AN ANALYSIS OF SALES PEOPLE’S PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL CRITERIA AT A TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

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The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria in a telecommunications corporation. The study was prompted by the perceived disillusionment of the sales people with the current performance appraisal criteria.

The perceptions of 67 sales people were assessed using a questionnaire developed by the researcher. One-way analysis of variance procedures (ANOVA) were used to determine if there were statistically significant differences in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria.

Findings indicated that there were no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the 38 performance appraisal criteria statements. Findings did not indicate a statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the performance criteria statements, the attitude or satisfaction statements, and the peripheral issue statements. Based on this study, the sales people appear to have clear perceptions of the performance appraisal criteria.
I would like to thank the many people who assisted in this accomplishment. I had much help, support, and guidance from university personnel, friends, coworkers, and family. I would like to thank Michelle Walker, my major professor, for her guidance, patience, and support. Earl McCallon provided excellent instruction and guidance in statistics and research design. Terry Holcomb and Mickey Wircenski supportively served on my committee, and Becky Yates also provided exceptional guidance and support above and beyond expectations.

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By

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Many authorities feel that a wholesome and fair work environment is considered essential for a positive work experience (e.g., Clifford, 1999; Cook, 1995; Longenecker, 1997). One of the issues that continues to be of concern for sales people as well as sales managers is that of performance appraisal criteria. Such criteria can be frustrating for both employees and managers (Clifford, 1999; Fetter, 1993; Muczyk & Gable, 1987; Swan, 1991).

The sales force industry has grown tremendously since the mid-1990s (Gabe & Goldberg, 1999). Corporations are desperately seeking qualified people, while they are feeling the effects of downsizing, industry growth, voluntary attrition, and the onset of new product lines. There is a major effort to hire sales people or to retain those already employed. According to Gabe and Goldberg, the cost of losing sales representatives is estimated to be between $100,000 to $250,000 a person.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that over 4 million people were employed as sales people during 1996. It is projected that the need for sales people will increase approximately 10% by the year 2006 (BLS, 1999). According to the BLS, the telephone communications industry currently has about 8,000 people employed in marketing and sales, with an anticipated 6% increase by the year 2006.

Performance appraisal criteria are characterized as among the most crucial factors used to determine a sales person’s pay, promotion, or termination (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997; Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985; McKay, 1988). These factors can have a
great impact on productivity, motivation, and satisfaction, depending on how the results are received by the evaluated employees (McKay, 1988).

The quantity of literature and research on performance appraisal criteria reveals an effort to understand and improve the work environment. Kikoski (1998) reviewed over 351 journal articles related to performance appraisal criteria. He found that performance appraisal criteria fell into one or two categories. One category identified and measured the behaviors and dynamics of the appraisal interview, whereas the other category took a general, vague, or contradictory approach to performance appraisal criteria.

Corporate organizational patterns, leadership behavior, managerial styles, and the work environment as perceived by managers are all important elements in facilitating sales performance (Adkins, 1979). They permit the integration of performance measures among sales managers of sales forces to be appropriately matched to individual sales people’s work assignments and the weighting of performance measures, according to the emphasis desired.

Several factors may influence the sales people’s performance appraisal criteria. They include (a) the manner in which a sales person is evaluated; (b) a sales person’s personal interaction with his or her manager or supervisor; (c) the validity of the evaluation process; (d) the basis for remuneration and reward; (e) plans for improved communication; and (f) ongoing performance feedback (Adkins, 1979; Decarlo & Leigh, 1996; Jackson, Schlacter, & Wolfe, 1995; Morris, Davis, Allen, Avila, & Chapman, 1991).
Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze sales people’s perception of performance appraisal criteria in a telecommunications corporation to provide information that will help in the continued development of effective performance appraisal criteria; aid managers when assessing the performance of sales people; and serve as guidelines for the professional development training of managers on performance evaluation.

Theoretical Framework

Performance appraisal criteria should be agreed upon by both the sales people and sales managers in order for the performance appraisal to be effective in a sales environment (Anderson, 1987; Blanchard & Blanchard, 1991; Churchill et al., 1985; Dubinski & Barry, 1982; Jackson et al., 1983; McKay, 1988). Longenecker (1997) proposed that, if organizations depend on performance appraisal criteria as a way to manage people, they should incorporate an effective appraisal system that is rewarding, enhancing, and guiding. Otherwise, poorly developed performance appraisal criteria can cause negative effects (Anderson, 1999).

According to Boice and Kleiner (1997), performance appraisal criteria are difficult to assess. Sales people may see the performance criteria as being undesirable and unwanted. To ensure that sales people remove this barrier, sales managers should review with sales people the performance appraisal criteria, organizational goals, and objectives. Departmental and individual objectives should also be shared so that sales people will know the standards by which their performance will be evaluated.
Kikoski (1998) indicated that an integral part of performance appraisal criteria is face-to-face communication. He stated that people tend to perceive performance appraisal criteria as an “Achilles’ heel” if management does not have effective face-to-face communication with them. When management does not listen to employees, employees become disillusioned.

According to Wanguri (1995), three components that may influence performance appraisal criteria are (a) the format; (b) the relationship between sales manager and sales person; and (c) the frequency of the appraisal. For the purpose of this study the three components used by Wanguri will be used throughout to identify what makes up performance appraisal criteria. Clifford (1999) observed that performance appraisal criteria should be a collective method of opinions by sales people and sales managers. If sales people perceive that they have no input, then the performance appraisal criteria lose their effectiveness.

According to Cron, Slocum, and Cox (1986), perception is an important factor in determining job performance. Examining how sales people assess performance appraisal criteria may help to determine a sales person’s effectiveness in the organization (Cron et al., 1986; DelVecchio, 1998; Dulebohn & Ferris, 1999; A. J. Taylor, Pettijohn, & Pettijohn, 1999; Walker, 1994; Zirkle, 2000). This study examined the perceptions of sales people on performance appraisal criteria. It attempted to show that the perception of sales people concerning various criteria such as communication skills, aptitude (ability), skill level (selling skills), attitude, and sales volume should be used to determine performance appraisal criteria.
Significance of the Study

Performance appraisals are the process by which sales managers assess the performance of sales people. Performance appraisals are essential for ensuring that the performance of sales people contributes to overall corporate efficiency and profitability (Jackson, Keith, & Schlacter, 1983; Jackson et al., 1995; Morris et al., 1991). Job security is related to performance appraisals. The results often determine whether a sales employee is promoted, compensated, transferred, and retained (Jackson et al., 1983).

It is also important for sales people to know how they are performing and whether or not they are meeting the expectations of the corporation (Boice & Kleiner, 1997). This allows sales people to become familiar with how they will be evaluated. They can become disenchanted with the lack of knowledge or lack of communication with employers about their performance. Sales people want to know how they are performing; they want feedback (Clifford, 1999).

Furthermore, managers themselves fail to be evaluated for their ability to appraise and praise their subordinates (Morris et al., 1991). Managers who appraise performance are more likely to fail without clearly established performance criteria (Longenecker, 1997; Marshall & Mowen, 1993; M. S. Taylor, Masterson, Renard, & Tracy, 1998). Finally, the present review process is often ambiguous. It lacks validity, structure, and a plan for improvement or feedback (Longenecker, 1997; Wiese & Buckley, 1998). This in turn makes the employee feel that he or she is being treated unfairly. There is also limited research on performance appraisal criteria for sales people (Jackson et al., 1995).

A study was needed to determine the perceptions of sales people of performance appraisal criteria in the telecommunications industry. A limited amount of research is
available pertaining to sales people’s perception of performance appraisal criteria. Their perception is important because it can affect their current performance and help develop more effective work habits. The goal of this study was to provide an analysis of the perception of sales people in order to provide insight into existing appraisal criteria procedures in the telecommunications industry.

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses for this study were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the 38 performance appraisal criteria statements.

Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the performance criteria statements.

Hypothesis 3: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the attitude or satisfaction statements.

Hypothesis 4: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the peripheral issue statements.

Delimitation

This study was delimited by attempting to identify only the extent to which sales people’s perceptions impact these performance appraisal criteria. The sales people are familiar with performance appraisal criteria. It was assumed that they were able to comment on their perceptions of performance appraisal criteria.
Limitations

Because the data came from a questionnaire, the instrument itself and the participants' truthfulness in responding to the statements were limitations. The study was further limited by the subjects’ bias, communication skills, and interpretation of the survey questions. Due to the various sales offices of the participating corporation, the data collection was limited to sales people in the Dallas sales office.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were adopted:

**Appraiser** is one who judges or assesses the quality of a person’s performance on the job. Appraiser, evaluator, or rater are used interchangeably.

**Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales** is a rating method in which various performance levels are shown along a scale and described in terms of a person’s specific job behavior (Parnes, 1981).

**Critical Incident Technique** is an appraisal that requires a written record of favorable and unfavorable behavior occurring on a person’s job (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984).

**Criterion method** is a standard or rule by which a judgment can be made. It is a measure for judging the effectiveness of the employees and the organizations. It is a predictor of behavior, results, and organizational effectiveness (Newman & Hinrichs, 1980).

**Essay evaluation** is an appraisal method in which the evaluator writes an essay describing a person’s strong and weak points (Parnes, 1981).
Forced Choice Performance Report is a rating method featuring a series of statements about an employee, arranged in blocks of two or more, from which the rater must choose which is most or least descriptive of the person (Parnes, 1981).

Forced Distribution is a method that is analogous to grading on a curve. The rater rates the employee on the basis of percentage categories.

Graphic Rating Scale is an appraisal that evaluates people according to numerically defined job and personal facts (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984).

Job classification arranges duties according to some systematic division into classes or groups; i.e., sales representative.

Management by Objectives (MBO) is a systematic approach that facilitates achievement of results by directing efforts toward attainable goals (Parnes, 1981).

