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# Improving Interpersonal Communication Between Generation Y and Management in Flight Service

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IMPROVING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN  
GENERATION Y AND MANAGEMENT IN FLIGHT SERVICE

By

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An Independent Study

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Science

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The Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved has read this independent study, submitted by Jeannette M. Fischer, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science from the University of North Dakota.

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(Advisor)

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## **ABSTRACT**

In October 2005 the flight service division of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) made history when the operations of the division was awarded to a third party vendor, Lockheed Martin. Through the outsourcing, communication issues arose in flight service between management, between specialists, and between specialists and management.

In this study, flight service communication errors between management and generation Y specialists were assessed from a specialist's point of view. The study determined in what areas of flight service interpersonal communication errors existed, and ways to improve interpersonal communication between management and specialists to excel operations. This study also determined if the interpersonal communication errors between management and generation Y specialists were new or has existed with previous generations. Lockheed Martin looks to improve communication between management and specialists to retain employees, increase job satisfaction, and provide a better working environment.

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

The outsourcing of the 58 flight service sites across the United States did not see any initial changes to operations. Flight service specialists still worked with the same people, in the same location, on the same equipment, and at the same pay-grade.

During the 18 months after outsourcing, the flight service industry encountered significant changes as Lockheed Martin implemented transitional plans. At the end of the transition 38 sites were closed and specialists were required to quit or relocate. Also during transition, a new windows based computer system was introduced and implemented into daily operations.

Today, three years after the transition, only 13 sites exist, the computer system is almost unrecognizable after three years of bi-monthly updates and upgrades, and staffing has been further reduced. These swift changes have frustrated specialists and the frustration is due to a lack of communication.

Communication is fundamental to a successful business. Without effective interpersonal communication, the chance of success is compromised. In the air traffic control industry effective interpersonal communication is vital for safe and efficient operations.

In the flight service division, communication occurs on the operations floor between management and specialists, between specialists, and between specialists and pilots. The flight service specialists rely on management for guidance on performing the job, and the management looks to specialists for operational feedback.

The focus of this independent study is to decipher what types of communication errors exist between management and new generation Y air traffic control specialists in the flight service division, as employees communicate both upward and downward. In what areas does communication fail and what can be done to ensure positive communication in the future?

## **PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to discover what kinds of communication errors exist between management and generation Y specialists. With the identification of these problems, this study attempts to determine if these types of errors are found within generation Y, or have existed with previous generations of workers. This study provides suggestions on ways to improve interpersonal communication in flight service between management and specialists.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

In October 2005 Lockheed Martin won the contract to operations for the flight service division from the FAA with a proposal that included plans to reduce the workforce needed by approximately 40 percent, reduce the number of flight service stations from 58 to 20 (three large hubs and 17 smaller legacy sites), and to implement a new computer system, Flight Services for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (FS21). The proposal would allow flight services to be run by fewer specialists more efficiently, and at a lower cost

than the federal government. (LM Operations Supervisor, Jeffery Scoval, personal communication, April 1, 2009)

The consolidation of the flight service stations began in the first quarter of 2006 and was completed in 18 months. Many specialists retired or quit when Lockheed Martin initially took over operations, and even more retired or quit when their local station was closed. (LM Operations Supervisor, Jeffery Scoval, personal communication, April 1, 2009)

Because of the reduced number of specialists, Lockheed Martin hired many new generation Y college graduates into the flight service program between 2006 and 2008. Currently, flight service station specialists in the Prescott Hub are approximately 40 percent previous FAA employees, and 60 percent new generation Y college graduates. The Fort Worth Hub specialists are approximately 50 percent previous FAA employees, and 50 percent new generation Y college graduates, and the Washington DC Hub approximately 20 percent previous FAA employees and 80 percent new generation Y college graduates. The legacy sites are unlike the hubs with 90 to 95 percent previous FAA employees, and five to ten percent new generation Y college graduates. (LM Operations Supervisor, Jeffery Scoval, personal communication, April 1, 2009)

With the unique combination of employees, especially at the larger hubs, and with the challenges of a newly implemented computer system, the Lockheed Martin flight service stations provide an environment where effective interpersonal communication is imperative. Lockheed Martin is seeking to improve communication, particularly between management and generation Y employees, to retain employees, increase job satisfaction, and provide a better working environment.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

The FAA mandates Approved Performance Levels (APLs) which Lockheed Martin flight service specialists are expected to meet and maintain. Some of the APLs include using correct phraseology on the radios, answering calls in an approved amount of time, giving pertinent weather information during briefings, and getting Notices to Airmen (NOTAMS) issued in a pre-determined amount of time. By meeting the APLs, Lockheed Martin earns bonuses from the FAA; therefore, the APLs are important in the future of flight service. Lockheed Martin must meet the APLs to earn a profit, and the specialists must meet the APLs to ensure job security. The new flight service system is unlike any of the past and the expectations are higher than ever. (LM Operations Supervisor, Jeffery Scoval, personal communication, April 1, 2009)

Generation Y employees are the future of the Lockheed Martin Flight Services, and one of the biggest challenges that Lockheed Martin management faces is communication with the new generation Y employees. By improving communication between management and generation Y employees, Lockheed Martin will look to meet APL's, retain employees, increase job satisfaction, provide a better working environment, and provide quality service to customers.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the most common types of downward and upward communication errors that exist at flight service between management and generation Y specialists?
2. Have these errors existed with previous generations?
3. Can Lockheed Martin work to improve this communication between management and generation Y specialists?

## **LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

Observations in this study are limited to a small number of generation Y specialists at the Prescott, Arizona Hub.

## **CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND/LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **FLIGHT SERVICE BACKGROUND**

“The evolution of Flight Service from the aviation support facilities of the 1920 to the present Automated Flight Service station mirrors the remarkable growth of aviation during this century” (Schamel, 2008). The very first Flight Service Stations were Air Mail Radio Stations (AMRS), established in conjunction with the new Air Mail routes. AMRS specialist’s responsibilities included taking local weather observations, making forecasts, and collecting weather information from the radio (Schamel, 2008). Additionally, an AMRS specialist assisted pilots with the loading and unloading of mail, serviced aircraft, and maintained equipment (Schamel, 2008). In 1921 there were 17 fully functional AMRS across the United States (Schamel, 2008).

The AMRS expanded and by 1927 were renamed Airway Radio Stations (ARS) (Schamel, 2008). The new ARS developed with the passing of the Air Commerce Act in 1926. The Air Commerce Act passed responsibility of the Transcontinental Airway System to the Bureau of Lighthouses (Schamel, 2008).

