preliminary meetings have been held with restaurant management personnel to chart a course of action to meet the previously stated project goal. During these meetings it was decided that by compiling an employee manual for the restaurant and developing an employee training curriculum that would be restaurant specific, we would be able to remove many of the restraining forces that were causing many of the restaurant problems.

The restaurant employee manual will define job position, while establishing success criteria for the same. Restaurant operational procedures will also be established in this manual to assure that each procedure is carried out in the same manner by all employees. This activity will be accomplished by using methodology learned in the CPM classes "Team Skills" and "The Manager's Role in Planning". Resources for this will include the above mentioned texts as well as the Kentucky State Park System's "Dining Room Manual."

The development of a training needs curriculum will provide employees with improved skills in areas such as quality customer service, health regulations regarding restaurant operations, and personal development to improve their chance to move into other positions. This training will enable employees to provide a greater customer focused product. Restaurant management personnel will be encouraged to seek participation in the Associate Public Manager program. Resources that will be utilized to develop this training needs curriculum include the SC State Park Service's Training Coordinator, Department of Health and

Environmental Control, Pickens County Health Department, Tri County Technical College Food Services Department, as well as the experience of the restaurant manager.

Potential obstacles to the completion of this plan include the possibility of an early busy season which will stretch our resources allowing little time to work on the project. This will be closely monitored, and if necessary, other park management personnel will be assigned project participants' duties throughout the duration of the project. Another obstacle may be a delay in agency approval due to other obligations of those who will review the plan. If this happens, the process completion dates will be adjusted accordingly.

A flow chart has been developed to guide the project from start to completion. (Appendix III, Figures 1 & 2) Feed back loops have been included where needed for possible re-evaluation of various steps. As part of the flow chart each process has been addressed including who will be responsible for completing the process as well as the anticipated completion date of that process. (Appendix III, Figure 3)

PROJECT EVALUATION

PROJECT EVALUATION

A realistic evaluation method is necessary to provide feed back detailing the success of the project. Since this project will become a part of the standard by which our restaurant operation's success will be based, the evaluation system will need to be one that provides continual feed back for years to come. I have decided that initially the two areas that will be evaluated are employee job satisfaction and quality customer service.

Employee job satisfaction will be evaluated through quarterly review of employee turnover rate and semi-annual job performance review with direct feed back from supervisors. This will also be gauged by increased proficiency and efficiency derived from employee enthusiasm toward the established training program. Exit interviews will also be scheduled by the park superintendent in order to receive feed back as to potential supervision problems in the restaurant operation.

Quality customer service will be evaluated by a variety of methods. Through information learned in the "Introduction To Total Quality" CPM class these evaluation methods will be both of the active and passive form. Passive evaluation will include having comment cards available for customers, as well as suggestion forms available for customers to suggest ways we can better provide the services they desire. Another passive method that will be utilized will be the development of a complaint tracking system. This system will include type, frequency, time, employee involved if appropriate, disposition of complaint and supervisor on duty at the time of

the complaint. Active methods of customer quality service evaluation will include random customer surveys and the utilization of mystery clients to gauge employee performance and quality service.

APPENDIX I

Conclusion: A Call To Action

The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism and the State of South Carolina cannot continue to conduct business as usual. If SCPRT does not seize this golden opportunity, it will fail in its responsibility to the citizens of South Carolina. To maintain the status quo would be to put at tremendous risk the unique natural and cultural resources that have been entrusted to the South Carolina Park Service. Ignoring this leadership responsibility will only serve to compound the ever-increasing operation and capital improvement demands on the park system and will result in lost opportunities, including lost revenue for parks and for the broader tourism industry.

A proactive, dynamic positioning is critical for the future of the South Carolina Park Service. The park service vision cannot be a static one. For as SCPRT implements the new vision, it must continue to evaluate the park service and modify and/or expand the vision to maintain a superior park service. It must also be prepared to develop new products to keep South Carolina's park service on the leading edge and to capitalize on consumer demands. With recommended new vision and implementation strategies, the South Carolina Park Service can contribute even more significantly to the quality of life of the state's citizens, to community economic development and to tourism.

The best interpretation at *Outdoor Recreation* parks, can be achieved by

(Active Interpretation)

- Training park staff in the basics of interpretation.
- Offering regular recreation programs at some parks. This will be determined by the park resources and visitor use patterns.
- Offering some special events coordinated through the central office or regional educational center.

(Passive Interpretation)

- Constructing primarily informational exhibits, in the form of bulletin boards/kiosks.

