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APPLIED ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

TERM PAPER

" ORGANISATION AND METHODS SURVEY "

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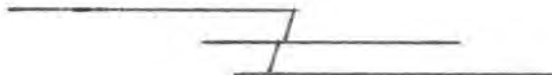
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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- I - Introduction
- II - Role of the Organization and Methods Examiner
- III - Attitude and approach of an Organization and Methods Examiner
- IV - How to conduct an organization and methods survey
 - 1) Planning
 - 2) Fact finding
 - 3) Analysis of facts
 - 4) Development of recommendations
 - 5) Written presentation (Final report)
 - 6) Oral presentation
 - 7) Installation and follow up
- V - Pitfalls to avoid in the conduct of a survey
- VI - Conclusion



" ORGANIZATION AND METHODS SURVEY "

I/- INTRODUCTION

"Organization and Methods" is not completely a new part of business management. In former times, systems and procedures of organizing were applied in every organization. However, they were not studied carefully and we paid too little attention to them, or we followed them as a tradition, not to be changed or improved .

In this scientific era, while the Government's activities are growing in scope and in complexity, we need an effective, a scientific system .

However, the system is not tough. It has to be changed if necessary. The more complex the Government's activities are, the more the system must be improved in order to get suitable results.

A today's effective system might not be effective two years hence. So, organizing, reorganizing and applying new methods is a never ending process .

II/- ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION AND METHODS EXAMINER

The field of Organization and Methods is very large. Work in this field requires a wide range of knowledge, embracing management, clerical procedures, forms, records, and office machinery and equipment .

The role of an organization and methods examiner is to advise on the organization, to help those taking part in the operating line to carry out the job effectively. He is an adjunct to line

management, and helping them with improvement of :

- organizational plans
- work simplification
- paper work management
- work measurement
- work methods instructions
- forms control
- correspondence
- records management
- office layout, and
- use of office machinery

The organization and methods examiner recommends improvement methods to the head of operating units.

On the other hand, the organization and methods examiner needs to know how to go about his job, how to approach people, how to get and record information, how to sort and classify it, how to build up his conclusions, and how to earn acceptance with line personnel & executives.

He also must help to install his recommendations and finally to follow up the application of the new system in order to find out if the changes are successful and if they are getting the results anticipated. He does the job of knowing and thinking. He knows the deficiencies of an organization, a system or procedures and thinks about the methods of improvement.

III/- ATTITUDE AND APPROACH OF AN ORGANIZATION AND METHODS EXAMINER

The organization and methods examiner is an advisor. He isn't on the line position. He has no authority over operating persons. So the most important factor in his work is to know how to gain cooperation of operating people when he goes into their jobs, when he interviews them. Because operating people should not want to be annoyed by his interference. They don't want an outsider to make a change of his methods and procedures. Your work should be recognized as a work improvement study and not thought to be a fault finding expedition.

But on the contrary, the organization and methods examiner has the advantage of freshness and detachment from the organization he is making the survey. He is in a better position to range around and link up activities in one place with ~~the~~ those in another and he may see chances of improvement quicker than the persons who is doing the job. Being detached hierarchically from the organization he is making the survey, he can have no prejudice in favor of the established practices.

However, in order to get success, to expect the best results, there must be a close collaboration of operating people. The special contribution of an organization and methods examiner needs to be compounded with the operating officials's knowledge and experience of the subject matter and of management. The O & M examiner's help should be welcomed by the operating officials so that his mission is understood and in addition of that, cooperation must be gone on with all operating levels.

The head of the unit must create a right atmosphere by explaining the object of the survey, the purpose of the organization and study to his subordinates. During the course of the survey, the O & M examiner will have every opportunity for developing a tight understanding with the officials of the unit where the organization and methods work is being done. An O & M examiner will never come into contact with a branch or section except through the head of it, with whom he will try to set up a cordial understanding.

Besides that, individuals at all levels should be encouraged to make suggestions or proffer opinion. The operating officials may know much more about the subject matter than he does and with their experience in their job, they can give him good suggestions, and opinions, and it is often on the good will of the persons who will actually operate a system that success of the new operation depends.

IV/- HOW TO CONDUCT AN O & M SURVEY

The first thing that an O & M examiner must know in conducting a survey is the principles. What steps he is to follow and which one is the most important.