In 1927 there were 45 specialists working at the new ARS’s. Most specialists background was in maritime radio, thus the main skill of the specialists was maintaining and building radios (Schamel, 2008). The radios were used until 1948 for Morse code, air to ground communication, and to pass weather and aeronautical information between stations (Schamel, 2008).

The ARS specialists used air ground voice radios and Teletypes in the early 1930’s (Schamel, 2008). These new technologies allowed more information to be passed

along circuits (Schamel, 2008). Specialists now provided services to not only mail planes, but to all aircraft. Aircraft could call in for weather information or to make a position report (Schamel, 2008). Specialists were now expected to continue with maintenance of radios and Teletypes, as well as maintain any airport light aids and provide search and rescue for aircraft (Schamel, 2008).

In the 1930's air traffic control towers were introduced to the aviation system; however, these towers did not reduce the need of pilots for weather and search and rescue services (Schamel, 2008). "The ARS controllers still provided the majority of services to pilots nationwide" (Schamel, 2008).

In 1938, the ARS once again changed names to Airway Communication Stations (ACS) with the passing of the Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) (Schamel, 2008). During World War II, the main customer of the ACS was the military and with men fighting the war, women were hired into the ACS (Schamel, 2008).

The post World War II era brought "new and improved radio navigation aids" that "helped speed the growth of the flying across the nation" (Schamel, 2008). The ACS specialists now expanded services to private, military, and airline pilots (Schamel, 2008).

In 1960 the ACS was renamed Flight Service Stations (FSS), which is the name still used today (Schamel, 2008). The FSS came about with the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, which merged the Federal Aviation Agency with the CAA (Schamel, 2008).

Initially these new FSS specialists were only allowed to read weather and forecasts verbatim, but in 1961 the National Weather Service (NWS) and the FAA agreed to train FSS specialists to be certified Pilot Weather Briefers (Schamel, 2008). The trained specialists were now allowed to read, summarize, and interpret the weather for

pilots from charts and reports (Schamel, 2008). The weather briefings were provided to pilots before flight on the phone and during flight on the radios (Schamel, 2008). “The FSS became ‘general aviation’s operations office’,” as FSS specialists provided additional weather services (Schamel, 2008).

Through the 1950’s and 1960’s, the FAA was focusing energy on updating older systems in towers and centers, while FSS continued to provide weather services with old Teletype systems of the 1930’s (Schamel, 2008). In 1972 the FAA decided to focus on ways to make flying safer for general aviation aircraft, and specifically the FAA was focusing on ways to reduce weather related accidents (Schamel, 2008). Per recommendations from not only the Civil Aeronautics Board, but also the National Transportation Safety Board, the FAA decided to implement a new position into FSS known as En Route Weather Advisory Service (EWAS). The new EWAS specialist was trained to provide ‘pertinent, current weather’ to en route aircraft (Schamel, 2008).

As general aviation traffic increased into the 1970’s, the need for a newer and more efficient flight service system arose. The FAA created and tested new systems at select sites around the country, and from these tests, the best features of each system were combined to create the new ‘Model One’ system (Schamel, 2008).

“The first Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS) was commissioned at Bridgeport, CT on March 3, 1984. Sixty more AFSS’s followed over the next few years,” (Schamel, 2008). In the late 1980’s, another new system called the Operational and Supportability Implementation System (OASIS) was introduced to flight service and was the FAA’s “blueprint for FSS into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (Schamel, 2008).

As the 21st century approached it became clear that the FAA could no longer afford the high costs of modernizing equipment in air traffic control FSS and keep pace with the higher salaries of employees. Due to the financial challenges of operating and updating flight service, the FAA decided to contract out flight service in an attempt to save money.

The current work environment for flight service employees has significantly changed in the last three years with the outsourcing to Lockheed Martin. Most employees have worked for the government anywhere from 15 to 25 years and are now seeing noteworthy changes in the flight service environment and job expectations.

One notable change is the equipment used. Most employees are familiar with Model One that ran off an old Disk Operating System (DOS) computer, and have now upgraded to a Windows based system. The ability to quickly access information needed to perform the job has been significantly impacted.

Another significant change for flight service has been the move from 58 smaller facilities of 25 to 35 specialists into larger hubs of 180 to 200 specialists (LM Operations Supervisor, Jeffery Scoval, personal communication, April 1, 2009). The dynamics in interpersonal communication have changed with the increase of specialists.

Another change with the outsourcing has been in the number of managers and supervisors. While flight service in the past has had four to six managerial figures to approach for information or problems, now in a hub there are ten to 12 supervisors, one lead supervisor, one assistant manager, and one manager (LM Operations Supervisor, Jeffery Scoval, personal communication, April 1, 2009). When an issue arises, specialists are unsure of which level of management to approach.

Another recent change in flight service is the large influx of generation Y employees. Lockheed Martin has hired hundreds of aviation college graduates to replace flight service retirees. The dynamics of FAA specialists with new generation Y specialists in a hub bring about unforeseen interpersonal communication problems and issues.

Each hub now employs about 20 to 60 percent former FAA employees, and 40 to 80 percent new generation Y aviation graduates (LM Operations Supervisor, Jeffery Scoval, personal communication, April 1, 2009). Management is made up of former FAA employees. While management has the experience in the job, they have minimal experience on the new equipment, and when personnel issues arise, management is unsure of Lockheed Martin policy. The lack of communication starts at the top of the managerial pyramid and flows downward, thus communication between management and flight service specialists is limited.

The need for improvement in interpersonal communication in flight service has never been greater. With the former FAA employees retiring weekly, Lockheed Martin is working diligently to ensure a workforce of the future in the generation Y specialists. The need for improved interpersonal communication is dire for the survival of flight service.

## **GENERATION Y**

Generation Y members were born between 1979 and 1994, and include over 70 million people, or 34 percent of the United States (US) population (Gardner & Eng,

2005). Generation Y is the most ethnically diverse generation to date and is larger than any previous generation (Gardner & Eng, 2005). Generation Y members are ambitious, optimistic, and technologically savvy (Gardner & Eng, 2005). Other names that refer to generation Y members are 'Nexters, The Internet Gen, and Millennials' (Zemke, 2001).

The generation Y members are self-confident and were raised in a 'me-oriented' environment with active parents (Zemke, 2001). "These kids are used to a lot of structure in their lives - chaperones, organizers, community coordinators. Generation Y parents and teachers have always planned things out for them. They've had very little unplanned free time and aren't used to ambiguous situations and may not be very spontaneous" (Zemke, 2001). Parents are very involved with generation Y and in fact, generation Y parents are sometimes referred to as over-involved (Neely, n.d.).