Paired Comparison is an extension of the ranking method that involves rating the performance of each employee against every other employee in the group (Parnes, 1981).

Performance appraisal is a continuing, methodical evaluation of how an individual is performing the duties and responsibilities of his or her current position (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997). Performance appraisal, performance rating, employee performance review, personnel appraisal, employee evaluation, merit rating, and performance evaluation are often used interchangeably.

Performance appraisal criteria are guidelines that determine what should be in a performance appraisal.

Position is the rank or status on a job; i.e., sales manager, premise or telemarketing representative.
Premise sales employee or account representative is an employee who is assigned to contact business customers on their premises for the sale and servicing of items for the Yellow Page directory, Internet, and Advertising Media Services.

Ranking is a method of evaluation in which the rater ranks people in a given group on the basis of each one's overall performance (Parnes, 1981).

Sales employee (sales people or sales person) is an individual who sells goods and services for a company.

Sales manager is the person in charge of the overall affairs or expenditures or a group of sales people.

Telemarketing sales employee or sales representative is one who contacts customers by telephone for the sale and servicing of items of the Yellow Page directory, the Internet, and Advertising Media Services.

Weighted checklist is a method of appraisal in which the rater completes a form similar to forced-choice performance reporting, but the various responses have been assigned different performance weights. The rater checks items that he or she feels describe the people’s performance (Bernardin & Beatty, 1994).

Summary

One of the issues that continue to be of concern for sales people is that of performance appraisals (Longenecker, 1997). Corporations’ organizational patterns, leadership behavior, managerial styles, and the work environment as perceived by people are important elements in facilitating sales performance. Performance appraisals often determine whether an employee is promoted, compensated, transferred, or retained.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study of performance appraisal criteria has been an area of interest for many years (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Various types of performance appraisals have been utilized, and studies have indicated that sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria vary (A. J. Taylor et al., 1999).

The literature review focused primarily on studies and related literature concerning the methods and approaches for identifying and satisfying performance appraisal criteria in the sales work environment. This review begins with the history, explanation of the purpose, and description of the types of performance appraisal criteria. This is followed by a review of the awareness of sales people and sales managers, which can be used to help organizations overcome their service quality shortfalls and prosper financially. Other topics related to performance appraisal criteria included in the review of literature are problems with performance; performance appraisal criteria; guidelines for a good performance appraisal; performance-based training; remuneration and rewards; customer satisfaction; and organizational outcome.

Historical Overview

The main purpose of a performance appraisal is to obtain information about a person’s performance in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of a corporation. The concept of performance appraisals has been used frequently since the 1950s, although some form of performance appraisal criteria has existed since the 3rd century AD
(Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Wiese & Buckley, 1998). In the 1950s, performance appraisal criteria used ratings for administrative decisions, such as counseling and development, promotions, and salary increases (Morriss, 1999). Essay evaluations, which involve a simple, yet popular rating format, have also existed since the 1950s.

A popular evaluation technique is the Graphic Rating Scales, which has existed since the 1920s (Morriss, 1999; Parnes, 1981). The military and the government primarily used this type of appraisal to promote top performers to higher positions. Later, ratings were used in industry to develop a man-to-man rating system for salespeople. These performance appraisal criteria brought about various types of rating scales and techniques for scale construction, such as the Likert scale (Wiese & Buckley, 1998).

During the 1950s the critical incidents technique, weighted checklists, and forced-choice appraisal methods came into being. The critical incident technique is a method whereby specific performance incidents are recorded. This method was mainly used in the evaluating of higher-level jobs (Morriss, 1999; Parnes, 1981). A weighted checklist consists of a list of items on a checklist. The rater checks the items on the list that best describe the person’s performance. The various items may have different weights. Forced choice is another rating system. It was designed to reduce human biases. This method has been criticized for yielding only an overall measure of performance (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984).

The 1960s brought about management by objectives and behaviorally anchored rating scales (Morriss, 1999; Wiese & Buckley, 1998). Management by objectives focuses attention on the job rather than on the employee. Behaviorally anchored rating scales became popular to overcome the failure of management by objectives.
Behaviorally anchored rating scales recognized observable behavior and not just results. According to Murphy and Cleveland (1995), during this time, performance appraisals were used for employee development, feedback, corporate planning, legal documentation, systems maintenance, and research.

Other popular performance appraisal criteria used during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s were ranking, paired comparison, and forced distribution. These approaches were used to evaluate people in comparison with each other (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984). Rank order is similar to the paired-comparison technique, with people being ranked from top to bottom on overall performance. Paired comparison works well with fewer than 20 people. Forced distribution is effective when used with 20 or more people being rated by more than one rater.

The use of personality traits in appraisal criteria, distorted performance appraisal criteria ratings, and many other problems created a need for improvement in organizational appraisal practices (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). This brought about the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1966 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines for Regulation of Selection (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984).

During the 1970s performance appraisal criteria used interviews for employee counseling and feedback. Emphasis was placed on developing valid and reliable rating scales (Wiese & Buckley, 1998). Managers began to recognize performance appraisal systems as tools for managing people rather than for measuring people.

Today, performance appraisals are an integral part of the managing of people. They play a major role in helping to improve work performance throughout many organizations.
Sales People’s Perceptions of Performance Appraisal Criteria

Churchill et al. (1985) stated that the sales person’s role is a three-step process. The first is how the sales person should behave based on the role of organizational policies, operating procedures, and training programs. The implication is that the sales person must follow the policies and procedures of the corporation and be able to apply the training received to perform the job.

Secondly, the perceived role is based on how the sales person perceived the job expectations and demands communicated through the manager or trainer. The sales person may suffer from perceptions of role ambiguity, role conflict, or role inaccuracy (Churchill et al., 1985; Jaworski & Kohli, 1991).

The perception of role ambiguity occurs when representatives feel that they have not been given the necessary training to perform the job adequately. Role conflict takes place when a sales person believes that the role demands of two or more members of the role set are incompatible. Lastly, role inaccuracy arises when the sales person’s perceptions of the immediate supervisor or manager, the perceptions of the customers, and the demands placed on the sales person by his or her family are unrealistic (Churchill et al., 1985).

According to Lindo (1997), 10 questions should be asked by sales people and answered by management to determine the effectiveness of performance appraisal criteria. First, sales people want to know the company’s performance standards before they are measured against them. Also, they want to be measured against specific agreed-to requirements. This allows them to evaluate their own performance and make changes in their performance throughout the year.
Secondly, sales people would be concerned about the organization’s “top priorities,” duties, or functions. If sales people do not have the same performance goals as management, the performance goals of the organization may not be met. Sales people would want to be made aware of the organization’s top priorities and changes.

Third, sales people should be made aware of their performance in case they are not meeting the requirements they need to know. They may want or need to seek help to get back on track.

Fourth, sales people should be familiar with how they are rated against their peers. This is important because it can determine promotions, merit adjustments, or termination.

Fifth, sales people should be aware of measures to help improve their current status. A plan should be developed to determine what the sales person needs to improve.

Sixth, sales people are apprehensive about the documentation of the evaluation in their personal file. The performance appraisal will be a written reference for the next appraisal as well as information about the person’s current performance.

Seventh, sales people are interested in knowing in what specific areas they need to improve. This information would allow sales people to modify their current behavior, which in turn would increase the value of the organization. For example, sales persons could improve their computer skills, which would allow them to do a sales presentation on the computer.

Eighth, sales people should be concerned about coaching or financial assistance from the organization. Will the organization have tuition reimbursement or pay for skill
enhancement? If no compensation is provided, the employees may assume that the organization shows no interest in their personal welfare.

Ninth, sales people may be anxious about their income. Are raises based on seniority, company averages, job title, or other factors? They need to know where they stand so that they can determine whether to try to improve their performance or leave the organization.

Last, sales people would be concerned about career advancement. Lindo (1999) feels employees should be advised of the promotable status at each review. Also, will their sales manager support them? Providing sales employees with answers to concerns they may have should encourage them to do their job, and in turn, help the organization to prosper.

Clifford (1999) had an opportunity to meet and talk with nearly 150 employees about performance evaluation. Over 450 comments on the topic were revealed. According to Clifford (1999), employees believe that there is a need for performance evaluation. They feel that a performance evaluation is indispensable but that the current system needs to be revamped or replaced. They believe that the performance evaluation should be related to their job functions.

Employees expressed that the performance evaluation should include positive criticism, negative criticism, and positive recommendations. Performance evaluations should incorporate future expectations; for example, employees should be given duties and tasks that need to be accomplished throughout the appraisal period.

Clifford (1999) acknowledged that employees believe that performance evaluation should be a time for communication between managers and employees.
Communication between the two groups should be nonthreatening, and management should be willing to listen and not prejudge or demoralize the employee. It should include specific job-related duties and responsibilities.

According to A. J. Taylor et al. (1999), sales people feel that criteria such as sales volume, profits, and expenses are more affected by natural conditions such as the economy than by their own efforts. Some sales people feel that the lack of understanding of their performance causes problems. Adkins (1979) stated that most firms use several methods to measure performance: for example, sales volumes, products units, and others. According to Adkins, many of these factors that affect sales people meeting these various measurements cannot be controlled. Sales people should be measured on those performance factors in which they exercise control.

Managers’ Perceptions of Performance Appraisal Criteria

According to Swift and Campbell (1998), sales managers’ perceptions of the psychological climate of their organization have an impact on job satisfaction. They mailed a questionnaire to a nationwide sample of sales managers in a variety of industries. Eight dimensions of psychological climate were used in the study to determine sales managers’ perceptions. The eight dimensions were autonomy, cohesion, fairness, innovation, pressure, recognition, support, and trust.