Retail

The retail sales function in the South Carolina State Park Service is increasingly becoming a major part of the operations and management of the state park system. It is a multi-faceted and valuable element that not only produces much needed revenue but also provides convenience, service and day-to-day contact to the park visitor that can be leveraged for higher quality visitor service.

Retail sales encompasses all of the goods parks sold to the visiting public including camping hardware, groceries, fishing tackle, bait, gasoline for boaters, souvenirs, apparel, gift items, park specific visitor guides, books, golf equipment and other items. These items are sold in park stores, gift shops, campground stores, tackle shops, golf pro shops, refreshment stands, vending machines, restaurants, grills, park offices, designated areas within historic structures and even from park vehicles.

Retail sales is the largest revenue producing category in the state park system. With sales totaling approximately \$4 million in fiscal year 1995-96, this category accounted for 28 percent of the \$13.9 million generated by the park system. Camping produced 27 percent (\$3.8 million) and overnight lodging produced 19.9 percent (\$2.7 million).

Retail outlets in South Carolina's state parks now serve multiple roles. The stores at parks that are located in remote areas stock conveniences for the park guest. They also serve as the information source and, in some cases, the registration area for campers. While food service is the primary focus of most restaurants at state park properties, the restaurants also can increase the duration of visitation, complement other operations, and expand the kinds of visitors usually attracted to the park. Other retail outlets are key profit centers. Park stores at Hunting Island, Huntington Beach, Myrtle Beach and Edisto Beach; tackle shops at Dreher

Island, Santee and Lake Wateree; pro shops at Cheraw and Hickory Knob; and campground stores at Kings Mountain, Oconee and Table Rock are examples of facilities that generate profits that support the park system's budget.

The role of retail centers can be expanded, however, to deliver quality visitor services in deliberate and strategic ways. Because these are the places of high visitor contact, there are opportunities for the state park service to

- raise public awareness about a park's natural and cultural resources;
- set an example of its commitment to sustainability and quality visitor services; and
- provide value-added service to the visitor to encourage visitor satisfaction for longer stays and repeat visits.

In order for the park service to raise the visitor service role of retail operations, fundamental changes will have to be made in each park based on their management classification.

Special Resource Parks

For parks whose natural and cultural features are the primary focus of management operations, retail sales will focus on merchandise that

- relates directly to the natural and cultural history of the park or surrounding area;
- assists with the educational aspects of these parks; and
- contributes to the marketing efforts of these parks (i.e. T shirts, headwear) or the state of South Carolina.

Additionally, vending will be handled in areas that do not detract from the park's natural or cultural features, and visitor guides that are park specific will be developed and sold for each park within this category.

Outdoor Recreation and Traditional Parks

For parks whose primary focus is to promote or develop opportunities for recreational activity in natural settings, retail operations will

- relate to the natural or cultural history of the park or region;
- assist with the marketing effort of the park;
- fulfill a need expected by the park visitor such as groceries, gas or camping supplies;

- core competencies could be achieved by on-the-job training, training workshops, personal research or by taking formal education courses at a college or university. Core competencies should be evaluated regularly.
- becoming a learning organization, where employees are continually expanding their capacity to create results and continually learning how to learn together.
- creating procedures and programs that support the learning process such as
 - mentoring, teaching, coaching
 - team development
 - changing management
 - more visioning, less micro-management
 - encouraging people to take risks and be innovative
 - helping employees become more self-directing

Training

The current level of training provided by the department is directed at specific areas of operation (see Appendix VII). The centralized training program is a vital part of our successful operation, but must evolve to meet the changing role of the park system. Programs must be developed that enable park staff to conduct training programs such as customer service and safety. The state park service will

- incorporate training opportunities that complement the strategies for career development;
- create a program that provides continuing education to managers, including information on management trends and self improvement;
- place emphasis on customer service training for all employees, particularly front-line employees, including supplemental employees that are critical to visitor satisfaction;

- provide basic interpretive training to superintendents and park rangers. This training should include program development, techniques, resource information, public relations, public speaking and evaluation;
- develop training for special operations, such as restaurants, retail outlets and golf courses where appropriate;
- provide timely information on training opportunities to all employees;
- capitalize on training opportunities with local colleges and universities; the South Carolina Department of Education; the state Budget and Control Board's Center for Education, Quality and Assessment (CEQA); the National Park Service; USDA Forest Service, and others;
- build training partnerships with other agencies or organizations;
- restructure and reactivate the State Park System Training Council to address the needs of the park system. This council should represent field and central office personnel and meet at least on an annual basis;
- solicit ideas from all state parks sections and work cooperatively in addressing specific needs and in the developing training programs; and
- develop an annual budget for training needs. A budget would enable the training section to plan for the following year, purchase necessary equipment, and offer programs on a timely basis.