Some positive characteristics of generation Y members include adaptability, skilled with technology, quick learners, effective multitaskers, and tolerant (Breeding, 2006) & (Neely, n.d.). The ability to adapt gives generation Y an advantage in a rapidly changing world.

For generation Y members, "technology is assumed to be a natural part of the environment" (Oblinger, 2003). One study found that between ages five and eight, 20 percent of generation Y members were using computers, and by the time generation Y members are 16 to 18, almost all were using computers (Oblinger, 2003). Generation Y members are very efficient with computers and keep pace with rapidly advancing technology.

For generation Y, "multitasking is a way of life" (Oblinger, 2003). The generation Y members are comfortable with multitasking, and some believe multitasking

is a reaction to information overload (Oblinger, 2003). Generation Y is accustomed to multitasking and have a harder time focusing on one task (Goodstein, 2008).

One last positive characteristic of generation Y is they are very tolerant and diverse. “Generation Y is openly accepting of diverse backgrounds and beliefs, which creates a community of tolerance and inclusion” (ValueOptions, n.d.).

Some negative characteristics of generation Y members are impatience, skepticism, and bluntness. Generation Y was raised with instant gratification (Breeding, 2006). For example, generation Y was raised with the Internet, which provides a means of accessing information quickly at anytime. Instant gratification breeds impatience.

Generation Y was also raised when media was booming. “Bombarded by constant advertising 24-hour news outlets, and information overload from the Internet, Gen Y has grown up skeptical of the media” (Miller, 2006). Skepticism is a positive and negative characteristic. Lastly, generation Y members tend to be blunt and they feel that the need to make their point is more important than self-control (ValueOptions, n.d.).

Parents of generation Y want their children to attend college and have programmed their children from a young age with strict schedules and extracurricular activities (Denham, 2002). “While at one time children enjoyed free time, now their free time has been replaced with a frenetic, never-ending race to fill their resumes up with super human activities” (Neely, n.d.). Members of generation Y value education and view a four-year degree as a minimum. Generation Y will have more graduates than any previous generation.

Generation Y will have an increasingly large impact on social and economics issues as they move into positions previously held by baby-boomer retirees. “There is

increasing evidence from generational researchers and on-the-ground reports that the newest group (generation Y) showing up at the personnel office is indeed as new and different a breed as the students of population, sociology, and demographics have been prophesying it might be” (Zemke, 2001). Employers must identify how the various generations at work differ and must cater to these differences in order to attract and retain employees.

When recruiting generation Y employees, employers must advertise via the right media, but once past the initial application phase, employers must make the interviewing and hiring process more personal. Further, employees must understand that, “Gen Y job seekers are circumventing traditional recruiting techniques and taking control of their own career development” (Miller, 2006). Traditional recruiting techniques include advertising online and on television. Generation Y members are connectors and are networking with friends to find their next job opportunity (Miller, 2006).

Generation Y employees connect best with others their age, thus “companies can connect to the networks of Generation Y by equipping their own Gen Y employees to carry the corporate message” (Miller, 2006). The final decision on whether to take a job will require generation Y’s parents input (Miller, 2006). Allowing time for a generation Y employee to gather facts and talk to a parent is necessary in the hiring process.

Once a generation Y member has decided to work for a company, the company’s new concern is the retention of the employee. Previous generations have had different views on rules and regulations; therefore, understanding what is important to a generation Y employee is imperative to retention rates. Generation Y employee’s value:

1. Meaningful work

2. Committed co-workers
3. Meeting personal goals
4. Meeting financial goals
5. Flexible work schedules and dress codes
6. Respect

(Neely, n.d.) & (ValueOptions, n.d.).

Generation Y members are motivated and want to advance quickly; they desire immediate gratification (Zemke, 2001). “This is a generation where career choices and behavior are driven, first and foremost by their quest for opportunities to play meaningful roles in work that helps others” (Gogoi, 2005). Generation Y members are very competitive. To further job satisfaction, allow generation Y employees to create customized career paths, and get to know them as individuals (Neely, n.d.). Further, an employer can retain employees by creating quality relationships with employees, training employees, mentoring employees, and providing access to the newest technology (Neely, n.d.).

Generation Y employees are very educated and like excel on the job. “A managers goal should be to find a balance between giving employees generous feedback and giving them the freedom to make decisions and solve problems” (Phillips, Torres, 2008).

Generation Y members need reasoning behind any orders given and want to know how it affects not only them as an individual, but the company as a whole (ValueOptions, n.d.). When generation Y employees understand how a change affects them and the company, they are more motivated to implement the change to their best ability. Further,

generation Y values ethical behavior and full disclosure, and when they feel they are not told the truth, they are skeptical, and they will not be satisfied (ValueOptions, n.d.). Full disclosure on changes passed from management will ensure job satisfaction.

Lastly, the generation Y employees grew up with technology, are connected, and want a rewarding career in a technologically savvy company. Management must understand how to attract and retain generation Y employees, as they are the workforces of the future. “The key to retaining all good employees and especially your Gen Y employees comes down to the quality of relationships they have with their managers” (Neely, n.d.).

## **INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

Interpersonal communication is “communication that occurs when members of two or more cultures or other groups exchange messages in a manner that is influenced by their different cultural perceptions and symbol systems” (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2003). Competent communication “is the ability to be both effective and appropriate” when communicating (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2003). One challenge in communication is effectively transmitting and receiving the intended message. Successful communicators have the ability to adapt to situations.

The two types of communication to be studied in flight service are upward and downward communication. In upward communication, “subordinates communicate with their bosses - sometimes in a way that distorts negative information and puts it in a positive light” (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2003). Upward communication includes

what the employee is doing, if the employee is having a problem at work, suggestions for improvement at work, and how the employee is feeling (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2003).

In downward communication, “managers address messages to subordinates” (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2003). Downward communication includes instructions for the employee, job rationale, and feedback (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2003).

Communication at Lockheed Martin Flight Service between management and specialists occurs in both an upward and downward motion. In upward and downward communication, the ability to be a competent communicator aids with specialist retention, increasing job satisfaction, and providing a better working environment.

## **IMPROVING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

In any business, communication is vital for survival. “Employees want guidelines from their supervisors, and the management wants input from the entire team” (Keefe, 2009). Three areas exist to improve communication in the workplace. These areas are the expression of communication, effective responses in communication, and active listening in communication (Chait, 2009).