Swift and Campbell (1998) found that the managers’ perceptions of autonomy, cohesion, and fairness were related to job satisfaction, whereas pressure was seen as negative. Pressure was related to role overload. Recognition and innovation did not relate to job satisfaction. Innovation and trust were important to the sales managers’ job
satisfaction; it allowed them to feel a part of the organization because they could contribute to the company and communicate openly without being harassed or ridiculed.

Longenecker (1997) reported that he has seen numerous negative consequences associated with managerial appraisals. He has written extensively about why managerial appraisals frequently fail and are ineffective as a management development tool. Longenecker performed a study with 120 seasoned managers from five large U.S. organizations.

Longenecker (1997) found 10 negative perceptions that managers felt were the cause of ineffective managerial appraisals. At the top of the list, eighty-three percent of the managers listed unclear performance criteria/ineffective rating instruments as a major concern. There must be clearly established performance criteria by which to judge people. Seventy-nine percent acknowledged a poor working relationship with their superior as a key problem. Seventy-five percent concluded that superiors lack information on a manager’s actual performance. Sixty-seven percent revealed that they wanted ongoing performance feedback and did not receive it.

Sixty-three percent of the managers felt that being overly critical was another prominent feature of ineffective managerial reviews. Managers confessed that no one is perfect but that constant criticism becomes counterproductive. Fifty-four percent of the managers perceived that political performance ratings damage the credibility of the appraisal process and can unintentionally create an ineffective rating practice.

Of the subordinate managers, fifty percent felt shortchanged when management development planning was not part of the appraisal process. Forty-two percent of the managers felt that appraisal ratings and corresponding organizational rewards were
difficult to achieve and limit the appraisal effectiveness in reinforcing high levels of performance. Thirty-three percent of the managers conducting formal appraisals concluded that one must possess both the skill and motivation to perform effectively if the process is to have positive outcomes. Finally, twenty-nine percent of the managers performed unstructured and ambiguous work that resulted in ineffective appraisals by managers.

Roberts (1998) talked to 18 personnel managers and supervisors who served as a defacto focus group. They were asked several questions pertaining to performance appraisals. Half of the managers believed that performance appraisals are used to intimidate and dominate people, while the remaining believed that performance appraisals are an effective tool for controlling behavior to meet the needs of the organization and develop the employee (Marshall & Mowen, 1993; Roberts, 1998).

These studies show that managers' attitudes are important to people’s success. Often, managers are the only personal contact between the corporation and the people.

Problems With Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisals have many problems. One of the problems with performance appraisals is that they suffer from many preconceived notions (Fetter, 1994; Morris et al., 1991). These notions should not influence appraisers and influence ratings, but they do (Cook, 1995). Some of the preconceived notions deal with age, ethnicity, gender, physical appearance, attitudes and values, in-group/out-group, personal like/dislike, politicking, impression management, ingratiating, undeserved reputation, and a number of others.
Caruth and Handlogten (1997) pointed out that performance appraisals are imperfect and that many of the problems sales managers have with performance appraisals come from misuse. Many sales managers are not trained in how to give and assess the performance of sales people. Some of the problems encountered include perfunctoriness, lack of objectivity, central tendency, halo/horn effect, leniency and strictness, personal biases, recent behavior bias, guessing, use bias, lack of documentation, and lack of appraiser training.

Caruth and Handlogten (1997) suggested that many managers fail to take the necessary time to give a thorough performance appraisal and that they tend to be subjective in their ratings of employees. A common error is to rate everyone as average or as middle-of-the-road so as not to have to explain why the employee was given an above-or below-average appraisal. In other cases employees are given undeserved high ratings, which eliminates the need to discuss or tell why the ratings were average or below. Also, some managers tend to be very critical of an employee’s performance and to document all of a person’s weaknesses and deficiencies.

Other problems with performance appraisals include employees feeling frustrated. Employees feel they have no input into the appraisal system. One method of performance appraisal method does not fit everyone. Employees also become disenchanted when they are constantly aware of downsizing or are worried about work and family problems (Fox, Byrne, & Rouault, 1999).

Abernathy (1999) listed 10 reasons for the failure of evaluations: lack of planning; expense of training; lack of sponsorship; lack of budget; lack of appropriate resources; lack of understanding of what is important to measure; evaluation techniques that do not
capture human performance; lack of valid measurements; lack of data collection; and lack of data analysis and summary.

Performance Appraisal Criteria

Newman and Hinrichs (1980) deemed that the various components of a performance appraisal ought to include who and what will be evaluated, where and when the appraisal will take place, and how it will be performed. In determining the appropriate standards for a performance appraisal, the employer must determine what aspects of the performance should be appraised. According to Newman and Hinrichs (1980), the performance criteria should consist of three general categories: the actual job-related behaviors of the employee, the immediate results and outcomes of those job behaviors, and the long-term impact of those behaviors and outcomes on organizational effectiveness (Bittner, 1948; Newman & Hinrichs, 1980).

Smith (1976) stated that a performance criterion should meet the following requirements:

1. It must be valid. That is, it must be relevant to the successful achievement of some important goal of the person, organization, or society. Some group or person must decide which activities are most relevant, or critical, to success. Once identified, psychometrically sound measures of these activities must be developed. Neither the criterion nor the measure of it should be biased or trivial.

2. The first requirement for a criterion consists of two parts. One is the validity of the goal that is judged to be important, the second is the validity of the measure or measures of the goal achievement.
3. It must be reliable. The performance criterion needs to be relatively stable and susceptible to accurate measurement. That is, evaluations or measurements of a given performance criterion taken at different times or by different people should be in agreement. Observability and objectivity of the criterion are important determinants of reliability.

4. It must be practical. It should be available, plausible, and acceptable to those who will want to use it for decisions. (as cited in Newman and Hinrichs, 1980, p. 5)

Dunnett (1963) wrote the following:

In most cases, the performance appraisal should be multidimensional (Morris, 1991). A single measure of success in a professional job is extremely unlikely. Effective job performance inevitably involves behaving skillfully along a number of different dimensions, such as technical competence, interpersonal competence, planning, organizing, motivating. To achieve the purposes or performance evaluation as discussed above, it is important to assess each and every critical dimension of performance. To repeat, a single, ultimate criterion of professional performance is quite unlikely. It is best to think in terms of the performance criteria for a given job rather than in terms of a single performance criterion (as cited in Newman & Hinrichs, 1980, p.5).

Newman and Hinrichs (1980) concluded that each of the following factors should be considered in choosing performance criteria:

1. Time span covered. The measure of performance can cover a small portion of time or a large portion or anything in between. For example, one
might measure the number of services rendered by a physician in one afternoon, or one might use the 30-year salary history of an executive as indices of performance.

2. Specificity or generality. Regardless of the time span covered, performance criteria may vary in their specificity or generality. Some criteria may refer to very specific aspects of job behavior or effectiveness. Others may refer only to the broader aspects of performance.

3. Closeness to organizational goals. Ideally, the performance criteria should be directly related to organizational effectiveness. When choosing performance criteria, be aware of choosing a behavior, a result or outcome of that behavior, or a subsequent organizational outcome that is even further removed in time and space from the initial job behavior. For example, one might choose to evaluate a manager’s success at (a) developing ambitious yet realistic plans to increase the profitability of an operation, (b) putting those plans into effect, or (c) increasing the actual profitability of the operation. (p.5)

Boles, Donthu, and Lohtia (1995) thought that the appraisal of sales people’s performance should be approached from at least three perspectives. These perspectives include focusing on output measures of performance; assessing potentially mitigating factors; and evaluating actual performance against expected performance (Pilling, Donthu, & Henson, 1999).

Guidelines for an Effective Performance Appraisal

Martin and Bartol (1998) believed that effective performance appraisal criteria consist of three major categories. Once the appropriate appraisal criteria are determined,
the sales manager or appraiser must be trained to conduct the appraisal. The performance appraisal criteria should be incorporated into written standards for the sales employee to be made aware of before the appraisal is given. Finally, the most significant indicator of performance appraisal criteria effectiveness is the quality of the standards used to appraise a person’s job performance (Martin & Bartol, 1998).

Since the introduction of the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures and Title VII of the Civil Service Reform Act in 1978, there have been distinct guidelines regarding appraisal issues (Martin & Bartol, 1998). Martin and Bartol alleged that the appraisal system consists of three major categories for maintaining a performance appraisal system after it has been implemented. The three categories include controlling the system, monitoring the system, and furnishing feedback to those who use the system.

Controlling the System

Various types of appraisals must be examined to create appropriate, job-related appraisal systems. This category requires the coordination of all facets of the system. First there must be clear-cut goals. Once the appropriate appraisal system is determined, the manager or appraiser must be trained to conduct the appraisal. Appraisals must be conducted in a timely manner in which the organization, the manager, and the employee are involved.

Performance appraisals should be based on specific tasks that the employee can accomplish in a reasonable amount of time (Martin & Bartol, 1998). Performance appraisals should measure what they purport to measure.
Effective training in appraisal criteria by and for management should include the role, the organization, the appraiser, and the employee. The appraiser and the employee should be aware of how the information will be used. The performance appraisal system should be incorporated into written standards for the employee to be made aware of before the appraisal is given. Blanchard et al. (1991) maintained that, in order to help employees accomplish their goals, coaching should take place. They believe that 90% of management’s efforts should be toward helping employees.

An appeal process should be established to give employees an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns about how the performance appraisal system is operating (Martin & Bartol, 1998).

Performance appraisals should be conducted on a scheduled basis and should be updated regularly. Performance feedback should be continuous.

Monitoring the System

A system should be established to update and determine the effectiveness of the performance appraisal. According to Martin and Bartol (1998), the indicators that should be used include setting quality of performance standards, conducting performance appraisal reviews, using performance appraisal results, tracking raters, socialization of scales, and eliminating adverse impact.