Morale

The morale of an effective organization is perhaps the best measurement of its success. Necessary steps to achieve vital employee involvement include:

- Providing management direction and involvement to give employees some ownership in the organization. This includes providing more information to employees, sharing the vision and goals of the agency, as well as the concerns and priorities.
- Monitoring performance and providing feedback.. Methods to evaluate all employees should be developed. Constructive feedback enables employees to strive for excellence. If performance is not monitored, employees lose interest and morale suffers.

TABLE ROCK STATE PARK

Marketing Classification
Signature

Management Classification
Traditional

3,083 acres

VISION

- Provide sectorized experiences ranging from backcountry hiking and rock climbing to family camping and rustic cabins.
- Focus more on the resources, increasing sustainable management practices while providing recreation opportunities. Expand the visitors' appreciation of the resources.
- Present high quality facilities and reinforce the image of the park service and state.

CURRENT STATUS

Table Rock includes Table Rock Mountain, a unique geologic feature that serves as a landmark in upstate South Carolina and serves as a backdrop for the developed portions of the park and the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway (Highway 11). Major park activities include rustic cabins, camping, fishing, trails, nature programs, restaurant, swimming, and picnicking. Many of the buildings reflect the 1930's architectural style and stonework of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

ACTIONS NEEDED TO MEET VISION

VISITOR SERVICES

- Provide a focal point for visitor orientation.
- Investigate converting the bathhouse into a nature center.
- Convert the nature center to a trailhead orientation building with exhibits and restrooms (perhaps an open deck with some covered exhibits).
- Upgrade restaurant (especially the interior) and cabins to reflect CCC heritage.
- Open up the backcountry portions of the park for designated tent camps, by registration only.
- Before expanding lodging, consider density and complementary design.
- Complete the Oolenoy development that is underway.

RESOURCES

- Seek land/partnerships for the protection of viewsheds and trail expansion.
- Make major improvements to the trail system.
- Extend the trail system to disperse current trail use.
- Address storm and beetle damage clean-up.

STRUCTURES AND GROUNDS

- ❑ Remove carpet golf.
- ❑ Improve the image and atmosphere for park entrances to reflect the high quality resource.
- ❑ Substantially upgrade the campground operations, including developing designated tent sites and providing level RV sites.
- ❑ Reestablish a primitive camping area.
- ❑ Investigate the conversion of the barn facility to a retreat center.
- ❑ Recognize the possibility for future lodging development, designed to blend with historic structures and the park's resources.

PARTNERSHIPS

- ❑ Continue and expand partnerships with Pickens County and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

APPENDIX

II

BRAINSTORM SESSION

NOVEMBER 18, 1997

**16 Restaurant Employees Present
(Including 2 Supervisors)**

**WHAT ARE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE MOST TO JOB
DISSATISFACTION IN YOUR POSITION AT THE TABLE ROCK
RESTAURANT?**

Response

**Low pay
No benefits
Irregular hours
Lack of training
Lack of recognition for job well done
Worn out equipment
Unsure of job duties
Lack of adequate kitchen space
Favoritism shown by supervisors
Sporadic hours
No identifiable uniform
Inadequate equipment
Haphazard disciplinary process
Lack of promotional opportunity
Lack of understanding by supervisors
Do not feel a part of total park operation
Supervisors' expectations change without employee realization
Lack of communications**