There are multiple areas in which a manager or an employee can focus on to improve the expression of interpersonal communication. One of the most important areas of interpersonal communication to improve upon is encouraging employees to communicate. The ability to effectively communicate both upward and downward ensures companies maximize resources. When an employee does not speak up on issues,

or management does not effectively communicate their needs, a company risks delaying projects as well as not utilizing resources (Keefe, 2008).

One way to increase effective communication is to talk about change. “If you know change is coming, communicate the reason behind the change” (Gallo, 2008). When managers communicate change before it occurs, as well as explain the reasoning behind the change, employees will be more receptive of the change.

When employees are blindly told new policy with no explanation or reasoning, they are often upset and resistant to implementing the change. Additionally, if an employee has a life change that will affect their job and performance, the ability to effectively communicate this change to management is vital.

The discussion of goals is another expression of communication. By sharing company goals, employees can understand how and where they fit into the company, and how they can best contribute to the team. Employees must also share goals with management. This allows managers to assist the employee in meeting professional goals.

Management should include employees in decisions and especially in feedback loops (Gallo, 2008). Often management is busy working on bigger details of a system and is not directly involved with production of products. Since employees make and sell the company products, it is important to get employee feedback and take it seriously. By doing this, management will improve interpersonal communication in the workplace and efficiency in operations.

Another tool to improve interpersonal communication in the workplace is to share skills and knowledge. If managers have previously worked the job, their knowledge can be invaluable to a new employee. If managers have not worked the job previously, they

should “ask employees to explain what goes into each project by listing the activities, costs, and time spent on each” to better understand operations (Keefe, 2008). Open communication keeps managers and employees striving toward similar goals.

One last tool to improve the expression of communication in the workplace is to create a motivation cycle. Managers should periodically find time to sit and discuss projects with employees (Keefe, 2008). Large group meetings are just as important as one-on-one sessions. “Management input plays a large part in motivating employees to communicate about and work toward goals” (Keefe, 2008).

The next focus is effective responses in communication. In order for communication to be successful, one must understand the listeners’ background and formulate feedback in a way that can be understood. Occasionally in communication, interpretations of the message may differ and a miscommunication arises. “Be clear about how you will communicate with employees and when your communication style might be different and why” (Parks, 2004).

The last focus is active listening in communication. For an employee to gain trust in their employer, the employer must actively listen and come from behind the desk to ensure active listening (Parks, 2004). Active listening requires the listener to not interrupt the employee as they describe concerns (Parks, 2004).

An important outcome of active listening is the employer will get to know employees. “A person can have significant vision for the company, but if that vision can’t be powerfully conveyed through words in a way that resonates with staff, the implementation becomes nearly impossible” (Parks, 2004).

## **SUMMARY**

Interpersonal communication in flight service is an issue. The need to improve interpersonal communication between generation Y and management is essential as employees and management work together to propel flight service into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While the outsourcing of flight service has presented many challenges, the biggest and most important challenge is improving interpersonal communication.

## **CHAPTER III: FLIGHT SERVICE COMMUNICATION**

### **UPWARD COMMUNICATION**

Multiple forms of upward communication occur daily at flight service. Some examples of upward communication in flight service include when a specialist is talking to management about what they are doing, when a specialist is talking to management about a problem they are having at work, when a specialist suggests an improvement, and when a specialist lets management know how they feel.

Specialists communicate daily with management about what they are doing. For example, management may ask a specialist what they are doing because they need them to switch to a different position on the operations floor. Also, a specialist may approach management and let them know what they are doing because they need help with an operational issue. Whether management is soliciting the response from the specialist or the specialist is seeking help from management, effective upward communication is vital in understanding day-to-day issues and ensuring unproblematic operations in flight service.

Upward communication also occurs when a specialist brings a problem they are having at work to management. A current problem at work, which has been brought to management's attention, is the daily schedule. The flight service hubs consist of 96 workstations in a full circle all facing the center of the room. The room is split into four quadrants. One quadrant is for In-flight and Flight Watch specialists, another is for Flight Data specialists, and the other two quadrants are for Preflight specialists. The dividing of the quadrants by position is referred to as the current sectorization plan.

If a specialist's schedule requires them to work four hours of preflight and then four hours of flight data, in the middle of the shift the specialist would log out of the preflight quadrant computer and switch quadrants to the flight data computer. Then the specialist would log into the computer and re-set up the display. Currently, a specialist may have a daily schedule that requires switching positions once in a day or up to five times in a day. Productivity declines each time a specialist switches positions because the average time to set up a computer station is anywhere from ten to 30 minutes.

Specialists have voiced their concern with the current sectorization plan. Most specialists prefer to sit at one station throughout the day and change positions at that station. The computer system is programmed to allow this; a specialist can work all four positions (Inflight, Flight Watch, Flight Data, and Preflight) without moving computer stations. A sectorization plan is not needed, but has been implemented to aid management in finding specialists throughout the hub.

Another scheduling issue brought to management's attention is training schedules. Because the transition from 58 sites to 20 sites happened so quickly, flight services was temporarily understaffed. In response to the understaffing issue, Lockheed Martin increased hiring efforts. The result of the hiring efforts was numerous new trainees and no trainers.

Trainers on the floor have been exhausted due to continuous training for the past two years. The Prescott Hub opened doors in May of 2007, and since then all trainers on the floor have been required to train. When a trainer finishes with one trainee, another is waiting to start. Sometimes trainers have been assigned two and three trainees at a time.

Trainers understand that training is a learning process. Under the FAA, flight service specialists were trained and checked out full performance level after one to two years of training. Lockheed Martin expects trainers to check trainees out as quickly as possible. The quickest trainee to date trained only six weeks, and the average trainee with Lockheed Martin trains only four to seven months.

Trainers are not only overwhelmed by the number of trainees, but also by the hours spent on position in one day training. Trainers agree that two to three hours of training a day is all that is effective. Trainers have found that trainees retain little information after the first three hours of a training session. In managements attempt to check trainees out as quickly as possible, trainers have been consistently assigned six to eight hour sessions of training, five days a week. The trainers and trainees are overwhelmed. Trainers have discussed the training problems with management.

Another issue that has been brought to management's attention is the lack of communication from supervisors to upper management. Specialists typically approach supervisors when an issue first arises. Unfortunately there have been multiple instances where an issue has been brought to a supervisor, and upper management is not advised.