The O & M examiner who will conduct the survey should always understand how the decision to call upon the service of O & M arose, who was the initiator, and whether a problem is supposed to exist. A thorough initial understanding of what the assignment is expected to achieve will help him greatly in his subsequent work.

PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCTING A SURVEY

- 1 - Planning
- 2 - Fact finding
- 3 - Analysis
- 4 - Developement of recommendations
- 5 - Written presentation
- 6 - Oral presentation
- 7 - Installation and follow up

I - PLANNING THE SURVEY

In every work, planning is needed to go first. Planning is the visualization and formulation of proposed activities designed to achieve certain results. Planning is the preparatory work used as a guide. Planning makes you know forward the basis of the future action, what possible course of action appears in order to carry out the survey. Like the explorer who uses the compas to find the way, planning is useful for an ~~see~~ O & M examiner to walk into his survey.

It is desirable to make a reconnaissance or preliminary survey of the ground to be covered. It will provide a more thorough understanding of the nature of the problems involved. It will also assist in estimating the extent of fact gathering necessary in the various fields as well as the order in which sections of work should be examined. Before making this survey, some study should be made of current documents which

give background information about the office and its activities. You must get a clear written definition of objectives in each of the fields of work to be studied. Obtain and check over a list of functions or duties relating each item to the defined objectives. You must know what the objectives of the survey are, what is the purpose of the improving study. Decide for whose use the end product is being prepared. Determine the scope of action, to know where the survey work will be spread. Determine the methods, techniques, tools, skills and facilities required for conducting the survey. Establish a time schedule by which you determine when you have to start a step, which part of the step must be done before the others and for how long. Decide a term of reference of your survey. Measuring such a survey will demand how much time to be achieved. Planning the time is the necessary part for the O & M examiner to accomplish his work.

Finally the O & M examiner presents the proposals to the head of the O & M Division. The O & M examiner and the head of the O & M branch should meet regularly and review the results obtained, discuss provisional findings and decide upon lines of further enquiry. Sometimes it may be decided that further fact collecting in certain fields is not necessary or the gathering of certain facts may give improved understanding of the objectives and lead to a change in the direction of fact finding.

2 - FACT FINDING

The methods of fact finding vary with the character of the survey but are usually a mixture of the following :

- a) Study of existing records, manuals
- b) Personal observation
- c) Interview and discussion
- d) Written questionnaires

The O & M examiner must know the purpose in collecting information and try to make sure that his information is reliable and useful.

When problems have been recognized, the collecting of information can be orientated around those problems. Don't plott on collecting facts without thinking about their implications. It should be wasteful and may result in the accumulation of a mass of information which is most difficult to analyze and it can make the survey be complicated.

Don't collect information with general statement which often wrap up into one parcel - and obscure - matters which should be dealt with separately. Lacking the detailed knowledge of the particular circumstances the O & M examiner may interpret it quite incorrectly.

The O & M examiner is concerned to gather proofs which he can draw conclusions about the effectlessness or complication of the existing operation and recommend improvements. On the other hand, he must know how to utilize the information in his survey.

a) STUDY OF EXISTING RECORDS, MANUALS

It has been suggested that as part of the preliminary work, documents giving the background information should be obtained. The material to be collected mostly concern :

- laws, principles, administrative orders, instructions, directives or regulations.
- Objectives description of the unit
- the organization structure of the unit, organization chart, description relationship between the units
- the functional chart. Description of duties and responsibilities allotted. Position distribution chart. Work distribution chart.
- guides and manuals, pamphlets, publications
- budget, funds
- reports
- correspondence files
- forms

Sometimes an official list of duties and responsibilities is available but, this may be inaccurate and inadequate. You must check it back, because they may be a difference between the duties officially allotted and those actually carried out; this is sometimes due to the needs of the job.

b) PERSONAL EXAMINATION, OBSERVATION

- To review the work of each post. Examine all the work done by one individual
- To follow action from starting point
- To ascertain the extent and frequency of reference to index registers or other records.
- To examine some completed cash or files or other records of business such as minutes of meetings.