Figure 1

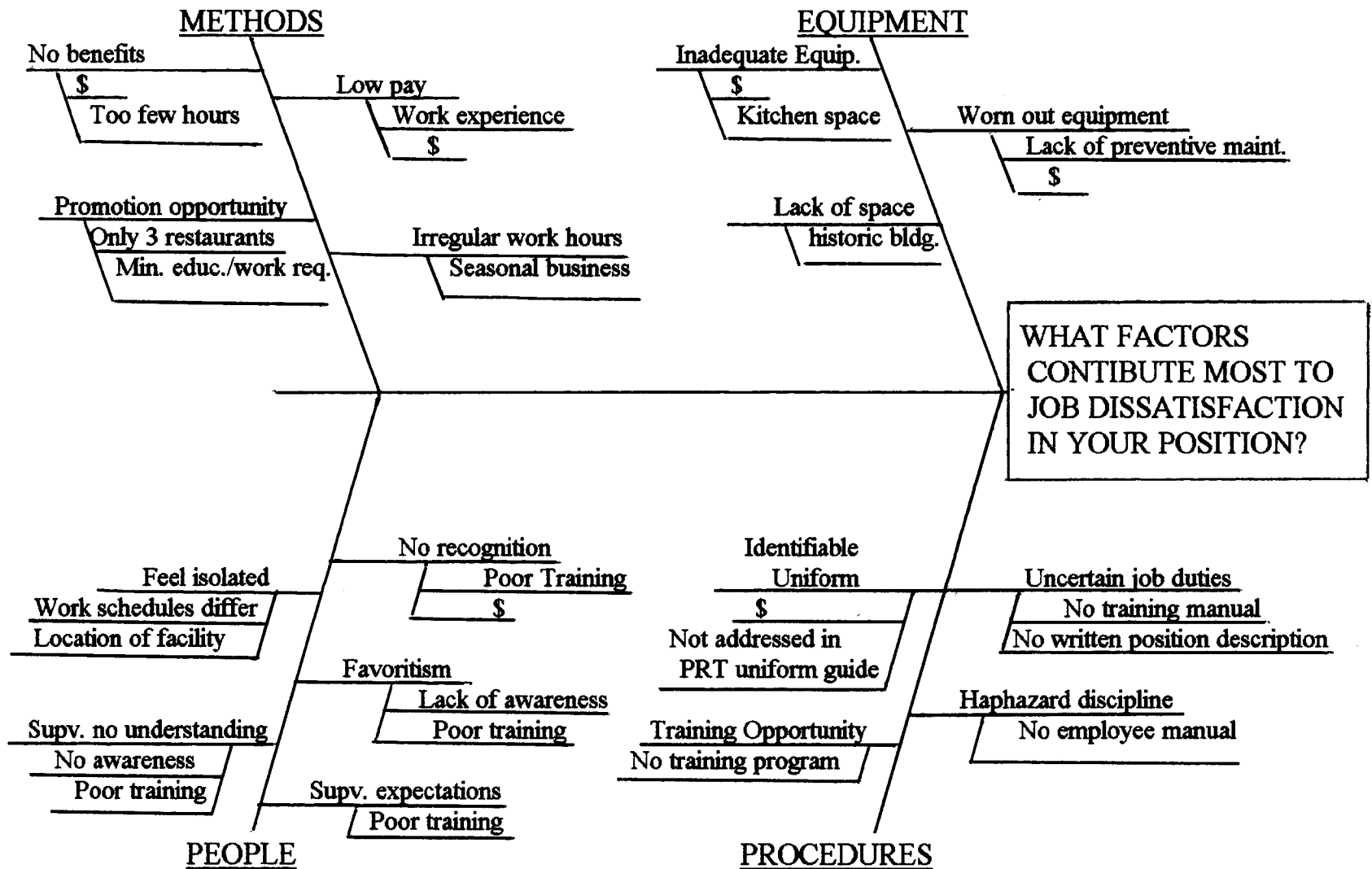


Figure 2

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Driving Forces

Low employee morale

Job dissatisfaction

High employee turnover rate

Less than quality customer service

Restraining Forces

Lack of training

Undefined job duties

Inadequate pay

No benefits

Lack of recognition

Irregular work hours

Inadequate/outdated equipment

Figure 3

APPENDIX III

PROJECT FLOW CHART

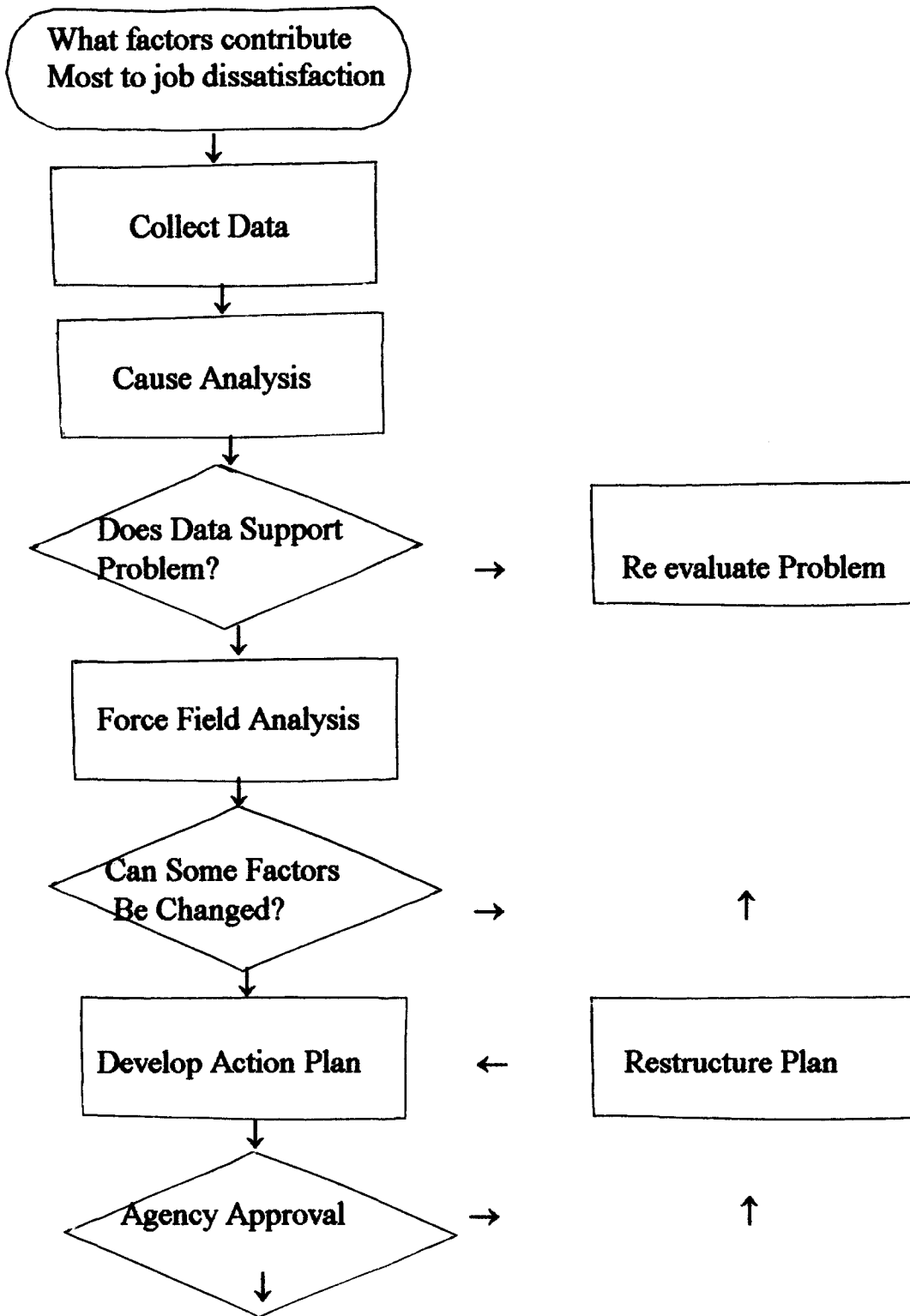


Figure 1

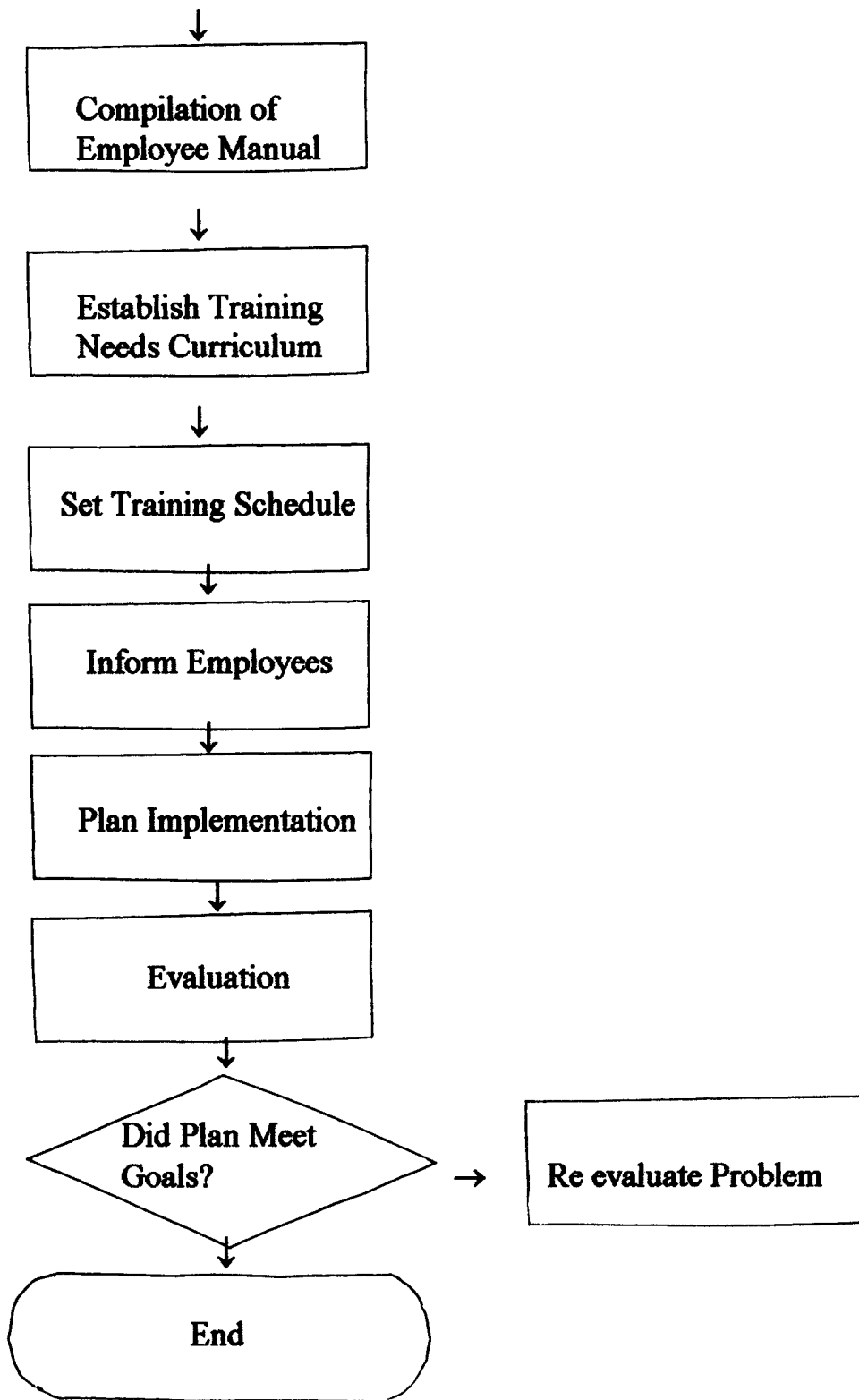


Figure 2

ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

<u>PROCESS</u>	<u>WHO'S RESPONSIBLE</u>	<u>COMPLETION DATE</u>
Collect Data	Joe Hambright Karen Fuller, Rest. Mgr.	December 1, 1997