For example, multiple specialists have brought attention to supervisors when other specialists sit on position unavailable, or when a specialist has issued multiple NOTAMS incorrectly. Some instances are a one-time situation, while others have been occurring for months. The supervisors typically listen to the issue, and upper management is not informed. Once a specialists is frustrated enough with the issue they go above the supervisor to upper management. Because upper management is unaware that the issue exists, the process of a solution is slowed.

Another important upward communication issue is again with trainers and trainees. An example includes three different trainees. Each of the three trainees separately approached management with issues concerning the training program, and each requested a new trainer. The attitude on the operations floor is that if a trainee is not getting along or learning from their trainer, they should switch to a new trainer.

The first trainee's situation was handled well. Management listened to the problem and promptly switched the trainee to a new trainer. Perhaps this situation was dealt with so promptly because the trainee went to management to quit the program and that is when the training issue was revealed. The second and third trainee's approached management with training problems and were told to stick it out. Only after much persistence and talking to multiple managerial figures were the trainees allowed to switch. The second and third trainees had to move up the managerial chain to finally be allowed to switch trainers. Specialists on the operations floor observed the lack of downward communication and feedback that these trainees endured.

Upward communication in flight service also occurs when specialists bring suggestions to management for improvement. In the Prescott Hub, multiple specialists have presented ideas for improvement of operations to management. When these issues are brought to management's attention, the typical response is: 'we are working on it', or 'you should work on it'. Beyond the initial suggestion, no additional feedback is given on the issue. With effective upward and downward communication, these issues could be addressed and implemented to make flight service operate more efficiently. The two instances when a specialist was able to get management to implement a suggestion have increased efficiency in operations.

The first improvement implemented was due to lost information with site closures during consolidation. Due to the loss of important information, a specialist in Prescott started compiling a quick link toolbar of maps, phone numbers, cheat sheets for NOTAMS, etc. that only specific individuals still had access to. The toolbar was specific to the Prescott Flight Plan Area because that is what the specialist worked.

After creating this toolbar on his own time at work, the specialist then emailed the link to his co-workers. Specialists across the operations floor at Prescott were utilizing this link bar because of the important operational information that could be quickly accessed. Even specialists in different flight plan areas were able to utilize information from this link bar.

After a year, management finally saw the usefulness of the link bar and the amount of time saved by specialists using it. After investigating the new link bar, management implemented it and promoted the specialist to create a link bar unique to each flight plan area across the nation. The specialist was also allowed to select a team of specialists from other locations to help him create the new link bars. Still today, four hours of his shift a day are utilized to keep this new Flight Service Link (FSLink) bar up-to-date.

The link bar has expanded to include information on scheduled computer or program outages and new policies in flight service. Specialists can find topography and detailed information on mountain passes and every airport in their designated flight plan area. Most recently, daily schedules have been added to the link bar as well as an area where specialists can keep an updated Status Information Area (SIA). The SIA is used to track closed airports and runways, as well as frequencies that are out of service in a flight

plan area. The SIA assists specialists in getting a clear picture of their flight plan area before their shift begins.

The FSLink team has found lost phone line numbers and maps, and added them for each flight plan area. The flight plan areas can also email the FSLink team if there is inaccurate information or missing information on the link bar, and it is taken care of promptly. Flight service specialists are dependent on the link bar for information. The FSLink bar is required to be used by all specialists and has increased efficiency in operations.

Another specialist suggested the implementation of a new Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) program. The FS21 system does not presently have the capability of mapping TFR's, so a specialist devised a program that other specialists could utilize at the beginning of the shift to accurately plot TFR's on the flight display map. The display of the TFR's allows specialists to quickly and accurately decide what TFR's affect a pilot's route.

Again this specialist's suggestion was not initially implemented. Over time as more specialists began to use the program, management decided to implement it. Specialists were provided one-on-one training to learn the new TFR mapping program. Specialists are not required to use the program, but it does provide an alternate solution to an ongoing problem.

In both the FSLink bar and TFR program examples, the provided suggestions for improvement have been valuable to advancing operations. Any programs and enhancements should be taken seriously because FS21 is still being developed, and small improvements are needed to increase efficiency.

The last upward communication issue is when a specialist talks to management about how they are feeling. These talks are typically initiated by the specialist and occur to assist management in understanding what is happening in a specialist's life, and how it might affect operations.

Management encourages employees to communicate how they are feeling through the completion of a career path worksheet. Specialists are advised to complete the worksheet and schedule one-on-one meetings yearly to discuss specialist's career goals. Through career path meetings a specialist relays how they are feeling in the job, what they expect from management, and their career goals with Lockheed Martin.

Upward communication occurs daily in flight service. Management and specialists must work together to improve effective and competent upward communication.

## **DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION**

Downward communication also occurs daily in flight service. Some areas of downward communication in flight service include: instructions for specialists, job rationale, and feedback. Effective downward communication is imperative to boost operations and teamwork.

When relaying instructions via downward communication, it is important that management not talk down to specialists. One area of downward communication in flight service that is a current issue is the mandatory briefing items (MBI's).

The MBI's are issued on an as needed basis and discuss current flight service issues such as APL tips from quality assurance and new flight service policies. MBI's are found in a binder at the supervisor's desk in the center of the operations floor. Specialists are required to brief themselves on the MBI items at the beginning of a shift. Once a specialist has read the MBI they sign a form that says they have read it, understand it, and will implement it.

The biggest problem with MBI's is the number printed. In the past two years, since the Prescott Hub opened, the number of MBI's has doubled in comparison to previous years. The MBI's have become a source of information overload for specialists. If a specialist leaves on vacation for a week, it is possible they will return to ten or more new MBI's.

The retention of MBI information decreases as the number of MBI's increases. Due to the increase in the number of MBI's, specialists find themselves skimming the information and signing the form without a clear understanding of the issue. Management must work to improve downward communication through MBI's to make it more effective in the future.

Another instructional issue in flight service with downward communication is the pre-duty relief briefing. When a specialist arrives at work for a shift, they are required to listen to a recorded briefing of all new operational and national issues. These briefings typically last seven to ten minutes and are not the same issues presented in the MBI's.

While the pre-duty relief briefing keeps specialists knowledgeable of daily issues in flight service, the problem arises in the repetitive nature of the meeting. Once an issue is presented at the meeting, it is then repeated for the next three to four weeks. The

meetings are repetitive, and specialists have begun to tune out the meeting due to boredom and information overload.

The biggest issue with instructions passed to specialists through downward communication is the frequency with which policies are changed. A specialist may be briefed on Monday about a new policy and by Tuesday the policy will change. Some policies that constantly change in flight service are the rules regulating Internet usage, reading on the operations floor, and cell phone usage on the operations floor.