Martin and Bartol (1998) noted that the most significant indicators of the performance appraisal system’s effectiveness are the quality of the standards used to appraise job performance. Caruth and Handlogten (1997) emphasized that the standards are expectations, norms, desired results, or anticipated levels of job accomplishment that express the organization’s concept of acceptable performance. The standards should be
clear-cut, reasonable, explicable, obtainable, and compatible with the organization’s goals.

Martin and Bartol (1998) realized that a specific standard should be developed for every employee rating. The employee should be made aware of the various standards before he or she receives their appraisal. According to Martin and Bartol, performance appraisal reviews must be scheduled in advance and conducted when scheduled. Both raters and employees should prepare for these reviews, which need to be given more frequently than once a year. The authors stipulated that reviews should be given quarterly or every 6 months, because increased communication reduces opportunities for misunderstandings about performance expectations.

The linkage between the performance appraisal results and their use should be clear to all involved, with a rater tracking system put in place. Martin and Bartol (1998) suggested that tracking consisted of reviewing the ratings allotted by individual raters and subsequently, giving raters feedback concerning the quality of their ratings.

**Furnishing Feedback**

The rater should inform the employee of his or her performance, and the discussion should be conducted in a friendly environment. The review should be a discussion between rater and the employee, with the employee able to give feedback.

1. A performance should be formalized in writing to be effective. It helps to minimize misinformation and clarify what and how the system is to be accomplished. Set policies, procedures, and instructions are required for the performance appraisal system to be effective. Appraisers must be trained in how
to perform appraisals, and employees must be made aware of the appraisal system (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997).

2. Only fundamentals that relate to the achievement of job performance should be employed. Every job is different, so set appraisals must be developed for each position.

3. Standards should be set and measurable (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997).

4. The performance appraisal must measure what it proclaims to measure in order to be valid. It should measure actual job performance.

5. An effective performance appraisal must be reliable. The performance appraisal must yield consistent results in order to be considered effective (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997).

6. There should be open communication between the manager and employee. People should be aware of their performance on a daily basis as well as through their yearly performance appraisal (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997).

7. It is essential for appraisers to be thoroughly trained and constantly updated and retrained. The organization should incorporate coaching and counseling into their performance appraisal procedures. Every level of management in the organization should be trained in the performance appraisal system (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997).

8. The performance system should be easy to use.

9. People should have access to their performance records.

10. Results of a person’s performance appraisal should be kept confidential (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997).
11. There should be a review system in place in which the next level of management reviews what the appraiser has done. This helps to keep the appraisal system consistent, accurate, and fair (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997).

12. There should be policies and procedures that allow an employee to be aware of due process. Employees should be able to appeal a negative appraisal review (Caruth & Handlogten, 1997).

**Performance-Based Training**

In order for the performance appraisal to work effectively it is essential to incorporate the performance appraisal criteria into the training program. Deming believed a company must focus on improving processes on a continuous basis (Nilson, 1992). According to Holton, Elwood, Bates, and Naquin (2000) increasingly more companies are instituting performance-based training, which centers on the trainee and the trainer. The company must first do a training needs assessment linked to performance improvement. Holton et al. (2000) suggested that the reasons for conducting a needs assessment included finding and disseminating information about performance; learning how key sources feel; discovering the causes of the problems; and finding solutions. Performance appraisal criteria should be used as part of the needs assessment process.

According to Watson (1998), in order for training to enhance performance development, the director of training and the person or persons in charge of sales must discuss improving performance and growing the business together. Watson discussed five principles he felt should be used to track the progress between the line and the training department.
Watson’s (1998) first principle is to focus on the business. He stated, “In order to be effective performance development must be linked to the goals and objectives of your organization” (p. 2). The second principle involves building a bridge between line and training. Training cannot be responsible for performance development without the help of line management. Line management and the training department should create business objectives linked to training and then track the progress.

The third principle is that training and line management must track progress, not proof (Watson, 1998). Companies must look for evidence that a program they plan to use has been successful in other organizations. It is hard to find absolute proof, but good evidence that a program is working is important. According to Watson, “Tracking progress not obtaining proof takes pressure off of the people doing the tracking and shifts it onto the people doing the performing, where it belongs” (p.4).

Watson’s (1998) fourth principle involves measuring results; however, only a few key performance indicators that are linked to a performance development initiative should be measured. For example, copies of incorporated monthly sales reports should be obtained and the information should be incorporated into training initiatives. Finally, cause and effect should be tracked. Cause and effect is a principle that applies to any type of performance development.

In keeping with Nilson’s (1992) philosophy, managers must focus on improving quality through training by focusing on improvement efforts; analyzing needs; removing obstacles; providing training to all employees; trusting employees to exhibit excellent behavior; and making commitment to lasting improvements.
Managers must be taught new skills in order to change from current practices. Nilson (1992) stated, “Training enables managers to analyze, envision, energize, and implement new organizational systems needs” (p. 5). Trainers must become subject matter experts as well as facilitators, and training programs should be incorporated to teach trainers techniques concerning how to ensure employee accountability.

Managers need to be taught about company procedures and how to teach them. When teaching procedures, trainers need to be clear about the steps or procedures so that those employees can account for their time. These procedures can be used to train employees in many situations. They are designed to help employees to be able to apply the knowledge or skill represented by the job aid (Nilson, 1992). Training should include case studies and role-playing, among others activities.

Remuneration and Rewards

According to Sparrow (1996), many organizations have considered introducing competency-based reward systems. However, most organizations can only think about it because it is so costly and they cannot afford to convert to a reward system.

Nourayi and Daroca (1996) argued that incentive systems should rely on some form of measure to assure goal congruency for the organization as well as for the employee. They stated that the performance appraisal process is imperative to the financial outcome of all involved.

Nourayi and Daroca (1996) examined five measurement principles used in designing or maintaining incentive systems as a part of the performance evaluation processes. The first measurement principle dealt with traditional measures and objectives, which have proven to be irrelevant and ineffective because of the ongoing revolution in
production techniques and marketing. Managers’ decisions are excluded from the compensation process, even though managers are more aware of the current changes. Only the immediate decision maker has input into the return on investment. Traditional measures deal with the results of actual choices and fail to deal with alternatives or current or future changes. Companies must change with the times in order to survive and remain profitable.

The second measurement principle accentuates environmental changes in business; these are significant changes that must be made in order for businesses to compete with the diversity of product lines, technologies in production and information, deregulation, and global competitiveness (Nourayi & Daroca, 1996).

The third measurement principle involves more than financial issues. It also incorporates nonfinancial issues, such as customer satisfaction and product quality, for a corporation’s success. Customer satisfaction has become a significant issue in how businesses will compete, because, without customer growth, companies become stagnant (Nourayi & Daroca, 1996). The fourth measurement principle engages in measuring the principles. One must map the qualitative attributes into a financial measurement system to attain the stabilizer that measures performance stresses.

The last measurement principle stresses the comprehensive view and measurement of objectives. Measurement systems should be based on accurate characterizations of the work environment. This measurement process has a significant impact on an organization’s financial success, which would allow management to reward employees (Nourayi & Daroca, 1996).
Customer Satisfaction

Harte and Dale (1995) pointed out that management must meet the needs and requirements of clients; require well-developed recruitment, training, internal communications and appropriate reward; and have recognition plans to survive in the present business environment.

According to Harte and Dale (1995), the 1990s were the “quality decade.” In this decade it was imperative for professional service organizations to use all the means necessary to identify the needs and requirements of their customers and then to make sure that those needs were met. At present, organizations can identify the needs of their customers by doing surveys, interviews, or questionnaires. With so many offers from which to choose, customers should be cultivated, not chased.

Thornburg (1992) stipulated that customer satisfaction is very important for a corporation’s survival. According to her, corporations need to develop a rating system that involves not meeting customer expectations, meeting customer expectations, and far exceeding customer expectations.

Organizational Outcome

In ascertaining the appropriate standards for a performance appraisal, the employer must determine what aspects of the performance should be appraised (Morris, 1991). According to Boles et al. (1995), the appraisal of a sales person’s performance must be approached from at least three perspectives: (a) focusing on output measures of performance; (b) assessing potentially mitigating factors; and (c) evaluating actual performance against expected performance.
Summary

The study of performance appraisal criteria has been an area of interest for many years, with various forms of performance appraisal criteria having been utilized. The main purpose of such an appraisal is to obtain information about a person’s performance in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of a corporation. Various forms of performance appraisal criteria have existed since the 3rd century AD. It has been debated that a sales person’s role is a three-step process and that a manager’s perception of performance appraisal criteria impacts job satisfaction.

There are many problems with performance appraisal criteria. According to Newman and Hinrich (1980), there should be various components of performance appraisal criteria. Martin and Bartol (1998) believed that good performance appraisal criteria consist of training sales managers and sales people, incorporating written standards, and appraising those standards. Once the standards are set, incentive systems should be put into place. Harte and Dale (1995) pointed out that management systems must also be put into place.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The research study was conducted at a telecommunications company in the North Central Texas region. Telecommunications is a growing industry, and the sale of various products and services has become a major part of the industry. It is also an industry in which factors beyond the sales person’s control often affect his or her level of sales productivity. In turn, sales managers may be inclined to consider more than just objective performance measures when evaluating their sales people. This study was designed to identify and analyze sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria in a telecommunications corporation.

Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria at a telecommunications corporation. The research hypotheses of this study were the following:

Hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the 38 performance appraisal statements.

Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the performance criteria statements.

Hypothesis 3: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the attitude or satisfaction statements.
Hypothesis 4: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the peripheral issues statements.

The independent variable, job classification of sales people, was used to compare differences between the premise sales people and the telemarketing sales people in sales departments. The dependent variable was the rating of performance appraisal criteria statements.

This chapter explains the process and is divided into the following sections: population, sample, research design, instrumentation, data collection, treatment of the data, and summary.