It should be explained that the processes, rather than the work of individuals is to be examined.

c) INTERVIEW AND DISCUSSION

As indicated above, a great deal of the organization and method examiner success will depend on his ability to deal with people, to gain their cooperation. This is an important factor. So, first, you must set up a plan to know in advance whom you expect to interview, about what matter, what information you want to have. And then, when you open the interview, the first thing you must gain from them is to let them have an impression that you come to help them, not to find their fault. Try to do your best to explain clearly the purpose of your visit and the objectives of the survey and to reassure them that their position will not in any way be defined. This is a psychological problem. Certainly, in every survey you make, the persons interviewed will greet you by a big suspicious question mark in their mind. So, if you conduct the interview without discretion, the persons you interview could misunderstand you and think what they will say might cause their job to be abolished.

Sometimes, because of the vanity, they resist to a change of their homespun procedures, to outside interference. The attitude that seems to say : " We need no help, we can carry out our own problems!. They desire to hang on to the old. Be patient, courtesy and sympathetic in dealing with them, do your best to draw them into the survey work. Stress the importance of their contribution to the success of the survey. Try to convince them that you have an interest in helping them through the survey, and that they will profit from the results of the new installation, which will help them to carry out their job easier, quicker, more effectively, without overtime and without backlogs. Remember that you should not criticize them, you are finding facts only. Encourage them to make suggestions and ask them for advice. Consider their good suggestions and advices.

As indicated earlier, the operating personnel don't see the weakness in the general organization but they may know their job much more than you do, so that they can give you good suggestions about what concerns their job.

It is often worthwhile to give a person who is to be interviewed some advance notice of the kind of question to be asked. Sometimes a rough note of the interviews should be taken and submitted to the person interviewed for comment and review. This will ensure that there is no misunderstanding, it may also give the opportunity to clarify a doubtful point and it may avoid possible controversy in the future.

Sometimes, if exact information cannot be given immediately, if question which may require some thought, the person interviewed will give you writing information, and then discuss with him if you want him to clarify some facts. If possible, use special forms for jotting down information. It might be more clear and you can save time.

Interviewing the persons you deal with in order to find the

necessary facts for your survey is an art. You can develop that art best by practicing it. Your skill in interviewing often decides your success or failure. You cannot analyze the data and build up sound conclusions if you did a poor job of fact gathering.

d) WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRES

The written questionnaire has a very limited use in O & M work. There is always great difficulty in framing questions which will be interpreted in the same way by everyone. Only use written questionnaires in the cases when the person interviewed is living far from the place of the survey, when the information required involved many persons and when you find that the information must be given under questionnaire form in order to permit easy tabulation.

Questions used should be brief, understandable, not be confused, not complicated and easy to answer. If possible you should use questions that the answer can be yes or no. And when you send out the questionnaire send also a transmittal letter or put a notation in the questionnaire itself explaining clearly what you want, what is the purpose of the questionnaire and how to complete it.

Finally it should not be forgotten that the results of a questionnaire may not be sound unless a fair percentage of the questionnaires are completed.

3 - ANALYSIS OF FACTS

This is the phase of building up the skeleton, the frame of the survey. You have the necessary tools and material in gathering information and finding facts. Now with these tools and material, build up your survey. This is the phase where a great part of your knowledge, your experience and your imagination will be used. Because if your knowledge and your experiences are good, you can search for signs and

symptoms of weakness easily and quickly, and if you have a good imagination, you will have a great skill and judgment in finding the new methods of improving.

In the study of facts, it is useful to clarify and summarize information. Tabular statements, charts, graphs, etc... are often helpful in presenting information for study in this way. Voluminous notes may be summarized or a short series of comments boiled down to a short essay about a situation. The O & M examiner will try to find a way of summarizing and condensing his facts so that he can see the whole picture in the form of a "relief map" showing the main sets of facts in the right scale and relationship to one another.

Analysis is assisted by subjecting facts to formal questions. The questions asked are "WHAT, WHY, WHEN, WHERE, HOW & WHO, and the approach is from the general to the particular part. The questions are asked in relation to whole sections of work, to phases of work, and then to detailed operations.

Ask WHAT is done. What is the operation, and what does it achieve.

WHY the operation is necessary. What are the compelling considerations? Can as good a result be obtained without it or a tolerable result be obtained with less of it.

WHEN should the operation be done. Is it in the right sequence? Could it be done more economically earlier or later in the procedure? Is the job done at the right frequency?