Initially when the Prescott Hub opened, specialists were allowed to use the Internet when there was a break in workflow. Specialists would read the news online and work puzzles. In the past three years Internet has been taken from specialists and given back multiple times. The Fort Worth Hub and Washington DC Hub had similar experiences. Presently, Internet is not allowed on the operations floor at any hub and has been blocked.

A similar issue is reading on the floor. Initially reading was allowed when there was a break in workflow, and then reading was not allowed at all. Presently, reading is allowed between 6PM and 6AM in the Prescott Hub.

Last, cell phones were initially banned in the Prescott Hub and Fort Worth Hub. The Washington DC Hub was initially allowed unlimited usage. After multiple policy changes at the three hubs, a national policy was issued that states cells phones are allowed if on silent and not answered on the operations floor.

Policies pertaining to Internet, reading, and cell phone usage have changed frequently in the past three years. Specialists struggle to keep up with the latest policy change. The new national policies for Internet and cell phone usage have provided

consistency. There is a need for more national policies to ensure more consistency in the future.

Scheduling of trainees is another inconsistent policy in flight service. Most trainees are paired with a trainer and required to follow the trainer's schedule. However, management does allow some trainees to pick their own schedule and days off, and then train when the trainers and trainees schedules happen to overlap. Scheduling policies must be set and followed to ensure no decrease of job morale.

Yet another example of rapidly changing policies in flight service occurred with the schedule bidding process. Through an MBI, specialists signed a form on the procedure to bid a schedule. When the bidding process began, procedures were changed and added. Additionally, after the bidding process had ended, some specialists were called in to re-bid a schedule. From the MBI, specialists understood the process and were frustrated as policies and schedules were changed without notification. The bidding process was a failure in downward communication and hurt specialist morale.

Job rationale in downward communication is present in flight service. An example of downward communication that is ineffective with job rationale is the jumbotron at flight service. The four quadrants on the operations floor face the supervisor's desk at the center of the room. Above the supervisors desk is a jumbotron, with a flat projected screen facing each quadrant. The jumbotron's are used to track and project VIP temporary flight restrictions, any computer issues of the day, and other flight service issues of immediate importance.

Management uses the open space at the bottom of the jumbotron to congratulate new specialists that have checked out full performance level, new specialists that have

signed off of a new position, any specialist that has passed a secret shopper evaluation, or new specialists that have passed a national weather service oral exam. The issue that has arisen from these messages is with inconsistency.

When a specialist takes the national weather service evaluation, management says the score does not matter, just passing the test. Passing is 70 percent or better. Management then puts the score on the jumbotron if the specialist receives a 90 percent or better; however, if the specialist scored below a 90 percent, the jumbotron reads that the specialist passed the test without reference to a score.

The posting of scores contradicts the point of the test and specialists are frustrated by this contradiction. By announcing a score on the jumbotron, management signals that a score indeed matters. A specialist that takes the national weather service exam with a harder grader and on a day with adverse weather typically will not score as high as a specialist that took the exam with an easy grader and no adverse weather. Specialists and trainers have brought this issue to management's attention. Specialists agree the jumbotron should announce a pass without reference to a score.

Another issue associated with the jumbotron inconsistency occurred when only one trainer on the operations floor was thanked for their training efforts. This thank you message created negative feelings with the other trainers who have gotten no written recognition or thanks for their services.

The last downward communication issue in flight service is feedback. Poor upward and downward feedback exists throughout flight service. An example of unsuccessful feedback is when a flight service specialist brings an issue to the supervisors. After the issue is passed to the supervisor, no further feedback on the issue

is given to the specialist. The specialist is unaware if the issue is taken care of, totally dropped, or being considered. The issue may have been dropped due to poor upward communication. Poor upward communication breeds poor downward communication. Effective communication requires competent upward and downward communication.

A successful feedback form in flight service is a weekly email from the head of the flight service program, Ron Petro. Ron Petro's weekly email updates specialists nationwide on current flight service issues, both job and computer related. The emails are a positive form of feedback.

One last feedback issue in flight service is with the APLs. The APLs were originally defined when Lockheed Martin acquired the flight service contract. In the past three years Lockheed Martin and the FAA have redefined the APL's to better measure performance at each position. Specialists are briefed via an MBI when a new APL is created.

Quality Assurance (QA) evaluates specialists by the APL's and scores are relayed through downward feedback. After aircraft incidents and accidents, QA reevaluates the APL's and often changes them. Even though the new APL did not specifically exist at the time of the accident, QA will still fail the specialist on the APL. Specialists are frustrated with this inconsistent feedback.

Interpersonal communication is an issue in flight service. The constant change of policies and rules regulating flight service is the biggest communication issue. Specialists struggle to keep pace with the newest computer workaround and the latest APL. The next chapter will explore the most common communication problems and if these problems are unique to generation Y employees, or if they have existed with

previous generations. Also the next chapter will suggest ways to improve interpersonal communication in flight service.

## **CHAPTER IV: OBSERVATIONS**

### **IMPROVING UPWARD COMMUNICATION**

Upward communication in flight service is more successful than downward communication. The upward and downward communication relating what a specialist is doing to management is usually successful because both management and specialists want the communication to be successful. Management formulates questions that are understood by the specialists and specialists formulate feedback that effectively relays current work activities. The desire of both management and specialists to effectively communicate what is happening in the current working environment aids in successful communication.

The communication relating what a specialist is doing to management is one of the most successful at flight service and is not new to generation Y. Generation Y is motivated to excel in the working environment and generation Y understands that the ability to communicate progress to management is necessary for future advancement.

Upward communications that brings problems to management in flight service has been successful and unsuccessful. The first issue discussed was the sectorization's impact on the daily schedule. Management of all levels in Prescott has been advised repeatedly of scheduling issues, but nothing has been done to correct these issues.

The Fort Worth Hub has addressed scheduling issues. While Fort Worth incorporates a different sectorization plan to assist management in finding specialists throughout the operations floor, management has realized the drawback of sectorization is lost time in switching positions. To reduce the time lost in switching positions, all Fort

Worth specialists work four-hour blocks on a position. The four-hour block scheduling ensures that specialists in Fort Worth only switch positions one time during the shift and allows the specialists to be more efficient.

Specialists communicate scheduling concerns frequently. Management should practice active listening with specialists to understand the frustration among generation Y specialists with daily schedules, and work with specialists to create a solution. Poor daily schedules are a newer issue that has arisen with the new FS21 computer equipment. Getting a workstation set up for a position previously took less than one minute with OASIS and Model One, but the new FS21 equipment requires ten to 30 minutes of setup time.