Targeted Population

The researcher was involved in various preliminary steps prior to conducting the study data. This included negotiating with the telecommunications corporation sales office for permission to conduct the study utilizing community sales people. The location of the population for this study was the Dallas sales office. The population consisted of 79 sales people of a telecommunications corporation in the Dallas sales office. The participants surveyed consisted of premise and telemarketing sales people. The demographics of the population surveyed consisted of 58% male and 41% female sales people (N=79). Each sales person involved in the study was employed full-time to ensure that he or she had a vested interest in the performance appraisal process.

Sample

The general rule in descriptive research is to use the largest sample possible (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). One of the prerequisites for determining the sample size is based on the number of subgroups. It is important when deciding on the size of the sample to
ensure that the sample can be subdivided during data analysis, and thus a large sample is preferable. According to McCall (1980), other factors affect sample size, including the population being sampled, the statistics used for summarizing the characteristics of interest, the desired precision, the confidence level, the data presentation, and other concerns such as time and population listings. Based on the preceding information, for this study the entire population of the Dallas sales office was utilized because of the limited number of sales people at that office.

Research Design

The study involved descriptive research, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data (Fink, 1995; Walker, 1994). The study design that was used was survey research. A questionnaire was developed to generate data for analysis. The survey participants were sales people from a telecommunications corporation. The study examined the perceptions of this group regarding performance appraisal criteria. The procedures used to develop the questionnaire and to implement the usage and return of the questionnaire as well as the treatment of the data are discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire was developed specifically for this research study (Varma, Denisi, & Peters, 1996). The researcher adapted the statements from a variety of instruments found in the review of literature. In order to ensure that the statements on the questionnaire appropriately reflected performance appraisal criteria, a panel of 10 subject matter experts rated the statements. A sales person’s rating of various performance appraisal criteria incorporates characteristics such as communication skills, aptitude, skill
levels, sales volume, and attitude. According to Dubinsky and Barry (1982), these personal characteristics are the principles used most frequently in the perception of performance appraisal criteria.

Three main areas measured were criteria, attitude, and peripheral issues that influence the effectiveness of performance appraisal criteria. The criteria subscales included items that dealt with the performance appraisal criteria. For example, an operational performance staff appraisal system is essential. The attitude scale dealt with the opinions and attitude of the appraisee. For example, the appraisee should realize that their work is important in terms of the whole organizational effort. The last subscale dealt with peripheral issues that related to performance. For example, the appraisee should present himself or herself in a professional manner when dealing with coworkers.

The instrument utilized to gather data for this study was a mailed questionnaire with three sections. The sections were performance criteria, attitude or satisfaction, and peripheral issues related to performance.

In order to develop the instrument, the researcher used the Delphi Technique, which was developed by the Rand Corporation in the early 1950s (Byers, 1975; Helmer, 1983). The Delphi Technique is a method used to summarize the opinion of subject matter experts about a particular subject (Farmer, 2000). As noted in Helmer, this technique was to systematically solicit, organize, and structure judgments and opinions of the subject.

A panel of experts in the field of sales and/or performance appraisal criteria was formed. The panel of experts was made up of a (a) manager of sales, (b) district manager, (c) training manager, (d) regional manager, and (e) vice president of training. The panel
of experts was introduced, in writing, to the various statements pertaining to performance appraisal criteria.

The questionnaire was submitted to the panel for review on three different occasions (Crews, 1997; Farmer, 2000). Initially, the panel of experts was requested to read over 100 statements and rate each statement according to prescribed criteria. The researcher adapted the statements from a variety of instruments found in the review of literature. In order to ensure that the statements on the questionnaire appropriately reflected performance appraisal criteria, a panel of 10 subject matter experts rated the statements. The statements were given to the experts for review and rating. The panel of experts rated each statement based on the importance of each item as performance appraisal criteria. The panel of experts rated each statement as 5 (very important), 4 (important), 3 (somewhat important), 2 (very little importance), and 1 (not important).

The initial responses by the panel were compiled, sorted, and edited by the researcher (Crews, 1997; Farmer, 2000). The researcher reviewed the information and made revisions recommended by the panel. The questionnaire was revised then submitted again to the panel (Crews, 1997; Farmer, 2000).

The panel of experts round 2 responses were tabulated to include percentage of responses to each question (Crews, 1997; Farmer, 2000). The panel members could retain or change the responses by placing an identifying mark in the spaces for the new rating. A space was provided for the panel to make comments and/or recommendations for improving the questionnaire. In the third revision of the questionnaire, the experts were asked to rate the revised statements. The panel members could retain or change the responses by placing an identifying mark in the space for the new rating.
suggestions on how to write the statements with more clarity. After receiving the responses, the researcher made the recommended changes suggested by the panel. Responses that the panel rated 3.5 and above were accepted as questionnaire statements.

The final questionnaire was divided into three sections based on recommendations of the panel. In the first section, participants were asked to respond to 14 statements pertaining to performance criteria. This section was designed to capture the participants’ knowledge of performance appraisal standards. Items for this section were developed based on various performance appraisals and the review of literature. The second section, which contained 14 statements, asked participants to respond to statements regarding their attitude concerning or satisfaction with performance appraisals. In the final section, the participants were asked to respond to 10 statements about peripheral issues related to performance appraisals.

The instrument consisted of 38 items and was scored with a modified Likert-type format. The responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991; Walker, 1994).

The rating scale was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Scale</th>
<th>Scoring Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildly agree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildly disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pilot tests are an important step in developing a valid and reliable questionnaire (Sudman, 1976). According to Sudman, 20 to 50 cases are usually sufficient to discover major flaws in a questionnaire. Thus, a pilot study was conducted. The questionnaire was administered to 20 participants, who were telecommunications employees. The 20 participants used were not a part of the research study.

The method used to estimate reliability of the instrument was Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (Nunnally, 1978). According to Nunnally, an alpha coefficient above .70 is an acceptable score for research. The reliability analysis in this study, based on the test for internal consistency, indicated an alpha score of .7776. To improve reliability, seven negative statements were reworded to positive statements. The performance criteria statements were 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14; and the attitude or satisfaction scale statement was 3 (see Appendix D). After the seven negative statements were reworded in a positive format the alpha score was .8992.

Data Collection

Data were gathered using a mailed questionnaire in the year 2001. The questionnaire was mailed by the researcher to the 79 sales people, with a cover letter and a stamped self-addressed return envelope, according to the recommendations of Berdie, Anderson, and Niebuhr (1986). The participants’ names were not on the questionnaire, but they were coded for followup purposes. The cover letter included the promise of confidentiality to all participants (Berdie et al., 1986; Walker, 1994). By checking the coded questionnaire with the corresponding codes for premise and telemarketing sales
people, it was possible to determine which subjects had not responded. The structured questionnaire was used to elicit information on the participant’s perception of performance appraisal criteria.

Two weeks after the initial mailing, a followup letter was sent to nonrespondents, and a followup letter and questionnaire were sent to nonrespondents 3 weeks after the initial mailing (Walker, 1994). After the original mailing and the followup, 68 responses were received. Of the 68 responses, 67 (85%) were usable. One questionnaire was unusable because the participant did not complete the questionnaire.

Treatment of Data

The researcher entered the data directly from the pre-coded questionnaire at the computer facilities of the University of North Texas. The data file was imported into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program. To analyze the responses, the researcher explored the numerical means for the questionnaire.

A test of statistical significance was performed to determine whether the research hypotheses were retained or rejected (Gall et al., 1994; Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1994). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine whether there were differences in the mean responses for the four hypotheses. The independent variable in the experiment was job classification. The researcher was interested in knowing whether there was any difference in the perceptions of the sales people. The differences were tested for statistical significance using a .05 alpha level.

Summary

This study was designed to identify and analyze sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria in a telecommunications corporation. The independent
variable was job classification. The dependent variable was the rating of performance appraisal criteria. The population consisted of 79 sales people. The study involved descriptive research, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey data. A panel of 10 subject matter experts helped develop the instrument, after which a pilot study was conducted, and changes were made to the survey.

The instrument used to gather data for this study was a questionnaire mailed to the entire population (N=79). In the administration of the questionnaire, the participants were directed to respond to each of the 38 item statements. The appropriate University of North Texas Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) approval was obtained prior to any data collection. The data were coded from the survey document into a data file and analyzed using SPSS software.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into two segments. The first segment provides an overview of the participants in the study, and the second contains a description of the data and statistical analysis. Detailed statistical tables can be found in Appendix E.

Employee Participation

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria in a telecommunications corporation. A questionnaire was administered to 79 premise and telemarketing sales people at a telecommunications corporation in the North Central Texas region to determine their perceptions of performance appraisal criteria. Sixty-seven (85%) of the 79 questionnaires were returned, analyzed and they are discussed in this chapter.

The data consisted of participant responses to 38 items on a questionnaire pertaining to performance appraisal. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section concerned the perceptions of the participants toward performance criteria. The second section asked participants to respond to statements regarding their attitudes concerning, or satisfaction with, the performance appraisal process. In the final section, the participants responded to statements about peripheral issues related to performance appraisals. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure was used to analyze the data concerning all four hypotheses.
Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1 stated: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the 38 performance appraisal criteria statements.

A one-way ANOVA procedure was conducted to determine the difference in premise and telemarketing sales people's overall perceptions of the 38 performance appraisal criteria statements at the .05 level of significance. The 38-item performance appraisal criteria statements compared premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria.

The test revealed some similarities in telemarketing and premise sales people’s perceptions. The mean scores for the 38-item questionnaire ranged from 3.02 to 5.9 on a 6-point scale. Telemarketing sales people scored somewhat higher (M = 5.38) than did premise sales people (M = 5.26). As shown in Table 1, the group mean for both groups was fairly high using the highest score possible was 6 (strongly agree), followed by 5 (moderately agree); 4 (mildly agree); 3 (mildly disagree); 2 (moderately disagree); and 1 (strongly disagree), the lowest score.
Table 1

Group Statistics for the Telemarketing and Premise Sales People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premise</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>6.326E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>7.943E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>5.022E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, these results suggested that the sales people perceived performance appraisal criteria of importance in this telecommunications corporation. Both groups agreed on the importance of several performance appraisal criteria items (see Appendix E).