WHERE the operation should be done. Is the physical layout sound? Can it be done easier by changing location of staff or equipment?

WHO should do the operation? Is it more logical to give the job to someone else? Are skills used to best advantages?

HOW

_____ should the operation be done?

This form of catechism is applied to all kinds of work and to organization as well as method; it should not be omitted for example because work is described as technical and is difficult to understand. The catechism will reveal many of the factors of cause and effect. It will lead to O & M examiner to explore the existing situation and alternative ways of achieving the objective of improvement.

4 - DEVELOPMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

You have found the methods of improvement by analyzing the facts. Your fact finding and analysis have made you very knowledgeable about the condition in which the job must be done. Now develop your recommendations about the problem, decide what is the best way to achieve the objectives. In the development of recommendations, use the possible of your judgment and this judgment must be firmly based on very clear and solid facts. An O & M examiner must guard against letting either his own or other people's prejudices dominate him. He can now set about experimenting by setting out the various alternative course of action and considering and rejecting until the right solution is found. He should be imaginative and think of wider issues such as the removal of legal barriers to improvements or abandonment of traditional ways.

Don't hesitate and be influenced by these obstacles which can obstruct the improvement if you find your solution is a better one and you can protect it by firm reasons. However, be careful in that point, because if an improvement installed does not bring back the best results expected, it may cause very serious consequences. The problem is to decide what is efficiency, what is the right degree of service, provision, accuracy, etc... for the circumstances and the right kind of O & M for those circumstances. You must consider the standard of the work to be done, the speed with which it should be done and the cost of doing it. The cost of change-over should always be estimated.

In this phase of development of recommendations, consultations with other persons, those in the organization and method branch, and those of the organization involved in the survey are necessary in order to discover weak points and to have further suggestions. When the solution to be recommended has been chosen, it should be written in draft report or outline in greater detail. Sometimes, the new procedure or organization is indicated in the draft report side by side with the existing so that the differences brought out can be judged. It is often worth to hold a conference attended by a group of O & M examiners, headed by the O & M Division head to review the draft report and discuss the problem before submitting the formal report. Copies of the draft report are supplied in advance to each O & M examiner attending.

5 - WRITTEN PRESENTATION (Final report)

Before beginning to write the report, it is helpful to make an outline, or framework of the main parts of the report, expanded as far as the subheadings with notes on the object of each paragraph.

The report is a document for action. It is written to offer advice and to provide information. So, it must be a document from which the officials concerned can easily translate advice and information into action. To help the reader, the report should be as short as possible, consistent with the objective it seeks to achieve. Facts are the foundation of the reports. They should be presented concisely with highlights on the essentials. They should be arranged to point as clearly as possible to the conclusions and the recommendations. The reader should be helped by a clear structure in the report; by simple language, clear headings and coherent paragraphs; by making the report easy to read and handle, and by an attraction but not lavish lay-out and make-up. The report is to lead the reader's thought to a definite end, and it will do so most convincingly if the matters at issue are presented unequivocally,

and if the statements made in the report answer specific questions. Tone of the report should be restrained and impersonal, avoiding criticism, exaggeration or an appearance of laying down the law. The approach, and the amount of detail given should be adjusted to the knowledge and needs of the person to whom the report is addressed. On the other hand, appendices should be included to make the report intelligible to the readers. These appendices must be carefully selected, simple but clearly, understood and the report should be related to them. A well constructed report makes a valuable contribution to the success of O & M work. The art of writing the report is to make the reader understand the problem as the writer does. The reader should not have any unanswered questions in his mind as he reads. Usually the elements which make a good report remains : first, good material, second good presentation, and third good style.

By presentation, the report should have a structure consisting of certain basic parts. These include the following :

- Title page
- List of content
- Introduction
- Summary of recommendations
- Body of the report
- Appendices

The title page and list of contents are taken together because one is not often used without the other. They will form the front and back pages of the first sheet in the report.

The title should be brief.

The introduction should begin with a brief description of the subject of the survey, the reasons for the survey and its purposes. The main purpose of the introduction is to define the subject more clearly than is possible in the short title and to set the reader on the lines which the rest of the report is going to follow.