The training problems brought to management has also been successful and unsuccessful. The first issue of too many trainees and too many hours training in a day has been unsuccessful. Lockheed Martin hired hundreds of aviation college graduates into the flight service program in the past two years. With the large increase in new employees and the shortage of older employees, trainers have no choice but to continue training multiple trainees.

The over-hiring combined with the lack of trainers is a new issue in flight service that deals mainly with generation Y. Lockheed Martin pushes trainees to check out quickly, and trainers to train quickly to make it easier for specialists to get time off.

The number of hours of training a day is also a new issue associated with the mass hiring of generation Y employees. The training continues in six to eight hour blocks daily. Management should again practice active listening to fully understand how trainers and trainees are feeling. Management needs to compromise with trainers on

training time in a day and slowing training down to reduce the burn out rate of both trainers and trainees, and to provide more quality training.

Generation Y employees are motivated to learn the job and become fully certified as quickly as possible. Generation Y employees also strive to learn the job well and want to succeed. The trainees understand that more than three hours of training a day becomes unproductive and have expressed their concern to management. Trainers and trainees have received little feedback on this serious issue, and have seen no policy changes.

In the issue of trainees switching trainers, some trainees' situation was handled correctly, while others had to fight to be heard. Switching trainers is not a new issue associated with generation Y. Flight service specialists have always had problems with training and trainers. While some stations in the past assisted trainees properly, the same issue existed with previous generations. Management must actively listen to trainees concerns and work with trainers to quickly provide a new trainer when needed. Effective and competent upward and downward communication will ensure successful training in the future.

The lack of communication between supervisors and upper management is yet another problem that generation Y has brought to management. When specialists advise a lack of communication between management exists, the issue should be taken seriously. The upward communication of this problem has also been successful and unsuccessful. Management cannot continue to have breaks in communication, especially ones that affect specialists and operations.

The lack of communication between management is not a new generation Y issue; however, improving interpersonal communication between management will help with

retention of generation Y specialists. Active listening and positive feedback from management is needed to improve this communication.

Management must actively listen when a specialist discusses a problem. Once a problem is identified, management should give feedback and share past skills or knowledge to assist the specialist in solving the problem. Further, management should have weekly local meetings to discuss issues in the office and to find solutions. The weekly meetings should provide an opportunity for management to understand and address current issues in flight service. By incorporating weekly meetings into management's schedules, management-to-management interpersonal communication will improve.

Specialists have experienced problems that were brought to management and dealt with properly as well as problems that were ignored. Communication of problems at work is not a new issue unique to generation Y. Improvement of this communication is necessary to boost morale and increase retention of specialists.

Upward communication that suggests improvements in the work place has also been successful and unsuccessful. Success has been seen through the implementation of the FSLink bar and the TFR program. The unsuccessful improvements were never considered. This communication issue is not new to generation Y; however, because flight service has never had APL's to meet, and is still adjusting to the new computer system, suggestions for improvement must be taken seriously.

When specialists talk to management about how they are feeling, the upward communication is generally successful in flight service. Management takes time to ensure specialists are physically and emotionally well enough to work. Further,

management ensures specialists personal needs are being met. This communication issue is not new to generation Y, but has existed with previous generations in the workplace. While frustrations exist with generation Y employees in upward communication, these are similar interpersonal communication issues that previous generations have encountered.

## **IMPROVING DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION**

In flight service there are many areas of downward communication to improve upon. To start, instructions communicated down to specialists are an issue. When passing instructions, management must ensure that the mode is not condescending. Instructional communication is an issue of past and present generations.

Instructions passed through MBI's and pre-duty relief briefings were minimized before the transition to Lockheed Martin. MBI's and pre-duty relief briefings are now a source of information overload. Generation Y specialists view the repetitive information as condescending. While generation Y understands the importance of repeating important information, more than three times is excessive. The information overload is not a new concept for generation Y, but generation Y typically deals with the overload by multitasking and not focusing on the task at hand.

Management should focus on alternate ways to transmit MBI and pre-duty relief briefing information. Pre-duty relief briefings should be given in the 'newest information first' order so that a specialist knows when they have already heard additional

information. Currently the briefing order changes daily depending on the supervisor transmitting the information.

Management should also consider further disclosing the company's goals and reasoning behind the issues presented in pre-duty relief briefings and MBI's. Mass amounts of information are passed along daily and specialists are typically not given any reason for policy changes. The lack of communication frustrates specialists and makes them less likely to want to implement new policies. Specialists are more receptive of policy changes when an explanation of the importance and impact is disclosed.

Last management must reduce the number of MBI's and amount of information in pre-duty relief briefings. Only the most critical information should be presented. All other information should be passed to specialists via PowerPoint presentations or group informational meetings.

Another issue in downward communication is the frequency with which a policy is changed. When flight service operated under the FAA there were no APL's and all computer and operational issues were answered by the flight service Order 7110.10. The Order 7110.10 was viewed as the flight service 'bible'.

Under Lockheed Martin, flight service uses the Order 7110.10, but can no longer use it to answer current issues. The Order 7110.10 was written for OASIS and Model One computers and does not correspond directly with the new FS21 equipment, or the new assigned flight plan areas. Without an official Order for guidance, specialists encounter daily policy changes.

Daily policy changes are a new issue for generation Y specialists. Because Lockheed Martin was restricted to 18 months to transition, new operational policies were

never developed. Lockheed Martin needs a new updated Order 7110.10 that gives guidelines for operational issues as they pertain to the new FS21 computer.

Other policy changes have occurred as well, which include Internet, reading, cell phone usage, scheduling trainees, and schedule bidding policies. All of these issues are not new to generation Y, but do affect generation Y morale and retention.

The policy changes with the Internet, reading, and cell phone usage on the operations floor have become more consistent in the past six months. Generation Y specialists have adjusted and appreciate the fixed policy. Scheduling trainees is a newer issue in flight service, which affects generation Y. The past 20 years in flight service have seen very few trainees, and the FAA has had a policy of training only a few hours a day over a longer period of time. When Lockheed Martin took the contract, and training hours increased, and training policies changed.

The training issue of too many hours training and too many trainees in a short amount of time can be fixed. Lockheed Martin should look to previous training techniques utilized by the FAA. If the training policies need to be changed, Lockheed Martin should work together with trainers and trainees to create a successful training program. By including trainers and trainees in decision-making, the training program and communication will be more successful into the future.

