

Improving Mine Operations by Recognizing Employee Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

Management has increasingly recognized that employee attitudes contribute to the peaks and valleys in production and safety. Data supportive of this position come from various industries, and several mines have undertaken efforts to assess and use information about employees' work attitudes to remove organization bottlenecks. These efforts reflect a family of methods known as organization development (OD) which are useful for addressing such issues as training, management controls and maintenance procedures.

The concept of OD represents both a goal and processes for reaching that goal. The goal is to improve mine productivity and the safety and morale of the work force. One particular process is employee attitude survey feedback, which uses a questionnaire having strong content validity because it is developed through input from local management and union leadership. The questionnaire is distributed to the work force and

group interviews of randomly sampled employees are subsequently done to add perspective and round out the data collection process. Responses to the questions are tabulated, then this information is posted on the bathhouse bulletin board for review and is also discussed in a follow-up feedback meeting with employees.

Problem areas may be probed further by an analysis in which key questions are scaled together around central management and operations issues such as production pressure, safety attitudes and practices, and supervisor-crew relations, to mention a few. Management is frequently interested in how its operations compare to other mines, and this also provides for examining what courses of action to take to resolve identified problems. Recommendations recognize constraints existing at the mine and are prioritized for management goal setting.

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