The most important appraisal criteria identified were the following: Performance appraisal criteria should be easily read and understood by the appraisers and the appraisees (5.90); the appraisers should be familiar with the job responsibilities of the appraisees (5.92); the appraisees should be able to make constructive comments about their performance appraisal without any repercussions (5.88); performance appraisal feedback should be constructive (5.82); the appraisers should be sufficiently trained regarding how to give a performance appraisal prior to giving appraisals (5.73); the appraisees should look for opportunities to increase the company’s value to the customer (5.73); and the appraisees should present themselves in a professional manner in dealing with the customers (5.86).
The least important appraisal criteria identified were the following: An operational performance staff appraisal system is essential for an effective organization (4.82); performance appraisal criteria provide an opportunity to encourage the appraisee and the appraiser to set objectives (4.63); performance appraisal criteria encourage the appraisees to develop job performance priorities (4.63); the current performance appraisal criteria are satisfactory (3.02); and attitude should be measured (4.30). The low mean may be attributed to the fact that the sales people did not perceive that they were evaluated on either of these criteria and had little exposure to these criteria. The highest mean score was 5.92 on Item 5 in the performance criteria section, and the lowest mean score was 3.02 on Item 5 in the peripheral issue section. Table 2 shows the results of the most and least favorable mean responses among premise and telemarketing sales people’s ratings of performance appraisal criteria.

Table 2

Comparison of Premise and Telemarketing Sales People’s Perceptions of Performance Appraisal Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Group mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Premise mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Telemarketing mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Criteria 1) An operational performance staff appraisal system is essential for an effective organization.</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>1.127</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.181</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Criteria 2) Performance appraisal criteria provide an opportunity to encourage the appraisee and the appraiser to set objectives.</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>1.365</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.524</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Group mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Premise mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Telemarketing mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 3) Effective performance appraisal criteria should include a self-appraisal as part of the overall appraisal process.</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>1.049</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.183</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 5) The appraiser should be familiar with the appraisee’s job responsibilities.</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 6) An appeal process should be available for the appraisee when there is a perceived disagreement on the accuracy of the appraisal.</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>1.019</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 7) Performance appraisal criteria should be easily read and understood by the appraiser and the appraisee.</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 8) The appraisee should be able to make constructive comments about their performance appraisal without any repercussions.</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 10) The appraiser should be sufficiently trained regarding how to give a performance appraisal prior to giving appraisals.</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.603</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 12) The appraisee’s knowledge of the job should be a part of the performance appraisal criteria.</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>.490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 13) Performance appraisal feedback should be constructive.</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>.554</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude 6) The appraiser should have ample time to work with the appraisee in order to evaluate properly.</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude 7) The appraisee should be able to track the progress of their own performance.</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude 11) The appraisee should look for opportunities to increase the company’s value to the customer.</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>.479</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude 12) The appraisee should demonstrate the ability to work with others.</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>.652</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Group mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean Premise mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Telemarketing mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Peripheral 1) Performance appraisal criteria encourages the appraisee to develop job performance priorities.</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>1.241</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Peripheral 3) The appraisee should present themselves in a professional manner when dealing with customers.</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>.343</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Peripheral 4) The appraisee should present themselves in a professional manner when dealing with customers.</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>.544</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>.561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Peripheral 5) The current performance appraisal criteria is satisfactory.</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.590</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.626</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Peripheral 6) Attitude should be measured in the appraisal process.</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1.810</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1.725</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>2.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Peripheral 7) Performance appraisal is valuable even if the appraisee is in good standing.</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>1.175</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>1.305</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Peripheral 10) The performance appraisal should be seen as a “win-win” interaction between the appraiser and the appraisee.</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>.560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=67.

Although the perceptions of the telemarketing sales people differed slightly from the premise sales people, no significant differences were evident among the two groups’ responses. Because there were no significant differences at the .05 level for the overall 38-item performance appraisal criteria statements $F(1, 65)= 1.304$ and $p = .258$, $p> .05$, the null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table 3).
Hypothesis 2 stated: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the performance criteria statements.

A one-way ANOVA was performed on the 14 items in the performance criteria statement section of the questionnaire at the .05 level of significance. This subscale measured the difference in perceptions of premise and telemarketing sales people toward statements that influence performance criteria. The mean of premise sales people was 5.40 whereas the mean for the telemarketing sales people was 5.56 (see Table 4). As shown in Table, no significant difference was found between the premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of performance criteria statements $F(1, 65) = 2.070$ and $p = .155$, $p > .05$. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not rejected.
Table 4

Statistics for the Performance Criteria Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premise</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>.4387</td>
<td>6.469E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>.3130</td>
<td>6.830E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>.4075</td>
<td>4.978E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Results of Comparison of the Performance Criteria Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>2.070</td>
<td>.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>10.621</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10.960</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 3 stated: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the attitude or satisfaction statements.

Table 6 illustrates the one-way ANOVA that was performed on the 14 items in the attitude or satisfaction section of the questionnaire at the .05 level of significance.

This subscale measured the difference in perceptions of premise and telemarketing sales people toward statements about their attitudes concerning, or satisfaction with,
performance appraisal. The mean for premise sales people was 4.99, whereas the mean for telemarketing sales people was 5.10 (see Table 7). No significant difference was found between the premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of attitude or satisfaction statements $F(1, 65) = .714$ and $p = .401, p > .05)$. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not rejected.

Table 6

Results of Comparison of the Attitude or Satisfaction Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>.401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>13.788</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.939</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

Statistics for the Attitude or Satisfaction Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premise</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>.5710</td>
<td>8.419E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>.5215</td>
<td>.1138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>.5545</td>
<td>6.774E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 4 stated: There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the peripheral issues statements.

A one-way ANOVA was performed on the 10 items that pertained to the peripheral issues statements section of the questionnaire at the .05 level of significance. This subscale measured the difference in the perceptions of premise and telemarketing sales people toward statements that had some impact on peripheral issues. The test revealed some differences in telemarketing and premise sales people’s perceptions. Telemarketing sales people scored somewhat higher ($M = 5.10$) than did premise sales people ($M = 4.99$), as shown in Table 8. Telemarketing sales people rated items dealing with the current appraisal system and their perceptions of peripheral issues higher than did premise sales people. The perceptions of the telemarketing sales people and the premise sales people were in high agreement. No significant difference was evident among the two groups’ responses. As shown in Table 9, there was no significant difference in the premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of peripheral issues in reference to performance appraisal criteria $F(1, 65) = .571$ and $p = .453$, $p > .05$. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not rejected.
Table 8

Statistics for the Peripheral Issues Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premise</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>.5710</td>
<td>8.419E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>.5215</td>
<td>.1138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>.5545</td>
<td>6.774E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

Results of Comparison of the Peripheral Issues Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td>.453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>20.114</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.290</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

The data indicated that premise and telemarketing sales people perceive performance appraisal criteria to be important. The mean for the two groups was highest for the performance criteria statements in section 1 of the questionnaire. The data also revealed that telemarketing and premise sales people agreed on the importance of several performance appraisal criteria items.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

An issue of continuing concern for sales people is that of performance appraisal criteria. Among the most crucial factors used to determine sales people’s pay, promotion, or termination are performance appraisal criteria (Caruth et al., 1997; Churchill et al., 1985; McKay, 1988). In order for the performance appraisal to be effective, the criteria should be agreed upon by sales people and sales managers. This chapter presents a summary of the study, offers conclusions in light of the study’s findings, and discusses implications and recommendations for further research.

Study Summary

This study analyzed the perceptions of sales people as they relate to performance appraisal criteria in a telecommunications corporation. The study was prompted by a perceived disillusionment by sales people with performance appraisal criteria.

Few studies had previously been conducted to determine performance appraisal criteria in sales at a telecommunications corporation. The information reported expressed a need to improve the current performance appraisal system. No studies had been conducted on the analysis of performance appraisal criteria in the telecommunications industry.
Theoretically, it was believed that a performance appraisal should contain various components. An effective performance appraisal should consist of input from training managers, sales people, and sales managers regarding written standards for performance appraisals.

The following research hypotheses were presented in this study:

1. There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the 38 performance appraisal criteria statements.

2. There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of performance criteria statements.

3. There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the attitude or satisfaction statements.

4. There is no statistically significant difference in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of the peripheral issues statements.

The four research hypotheses were formulated to determine the perceptions of sales people at a telecommunication’s corporation regarding performance appraisal criteria. The raw data relating to all four-research hypotheses were analyzed using the one-way analysis of variance.

Hypothesis 1 was not rejected, signifying that there was no statistically significant difference at the p > .05 level in the premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of 38-item performance appraisal criteria statements. Seven of the performance appraisal criteria statements were rated very highly (5.72 and above) by the sales people. And 6 of the performance appraisal criteria statements were rated mildly agree to mildly disagree.
(4.81 to 3.02) by the sales people. Overall, the data showed that sales people perceived that performance appraisals should be given to employees.

Hypothesis 2 was not rejected, signifying that there was no statistically significant difference at the .05 level in premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of performance criteria statements. The two groups rated statements in this section higher than for any other section.

Hypothesis 3 showed that there was no significant difference between premise and telemarketing sales people’s perceptions of attitude or satisfaction statements.

Finally, concerning Hypothesis 4, telemarketing sales people rated items dealing with the current appraisal system and their perceptions toward peripheral issues higher than did premise sales people. Although the perceptions of the telemarketing sales people differed slightly from those of the premise sales people, there was no significant difference.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Although there was not a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of premise and telemarketing sales people, telemarketing sales people agreed more strongly to performance appraisal criteria statements than did premise sales people.