Cause Analysis	Joe Hambright	December 31, 1997
Force Field Analysis	Joe Hambright	December 31, 1997
Develop Action Plan	Joe Hambright Karen Fuller, Rest. Mgr. Claudette Long, Asst. Rest. Mgr.	March 15, 1998
Compilation of Employee Manual	Karen Fuller, Rest. Mgr. Claudette Long, Asst. Rest. Mgr.	June 1, 1998
Establish Training Needs Curriculum	Joe Hambright Mike Hunt, State Park Training Coordinator Karen Fuller, Rest. Mgr.	June 1, 1998
Set Training Schedule	Joe Hambright Mike Hunt, State Park Training Coordinator	June 1, 1998
Inform Employees	Joe Hambright Karen Fuller, Rest. Mgr.	June 15, 1998
Plan Implementation	Karen Fuller, Rest. Mgr. Claudette Long, Asst. Rest. Mgr.	July 1, 1998
Evaluation	Joe Hambright Mike Hunt, State Park Training Coordinator State Parks Operation Section	October 1, 1998 July 1, 1999

Figure 3

January 14, 1998

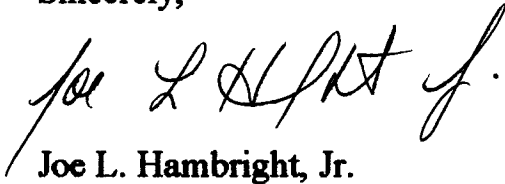
Laurette Burdyl
CEQA
Office of Human Resources
1201 Main Street, Suite 1000
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Laurette:

Enclosed you will find the first draft of my CPM project. Hopefully, all the needed information is enclosed. If additional information is needed, please contact me. I will continue working toward the project completion while awaiting your feed back.

Thanks for your continued support in this project as well as the Certified Public Manager program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joe L. Hambright, Jr.", written in black ink.

Joe L. Hambright, Jr.