The summary of recommendations is not necessary in every O & M

report. It permits the persons who don't have time to read the report in detail to understand the main conclusions and recommendations in the body of the report; the O & M examiner presents his facts finding, his analysis and evaluation bringing to conclusions and recommendations.

Of the information collected during the assignment, only a part will be needed in the report. The report writer will have discovered and answered certain problems, and the purpose of writing the report is to present those problems and give the answers. What essential facts are needed to achieve this purpose, and how can they be most forcibly presented? Is the information used in the report to lead to a conclusion or a recommendation ?

Is the information needed to give the reader the necessary background information to judge the soundness of the recommendations? The information must be screened very carefully. What information needed and which must be used in the body of the report, and which must be presented in appendices.

However, in some cases, it will be worth to give more detailed information. For example if the recommendations are controversial or if the information may help to forestall an objection that may be raised against a recommendation or if information may have been obtained on subjects on which it would not be appropriate to make recommendation.

Balance in the report is the relating of means and ends. The space given to various items of information and the calls made on the reader's attention to absorb that information should be related to the importance of those items in the report as a whole. A long statement of fact is best put into an appendix, for example, organization charts and lists of duties, procedure records, table of figures etc...

Sometimes, in summarizing or quoting from the information

in an appendix, for example by reproducing a few lines of figures from a table, or a small part of chart, you can give the text of the report a well balanced picture of essentials. The reader can assimilate it easily.

The recommendations should be as short as possible and to the point statements of what is to be done. They should be brief specific points of action which can be immediately, and as far as possible, completely accepted or rejected.

Appendices provide a convenient place to put graphical, tabular charts, and detailed parts of the report. Only the information pertaining to the essential of the report should be included.

Language used in the report is also an important thing. This is the mean of communicating ideas from one person to another. Usually it can be, and is, much easier to communicate orally than in writing.

Words can be spoken quickly, and the poor choice of words, the awkward phrasing, the excesses and the grammatical errors quickly become things of the ~~past~~ past. The written report preserves them, thus making the task of reading and understanding difficult.

Certain easily memorized guides, such as follows, should be constantly used :

- Cut out unnecessary words and phrases.
- Prefer short words to long
- Prefer familiar words to unfamiliar
- Prefer concrete words to abstract
- Prefer active verbs to passive

The report must be persuasive, it carries the reader along with you in your description, process of analysis and conclusions.

6 - ORAL PRESENTATION

This is the phase of selling your recommendations. The O & M

work does not end when he submits the final report. Yet he must gain acceptance of your recommendations until the proper changes have been put into effect. This is also an important part in dealing with people. Although the acceptance will depend on the presentation of the report, however, it will also depend upon your oral presentation when you submit the report to persons interested. Remember that the key element in facilitating acceptance of proposal is to make all persons concerned be fully informed about the problem and to understand the objective. So, do not push for an immediate decision because, usually one of the principal reasons for rejection of recommendations is that they are not supported by factual information.

However there is profitable major for an O & M examiner in this phase of working for acceptance. That is the interviewing people during the survey work itself. Because in dealing with people during this time, he has had the opportunity to test their opinion, their ideas regarding the problem. Therefore, when he submits the report, he might know in advance what are the causes of opposition. Thus, he can give special attention in the area of opposition in presenting the recommendations.

7- INSTALLATION AND FOLLOW UP

The O & M examiner's responsibility does not usually end with the submission of the final report and the acceptance of recommendations. Although the responsibility for impleting the proposed improvement belong to the operating unit under survey, the O & M examiner's advisory functions may continue until the proposed changes have been put into ~~xxxx~~ successful operation. He must assist the management, help the line officials to carry out the installation of the new organization, operation or procedure, to give them opinion and additional information.

Sometimes the O & M unit may be given the responsibility to

supervise the installation of the new system. In such case, as in the survey itself, the O & M examiner must carefully plan and schedule the work. A preliminary plan is a necessary guide to permit the O & M examiner to see in advance what steps to follow in carrying out the installation and what condition involved.

As the O & M examiner is the ^{author}~~author~~ of the new methods, he knows much more details than the operating officials do, so he must give the latter the technical guidance in the installation process. Sometimes, a special training is needed to give the employees responsible for implementing the proposed improvement a knowledge about the installation problem.