2. Sales people tended to rate items that dealt with their accountability lower than other items.

3. Premise and telemarketing sales people rated most of the items the same except for those items that might show premise deficiencies. For example, a performance
appraisal provides an excellent opportunity for constructive feedback regarding ones job performance. Premise sales people rated these items lower.

4. The degree of flexibility that sales people have over the performance appraisal criteria is limited.

5. The performance appraisal is multidimensional rather than one-dimensional.

6. Sales people appear to have clear perceptions of the performance appraisal criteria.

7. Sales people want to be rated based on performance appraisal criteria in which they rated highly. For example, the appraiser should be familiar with the appraisee’s job responsibilities.

8. Sales people seem to feel that they are being assessed on inappropriate criteria or that they are being assessed on criteria that are uncontrollable.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, there are two distinct types of recommendations that are made and are supported by the data:

Recommendations for practice are as follows:

1. Telecommunications corporations should develop performance appraisal criteria involving input from management, employees, and customers.

2. Training and development should be conducted on performance appraisal at the managerial level. Sales managers affect the corporation’s financial status, and they can influence the output of sales people (Jaworski & Kohli, 1991).

3. A system needs to be studied and redesigned to include past, present, and future aspects of the employees (Pratt, 1991).
4. Performance appraisal criteria should be used for more than sales volume (results); they should be used for training, improving job performance, and increasing company objectives.

5. Sales managers should ensure that sales people understand and are aware of the criteria on which they will be evaluated.

6. Management should decide on the appropriate amount of time needed by appraisers to complete a comprehensive appraisal.

7. A system should be established to ensure that appraisers are held accountable for how well they conduct performance of the appraisal process.

8. Appraisers should be trained in how to conduct the appraisal, how to assess the appraisal, and how to adhere to the policies and procedures (Roberts, 1998).

9. Sales managers and sales people should attempt to improve their relationship and communication.

10. Performance incentives should be individualized and frequent.

11. Sales people’s results on performance appraisal criteria should be used to provide insight into the modification of the existing performance appraisal criteria.

Recommendations for further study are as follows:

1. Additional research should be conducted in a variety of sales settings to determine the appropriate performance appraisal criteria. Factors such as age, gender, and income should be used.

2. This study should be replicated using a sample from the sales manager population at a telecommunications corporation. This would allow for a comparison of
perceptions between premise and telemarketing sales people and premise and telemarketing sales managers.

3. Further research should be conducted that assesses the differences between the sales managers’ and sales people’s satisfaction levels with the performance appraisal process and company performance in such areas as sales, expenses, profitability, reliability, and validity.

4. Further research should be conducted on procedures to design an effective performance appraisal system that can be continually evaluated and improved.

5. A study should be conducted using multiple telecommunications corporations to analyze sales employees’ perceptions of performance appraisals. This replication would generalize the study more to the universe of sales employees in the telecommunications industry.

6. A study should be done on actual, not perceived, performance appraisal criteria in order to obtain an accurate review so that problems could be corrected or eliminated.

Summary

Based on the findings of this study, performance appraisal criteria are perceived as being important to both telemarketing and premise sales people. However, further research studies need to be performed as followup to obtain information for use by sales managers and other sales people in the telecommunications industry.
APPENDIX A

APPROVAL LETTER OF THE STUDY BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF INVESTIGATION 
INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS 

University of North Texas Institutional Review Board 
For the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) 

This application should be submitted to the Office of Research Services, Room 160, Administration Building.

1. Principal Investigator’s Name: Ellen L. Harris
   Department & Campus Address: Department of Technology and Cognition, Applied Technology, Training and Development
   Campus Phone No.: none  Home No: 817-572-5527 Email address: boldwood@swbell.net

2. If you are a student, provide the following:
   Home Address of Student: 4100 Flower Garden Drive, Dalworthington Gardens, Tx 76016
   Name of Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Michelle Walker  Phone Ext: 940 565-2154
   Email address of Sponsor: mwalker@tac.coe.unt.edu

3. Title of Project: An Analysis of Sales People’s Perceptions of Performance Appraisal Criteria at a Telecommunications Corporation

4. Total Project Period: From: March 2001 To: May 2001

5. Is a proposal for external support being submitted? Yes  No X
   Funding agency:_____________________________________________
   If "Yes," you must submit one complete copy of that proposal as soon as it is available and complete the following:
   a) Is this a renewal application? Yes  No X

6. In making this application, I certify that I have read and understand the UNT guidelines and procedures for the protection of human subjects in research. I will comply with the letter and spirit of the University policy and 45 CFR 46. I further acknowledge that I will inform the IRB of any significant changes in the protocol and will refrain from applying any protocol changes until I receive approval for said changes. I understand that I cannot initiate any contact with human subjects before I have received UNT IRB approval.

Signature of Principal Investigator                            Date
__________________________________________________________________________

7) Approval by Faculty Sponsor (required for all students): I affirm the accuracy of this application, and I accept the responsibility for the conduct of this research as approved by the UNT IRB.

Signature of Faculty Sponsor          Date
__________________________________________________________________________

60
8) I have included copies of all pertinent attachments including, but not limited to: questionnaire/survey instrument, informed consent, letters of approval from cooperating institutions, copy of external support proposal if applicable, etc. ..

Yes__X__ No____ (If no, explain on an attached sheet)

For the following items, attach your answers, appropriately numbered on a separate sheet of paper.

9) Identify the sources of the potential subjects, derived materials or data. Describe the characteristics of the subject population, such as their anticipated number, age, sex, ethnic background, and state of health. Identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion. Explain the rationale for the use of special classes of subject, such as fetuses, pregnant women, children, institutionalized mentally disabled, prisoners, or others, especially those whose ability to give voluntary informed consent may be in question.

The potential subjects will be:
Sales employees: All of the of sales employees in the sales department at the telecommunications corporation in Dallas. The potential subjects are from diverse backgrounds. I do not feel that any of the potential subjects in this sample fall into a category that would not allow them to give their voluntary consent. All information will be distributed directly to and from the sales people through the company mail. They are male, female, black, white, Hispanic, etc. They are all over 21 years of age. There are approximately 110 sales employees at this facility.

10) Provide a description of the procedures to be used in the study including major hypotheses and description of the research design.

Problem:
An issue that continues to be of concern for sales managers as well as sales people is that of performance appraisal criteria.
Some of the perceived problems of performance appraisals are:
• Job security
• Promotions
• Compensation
• Transfers

The objective of this study is to help identify and analyze the perceptions of sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria at a telecommunications corporation. The study will provide information regarding the modification of, and insight into, the existing performance appraisal criteria.

Methods and Procedures:
The graduate student is ATTD 6950, in cooperation with the Department of Applied Technology Training and Development (ATTD) and the College of Education Administration will conduct a study on performance appraisal criteria at a telecommunications corporation during the Spring Semester, 2001. Sales and account representatives and sales and account managers will be surveyed on their perceptions of performance appraisal criteria within the telecommunications corporation. They will be asked, in part to rate:
• What should be a part of performance appraisal criteria?
• What should be the attitude and benefits of performance appraisal criteria?
• What are peripheral issues related to performance appraisal criteria?
This will be accomplished through a questionnaire that will be given to the representatives and managers. The total population is approximately 122.

A pilot study will be conducted to determine the reliability and validity of the survey instrument. The pilot instrument will be given to representatives and managers. After the pilot study, the instrument will be revised and then administered to the sample population of representatives and managers.

Once this information is collected the researcher will see if:

- Is there a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of telemarketing sales people and premise sales people toward performance appraisal criteria?
- Is there a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of premise and telemarketing sales people toward the performance appraisal criteria?
- Is there a statistically significant difference between the subscales criteria, attitude, and peripheral issues.

The type of data is qualitative in nature; however, information will be coded and descriptive statistic methods applied. After analysis of the instrument results, recommendations will be made and disseminated within the telecommunications corporation.

11) Describe the recruitment and consent procedures to be followed, including the circumstances under which consent will be solicited and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the methods of documenting consent. (Include applicable consents form(s) for review purposes). If written consent is not to be obtained, specifically point this out and explain why not.

{Note: Informed consent must normally be obtained in a written form, which requires the subject's signature or that of the subject's legally authorized representative. A waiver of this requirement may be granted by the IRB if adequate justification for the requirement is provided by the investigator in # 11. However, if the procedures pose no more than minimal risk to the subjects, informed consent may be documented via a written cover letter, which does not require the subject's signature. In all cases, a copy of the written informed consent must be given to the subject. Consult the document “Information on Human Subjects Research” for more information on informed consent requirements and specific examples of possible informed consent documents. }

Subjects will be recruited by mail. Consent will be solicited through the information letter enclosed and by the return of the survey. The researcher will ask participants to fill out a survey. They will be advised that their participation is voluntary, and that there are no personal benefits to the participants, but to the discipline. The researcher is doing this survey as part of their doctoral dissertation requirements at the College of Education at the University of North Texas.

There are no risks associated with the completion of this survey. The data are being used strictly for research purposes. The subjects will be asked to provide their honest opinion on the 38-item survey. Only the researcher will have access to the survey answers and names. Each survey will be numerically coded for anonymity.

12) Include a discussion of confidentiality safeguards.

As discussed in #9, information will be mailed to subjects by the researcher. All information will be mailed directly back to the researcher. All information collected from the subjects will be compiled onto a secured computer file. Individuals will not be identified in the final report.

13) Describe the anticipated benefits to subjects, and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.
The anticipated benefits are to provide information regarding the modification of, and insight into, the existing performance appraisal criteria.

14) Describe the risks involved with these procedures (physical, psychological, and/or social) and the precautions you have taken to minimize these risks. Do the benefits described above outweigh the described risks?