Lastly, the schedule bidding process should be a consistent policy. The schedule bidding process with previous generations was consistent and so this is a new issue for generation Y. Generation Y wants to be told the policy in complete from the start so no confusion arises as schedules are decided.

Management must work with generation Y to develop consistent policies. When issues not covered by a policy arise, management should create notices informing specialists of proposed rule makings. Once a notice is passed to specialists, there should be an initial two-week response period where management takes suggestions from specialists on the proposed rule making. At the end of the comment period management should review suggestions and publish the new policy.

Effective downward communication can enhance or destroy morale in flight service. The new jumbotrons utilized in the flight service hubs could be used to improve morale, but instead the jumbotrons are unintentionally utilized to decrease morale. Specialists not only worry about their score, but also worry when other specialists get secret shoppers. This is because generation Y specialists want an opportunity to excel and show their skills. Generation Y wants to get the secret shopper call and pass them so management knows they are working hard and doing the job correctly.

The jumbotrons are a new issue associated with generation Y. Previous flight service facilities did not have a jumbotrons or similar item. Management needs to be consistent on the jumbotrons or not use them to post scores and congrats.

Feedback is very poor in flight service, and is a significant downward communication issue. Currently little to no feedback is given when specialists offer ideas for improvement to management or when specialists present problems to management. Even worse is that when feedback is given, it is often negative or stated poorly, for example the APL feedback. Providing effective and positive feedback is not a new generation Y issue but has been a managerial issue for generations.

One form of positive feedback that specialists receive is weekly emails from the head of flight service. Local managers should consider a weekly email that would keep specialists and management in two-way communication about local and national flight service issues. The email should also provide a means for specialists to ask questions to local management. Another suggestion would be for management to have an anonymous question box that allows specialists to ask questions or present issues to management. Management could answer the questions from the question box in the weekly email.

Management should work to be clear in feedback responses to specialists. Also management should discuss the company goals and talk about change with specialists to keep specialists motivated and working towards company goals. Active listening will help management keep current with operational flight service issues as well as give feedback. Lastly management should include employees in decisions and share skills and knowledge to help improve downward interpersonal communication.

Flight service should focus on improving downward communication. As downward communication is improved, upward communication will also improve. A constant positive flow upward and downward in communication will guarantee retention of current generation Y specialists in the future of flight service and efficiency at the operations level.

## **CHAPTER V. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Lockheed Martin wants to improve interpersonal communication with generation Y specialists to meet APL's, retain employees, increase job satisfaction, provide a better working environment, and provide quality service to customers. Multiple steps exist that Lockheed Martin management can employ to improve interpersonal communication.

Recommendations for meeting APL's include encouraging communication from employees on the current APL's, and encouraging feedback on ways to improve the APL's in the future. Also to meet APL's, management must actively listen to feedback, and provide positive feedback when grading specialists on current APL's.

Lockheed Martin's main company goal is to make a profit. Lockheed Martin can earn bonuses by passing APL's. By sharing this goal with specialists, and informing specialists that passing APL's is not only a bonus for Lockheed Martin, but also a bonus of cash and job security for specialists, specialists will be more motivated to continue to pass the APL's.

To improve communication to help retain employees, increase job satisfaction, and to provide a better working environment, are also objectives of Lockheed Martin. Lockheed Martin knows that generation Y is the workforce of the future and Lockheed Martin is working hard to ensure specialists stay with flight service and the company.

Areas important to generation Y specialists include positive relationships with management, a good salary, opportunities to grow and excel, recognition for a job well done, challenging work, flexible schedules, and casual dress. Lockheed Martin already

has provided very competitive salaries, opportunities to grow and excel, challenging work, flexible schedules, and a casual dress.

Improving communication between management and generation Y specialists is still an issue. Some recommendations for improvement are for management to encourage specialists to communicate, talk about any changes and the reasons behind changes, discuss company goals with specialists, include specialists in decision making, share skills and knowledge with specialists, create motivation cycles in flight service, be clear in responses in communication, and be active listeners.

Lockheed Martin has started making efforts with job recognition, but management must actively listen to specialists on effective and ineffective recognition efforts. By enhancing communication between specialists and management, job retention will increase, job satisfaction will increase, and a better working environment will develop.

Recommendations for improving quality of service provided to customers is tied directly into making specialists secure in their job and increasing job satisfaction. As job satisfaction is increased, specialists will want to give back to the company and will be motivated to provide better service to customers.

One last recommendation for improving communication between generation Y specialists and management is to create a committee or panel of specialist's designated to work with management on local policies and operational issues. The committee would actively listen to specialists' issues and present the issues to management. Then the committee would work with management to ensure issues are resolved and feedback is

given to the specialists. The committee would hold management responsible and ensure solutions to problems are reached.

Lockheed Martin is working to improve communication with generation Y specialists to ensure success of the flight service contract. As communication between generation Y and management increases, so will the success of the entire program. While many of the interpersonal communication issues seen today in flight service are similar to those of the past, improving the communication will have an increasingly positive impact on the flight service program.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

Communication within the flight service division is an important and current issue between management and all specialists. The most common upward and downward communication errors exist through poor interpersonal communication skills.

Management must encourage generation Y employees to openly communicate. Through open and competent interpersonal communication, generation Y can express concerns, improvements, and feelings to management. The relationship between generation Y and management will improve as communication improves. Improving communication channels in flight service is necessary to continue to advance operations and to increase retention and job satisfaction.

Generation Y is motivated to work hard and excel. Generation Y wants recognition and respect for their hard efforts. Respect provides a better working environment and helps increase retention and job satisfaction.

To show respect and recognition to specialists, management should include specialists in decisions and be open with specialists on company goals. When new policies are implemented, management should share any knowledge and reasoning for the new policy with specialists. Management should actively listen to specialists and be clear in responses to show specialists their opinions matter.

Generation Y specialists want management to be credible and trustworthy. This will enhance good relationships with management and increase retention of specialists. When management is credible and trustworthy, job satisfaction is increased.

Management's credibility and trustworthiness increases and decreases as the effectiveness of upward and downward communication increases and decreases. To ensure effective communication, management must be clear in responses and provide full disclosure on issues in flight service.

Generation Y and previous generations fear change and thus resist it. Effective interpersonal communication can reduce fear of changes and allow quicker implementation of the change. As changes are embraced, operations improve for customers, and APL's are passed.

Management and generation Y must work to improve interpersonal communication in flight service. With the mass number of generation Y specialists already in flight service and those to be hired in the future, effective interpersonal communication is needed to ensure flight service success into the future.

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