While an O & M branch can not possibly keep in intimate touch with the detail arising from the new installation, it is desirable to follow up the new methods installed, after a suitable period, to assess the broad results achieved. This can provide a valuable contribution to experience, and is also a safeguard against possible misinterpretations of the recommendations or the introduction of modifications without due consideration which may prevent the full achievement of the improvements.

Follow up is an essential action for finding out the advantages and disadvantages, the deficiencies, to help in future surveys. It should be carefully checked by observing, interviewing and reviewing of records and reports. Follow up may bring on new ideas, new suggestions.

V / - PITFALLS TO AVOID IN THE CONDUCT OF A SURVEY

In the above discussion, the various essential elements for conducting a survey are indicated.

There are certain reasons for project failures.

According to the outline discussion prepared by the United States Bureau of the Budget for conferences on O & M, there are five

general kinds of pitfalls in the conduct of a survey.

They are :

- I) Pitfalls caused by inadequate preparation for the survey
- 2) Failures due to poor fact gathering
- 3) Failures caused by inadequate or incorrect analysis of facts.
- 4) Failures caused by faulty reporting of survey results
- 5) Failures caused by inadequate follow through.

I) PITFALLS CAUSED BY INADEQUATE PREPARATION FOR SURVEYS

- a) Failure to define clearly the mission of the survey
- b) Failure to have a clean-cut understanding with top management regarding the survey, its purposes, and the action to be taken on the survey findings.

c) Failure to establish proper relationships between the survey staff and the organization being surveyed

d) Failure to put definite boundaries around the survey, attempting to cover the water front instead of concentrating on the main issues.

2) FAILURES DUE TO POOR FACT GATHERING

a) Failure to study background material such as previous surveys, budget document, outside criticism, before attempting to gather facts regarding current operations.

b) Use of superficial fact gathering technique when only first hand observation, testing, etc... will give accurate information upon which action can be based. Examples : too much dependence on pleasant, conversational interviews with supervisors, use of general questionnaires, etc...

c) Failure to keep accurate, complete records of the

facts gathered, properly arranged so that they can be intelligently studied in the later phases of the survey. Poor work papers.

3) FAILURES CAUSED BY INADEQUATE OR INCORRECT ANALYSIS OF FACTS

a) Failure to discuss facts with the organization surveyed or with others in a position to know to determine whether or not the facts really mean what they seem to mean.

b) Failure to check the facts learned from one source with the facts learned from other sources to be sure that they are properly integrated.

c) Common tendency to jump to conclusions and use pattern solution.

d) Tendency to form early prejudices and attempt to make later findings support these prejudices.

e) Failure to use the best tools for integrating and interpreting facts, i.e. Process charts, organization charts, etc...

f) Tendency to spend too much time on the analysis, thus making the data upon which recommendations must be sold so out of date that the management will not have full confidence that they represent current situations.

4) FAILURES CAUSED BY FAULTY REPORTING OF SURVEY RESULTS

a) Failure to discuss freely survey recommendations with people who will have to live with them, the management of the organization surveyed.

b) Failure to convince these people of the benefits to be derived from the recommendations.

c) Tendency to deal in personalities instead of with ~~an~~ objective materials.

d) Tendency of some survey teams to put their own personalities

personalities into reports to claim credit that does not belong to the survey team; to claim credit/^{which}~~that~~ does ~~not~~ belong to the survey team but which might better be left unmentioned.

e) Failure to summarize properly and organize the net results of surveys in brief form so that management can take action without too much digging into detail.

f) Failure to use visual aids to explain the more complicated principles involved.

g) Failure to ~~convinced~~ consider properly the personalities involved. Sometimes better results will be obtained if no report at all is submitted and the whole matter is handled orally.

5) FAILURES CAUSED BY INADEQUATE FOLLOW-THROUGH

a) The common tendency and feeling the survey staff should make recommendations only and should be completely divorced from responsibilities.

b) Tendency to concentrate survey efforts, the best survey personnel, etc... on current projects with the result that completed project are not adequately checked to see that the recommendations are actually in effect in their intended form and accomplishing their intended purposes.

c) In some instances, survey teams err in the opposite direction by completely installing their recommendations, leaving the management of the organization surveyed out of the picture entirely, completely unprepared to maintain and support the changes made and usually unsympathetic toward them.