If study procedures are followed, the researcher anticipates a minimal risk to subjects in this study. Information is communicated directly between the researchers and the participants. This will minimize risk to individuals involved in this study. The benefits to the individuals greatly outweigh the risk. Recommendations from this study are expected to improve the learning and/or working environments of the participants.
Title of Study: **An Analysis of Sales People’s Perception of Performance Appraisal Criteria at a Telecommunications Corporation**

Principal Investigator: **Ellen Harris**

Co-Investigators: _____________________________________________________

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the proposed procedures. It describes the procedures, benefits, risks, and discomforts of the study. It also describes the alternative treatments that are available to you and your right to withdraw from the study at any time. It is important for you to understand that no guarantees or assurances can be made as to the results of the study.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND HOW LONG IT WILL LAST:**

The purpose of this study is to help identify and analyze sales people’s perceptions of performance appraisal criteria at a telecommunications corporation. The study will provide information regarding the modification of, and insight into, the existing performance appraisal criteria. Approximately 20 minutes.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY INCLUDING THE PROCEDURES TO BE USED:**

The study will involve descriptive research, and descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the survey data. The study design that will be used is survey research. A questionnaire will be used to generate data for analysis, and the survey participants will include sales people from a telecommunications corporation. The study will examine the perceptions of these two groups regarding performance appraisal criteria. The procedures that will be used to develop the questionnaire and to implement the usage of the questionnaire is the Delphi technique. A group of subject matter experts will rate the statements the researcher has developed. Upon the completion of rating the statements on three different occasions, the researcher will give this survey to approximately 100 representatives to rate the various statements pertaining to performance appraisal criteria. The researcher will explore the numerical means and ranks for the questionnaire, the analysis of performance appraisal criteria. A test of statistical significance will be performed to determine whether the null hypothesis will be retained or rejected.
Subject Name: ________________________________________  Date:_____________________

Title of Study: An Analysis of Sales People’s Perceptions of Performance Appraisal Criteria at a Telecommunications Corporation

Principal Investigator: Ellen Harris

Co-Investigators: _________________________________________________________________

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES/ELEMENTS THAT MAY RESULT IN DISCOMFORT OR INCONVENIENCE:

There is no known inconvenience or discomfort.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES/ELEMENTS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH FORESEEABLE RISKS:

There are no foreseeable risks.

BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECTS OR OTHERS:

The anticipated benefits are to show a more accurate and consistent pattern predictor of performance appraisal criteria to help increase sales performance.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH RECORDS:

Surveys will have unique and indecipherable codes on them that will reveal the identity of the participant only to the researcher. If the survey were to be lost or seen by another, etc., the identity of the person surveyed could not be determined.
Subject Name: ________________________________________ Date: _______________

Title of Study: An Analysis of Sales People’s Perceptions of Performance Appraisal Criteria at a Telecommunications Corporation

Principal Investigator: Ellen Harris

REVIEW FOR PROTECTION OF PARTICIPANTS:

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (940) 565-3940.

RESEARCH SUBJECTS’ RIGHTS: I have read or have had read to me all of the above.

Ellen Harris has explained the study to me and answered all of my questions. I have been told the risks or discomforts and possible benefits of the study. I have been told of other choices of treatment available to me.

I understand that I do not have to take part in this study, and my refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of rights to which I am entitled. I may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am entitled. The study personnel can stop my participation at any time if it appears to be harmful to me, if I fail to follow directions for participation in the study, if it is discovered that I do not meet the study requirements, or if the study is canceled.

In case there are problems or questions, I have been told I can call Dr. Michelle Walker at telephone number 940 565-2154.

I understand my rights as a research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

__________________________________________________________________________________
Subject’s Signature                                  Date

__________________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Witness                                   Date

For the Investigator or Designee:

I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the person signing above, who, in my opinion, understood the explanation. I have explained the known benefits and risks of the research.

__________________________________________________________________________________
Principal Investigator’s Signature                          Date
APPENDIX B

SURVEY PARTICIPANT COVER LETTER
April, 2001

Dear Participant:

You have been selected to participate in a questionnaire as part of my doctoral dissertation in the College of Education at the University of North Texas. The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect information in order to determine valid performance appraisal criteria. This information may result in a more accurate and consistent pattern predictor for increased sales performance. There are no personal benefits to the participants, but to the discipline.

There are no risks associated with the completion of this questionnaire. The data are being used strictly for research purposes in completion of my doctoral studies under the guidance of Dr. Michelle Walker, faculty sponsor at the University of North Texas. This research has the consent of the University’s Internal Review Board (IRB #01-073) and their telephone number is 940 565-3940. Keep in mind your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time.

I am asking for your assistance with this important project. Please take a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire, and RETURN IT TO ME IN THE SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. I would ask that you provide your honest opinions on the information addressed in the questionnaire. Your responses will be kept confidential. A numeric code will identify all records. The questionnaire is a 38-item instrument that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it by _____________. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 214 525-8722 or Dr. Michelle Walker at 940 565-2154.

Sincerely,

Ellen Harris, M.A., Ed.S.  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of North Texas  
(Enclosure)

Dr. Michelle Walker  
Major Professor  
University of North Texas
APPENDIX C

FOLLOWUP QUESTIONNAIRE LETTER
May, 2001

Dear Participant:

I recently sent you a questionnaire about performance appraisal criteria. The research is in partial fulfillment of my doctoral requirements in the College of Education at the University of North Texas.

All questionnaires were sequentially numbered for data entry and followup purposes. All responses will be kept confidential, so please do not indicate your name on any of the materials.

There are no risks associated with the completion of this questionnaire. The data are being used strictly for research purposes.

Thank you in advance for taking a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your response is very important and deeply appreciated.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it by May 22, 2001. A self-addressed, stamped envelope has been provided.

Sincerely,

Ellen Harris, MA, Ed.S.
Doctoral Candidate
University of North Texas
(Enclosure)
APPENDIX D

AN ANALYSIS OF SALES PEOPLE’S PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL CRITERIA AT A TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION QUESTIONNAIRE

71
An Analysis of Sales People’s Perceptions of Performance Appraisal Criteria at a Telecommunications Corporation

Questionnaire

Directions: The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain your perception of performance appraisal criteria. There are no right or wrong responses, only opinions. Please be sure you respond to each statement. For the following statements, please circle your level of agreement according to the scale.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA STATEMENTS

1. An operational performance staff appraisal system is essential for an effective organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

2. Performance appraisal criteria provide an opportunity to encourage the appraisee and the appraiser to set objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Effective performance appraisal criteria should include a self-appraisal as part of the overall appraisal process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. The appraiser should have direct observation of the appraisee’s job performance for an effective evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. The appraiser should be familiar with the appraisee’s job responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
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<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. An appeal process should be available for the appraisee when there is a perceived disagreement on the accuracy of the appraisal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
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7. Performance appraisal criteria should be easily read and understood by the appraiser and the appraisee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
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<td>3</td>
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</table>

8. The appraisee should be able to make constructive comments about their performance appraisal without any repercussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. If an appraisee is performing at less than satisfactory performance, they should have more reviews in order to improve performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. The appraiser should be sufficiently trained regarding how to give a performance appraisal prior to giving appraisals.

    | Strongly Agree | Moderately Agree | Mildly Agree | Mildly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
    |----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
    | 6              | 5                | 4            | 3               | 2                  | 1                 |

11. Performance appraisal criteria should help to point out if there are any performance areas that need improvement.

    | Strongly Agree | Moderately Agree | Mildly Agree | Mildly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
    |----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
    | 6              | 5                | 4            | 3               | 2                  | 1                 |
12. The appraisee’s knowledge of the job should be a part of the performance appraisal criteria.

13. Performance appraisal feedback should be constructive.


ATTITUDE OR SATISFACTION STATEMENTS

1. A performance appraisal provides an excellent opportunity for constructive feedback regarding one’s job performance.

2. The appraisee should realize that their work is important in terms of the whole organizational effort.

3. A performance appraisal can make you aware if you are being productive or not.

4. The appraisee should be provided an opportunity to sit down with the appraiser from time to time to talk about issues that are relevant to the work they are responsible to perform.

5. The performance appraisal interview should be an open exchange of information between both the appraiser and the appraisee against specific measurable standards.

6. The appraiser should have ample time to work with the appraisee in order to evaluate properly.

7. The appraisee should be able to track the progress of their own performance.

8. The appraisee should use the company’s selling plan to communicate orally.

9. The appraisee should utilize visual aids, when appropriate and possible, during sales presentations.

10. The appraisee should successfully incorporate product integration strategy into the sales approach.

11. The appraisee should look for opportunities to increase the company’s value to the customer.
12. The appraisee should demonstrate the ability to work with others.

13. The appraisee should demonstrate a willingness to adjust to change.

14. The appraisee should demonstrate a willingness to present new product offerings.

PERIPHERAL ISSUES RELATED TO PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS

1. Performance appraisal criteria encourages the appraisee to develop job performance priorities.

2. The appraisee should present themselves in a professional manner when dealing with co-workers.

3. The appraisee should present themselves in a professional manner when dealing with customers.

4. The appraisee should present themselves in a professional manner when dealing with the company.

5. The current performance appraisal criteria is satisfactory.

6. Attitude should be measured in the appraisal process.

7. Performance appraisal is valuable even if the appraisee is in good standing.

8. The appraisee should submit reports in a timely manner.

9. The appraisee should complete assignments provided by the company in a timely manner.

10. The performance appraisal should be seen as a “win-win” interaction between the appraiser and the appraisee.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY
APPENDIX E

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS
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REFERENCES


Crews, J. A. (1997). A Delphi study to determine if scans workplace know-how can be developed through the achievement of the national standards for (visual) arts education. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 161-4514.


