

**DEVELOPING LASTING RELATIONSHIPS
WITH YOUR
FOOD SERVICE INDUSTRY and
COMMUNITY PARTNERS**



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MIDLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

A Manual Designed to Assist in Building and Maintaining a Helpful Business Relationship with Our Food Industry Partners



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Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Total Quality Management (TQM)	2
Decision-Making Process	3
Management Philosophies and Motivation	7
Significance of Communication	8
Communication Types	9
Improving Communications	12
Challenges of Change	12
Challenges for Leaders	13
Transformational Leadership	13
Leadership Change	14
Effective Organizational Control Systems	15
Implementation of TQM	16
Commitment Throughout the Organization	16
Relationship Building	17
Conclusion – Managing for Better Outcomes and Experiences	19
References	20

Introduction

The perceived conception that ‘government knows what is best for me’ is a controversial phrase that may invoke a variety of reactions. The phrase “I am from the government and here to help!” evokes both fear and assurance, depending on the receiver of the information. Trust is a big word to all and is an important building block to relationship development.

Building and maintaining relationships is a tough idea to accomplish for many businesses and organizations. Health departments are often deficient in this skill, especially if industry views the health department inspectors as only regulators. Yes, we are regulators, but we must integrate regulation with relationship building on industry goals. Both regulators and industry have many similarities. If relationships are focused on these similarities, your authority as an inspector will not be compromised and trust will be built.

Generally speaking, communication is the key to building a strong relationship. Many inspectors are excellent at communication, but some improvement is needed to be even more effective with diversified generations we interact with daily. We need to be professional while treating our industry contacts with respect. Good advice is to treat others how we wish to be treated. Common courtesy goes a long way. This seems very simple and probably something that you have heard from a family member many years ago, but sometimes we lose touch with this basic ideology. If we do not effectively communicate with our industry, we will continue building barriers making it difficult to conduct effective inspections that result in shared corrective action.

With good communication, punitive consequences are not necessary in many instances because you will achieve better compliance when completing an inspection. Non-compliance items can be discussed in a teachable moment, which may take a little more time initially. However, the business manager will have a better understanding of deficiencies and is more likely to view you as an interested party in their success. This reinforces trust, and you are on your way to building a sustainable industry / regulator relationship.

In Midland County, we have developed our own patterned modification style for sharing and assisting for many years. We have gained community support from our food service operators and have great success because of this inherent program management style. Simply put, we support our food industry, their ideas, and goals; and they respect our authority as a regulator. Law / codes in some instances are simply not “Black and White”; there are many grey areas that require deliberation and discernment. Every inspector experiences challenges; how we deal with those opportunities during an inspection have a huge effect on our success.

Managing individual resources or those within a department can become complicated. Whether the resources be educational, personnel, community or industry we all have common goals and similarities. How we arrange and implement these goals in relationship building is a part of the Total Quality Management process.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a philosophy that embraces uniform commitment to quality in all areas of an organization resulting in an organizational culture that meets consumers' perceptions of quality.

The concept of TQM rests largely on five principles:

1. Produce quality work the first time.
2. Focus on the customer / industry owner.
3. Have a strategic approach to improvement.
4. Improve continuously.
5. Encourage mutual respect and teamwork.

To be effective in improving quality, TQM must be supported at all levels within your department. TQM even expands the definition of customer to include any person inside or outside the company to whom an employee shares responsibilities for his or her work. In a restaurant, for example, the cooks' customers are the waiters and waitresses. This notion encourages each member of the organization to stay focused on quality and remain fully aware of his or her contribution to it and responsibility for it.

The TQM philosophy focuses on teamwork, increasing customer satisfaction, and lowering costs. Organizations implement TQM by encouraging managers and employees to collaborate across functions and departments, as well as with customers, to identify areas for improvement, no matter how small. Teams of workers are trained and empowered to make decisions that help their organization achieve high standards of quality. Organizations shift responsibility for quality control from specialized departments to all employees. Thus, total quality management means a shift from a bureaucratic to a decentralized approach to control.

An effective TQM program has numerous benefits. In a business, financial benefits include lower costs, higher returns on sales and investment, and the ability to charge higher rather than competitive prices. TQM is not always used in business because

implementing an effective program involves much time, effort, money, and patience. Lack of awareness or expertise in using TQM is another reason it is not used. However, firms with the necessary resources may gain major competitive advantages in their industries by implementing TQM.

The Decision-Making Process

A manager typically plans, organizes, staffs, leads, and controls his team by executing decisions. The effectiveness and quality of those decisions often determine how successful a manager will be.

Managers are constantly called upon to make decisions in order to solve problems. Decision making and problem solving are ongoing processes of evaluating situations or problems, considering alternatives, making choices, and following them up with the necessary actions. Sometimes the decision-making process is extremely short, and mental reflection is essentially instantaneous. This is also true for health inspectors. In many cases inspectors make more instantaneous decisions than any other type. The entire decision-making process is dependent upon the right information being available to the right people at the right times.

The decision-making process involves the following steps:

1. Define the problem.
2. Identify limiting factors.
3. Develop potential alternatives.
4. Analyze the alternatives.
5. Select the best alternative.
6. Implement the decision.
7. Establish a control and evaluation system.

Define the Problem

The accurate definition of the problem affects all the steps that follow. If the problem is inaccurately defined, every step in the decision-making process will be based on an

incorrect starting point. One way that an inspector or manager can help determine the true problem in a situation is by identifying the problem separately from its symptoms.

Identify Limiting Factors

Most inspectors want to make the best decisions. We need to have the ideal resources — information, time, personnel, equipment, and supplies — and identify any limiting factors. Realistically, inspectors operate in an environment that normally doesn't provide ideal resources. Local health department budgets are tight, making adequate staffing and equipment a challenge. So, they must choose to sacrifice — to make the best decision possible with the information, resources, and time available.

Develop Potential Alternatives

Time pressures frequently cause an inspector to move forward after considering only the first or most obvious answers. However, successful problem solving requires thorough examination of the challenge, and a quick answer may not result in a permanent solution. Thus, an inspector should think through and investigate several alternative solutions to a single problem instead of making a quick decision.

One of the best known methods for developing alternatives is through **brainstorming**, where a group works together (can be staff or staff and restaurant manager) to generate ideas and alternative solutions. The assumption behind brainstorming is that the group dynamic stimulates thinking — one person's ideas, no matter how outrageous, can generate ideas from the others in the group. Ideally, this spawning of ideas is contagious, and before long, suggestions and ideas flow. Brainstorming usually requires 30 minutes to an hour. The following specific rules should be followed during brainstorming sessions:

- **Concentrate on the problem at hand.** This rule keeps the discussion very specific and avoids the group's tendency to address the events leading up to the current problem.
- **Entertain all ideas.** In fact, the more ideas that come up, the better. In other words, there are no bad ideas. Encouragement of the group to freely offer all thoughts on the subject is important. Participants should be encouraged to present ideas no matter how ridiculous they seem because such ideas may spark a creative thought on the part of someone else.

- **Refrain from allowing members to evaluate others' ideas on the spot.**
All judgments should be deferred until all thoughts are presented, and the group concurs on the best ideas.

Although brainstorming is the most common technique to develop alternative solutions, inspectors can use several other ways to help develop solutions, too.

No matter what technique is used, group decision making has clear advantages and disadvantages when compared with individual decision making. The following are among the advantages:

- Groups provide a broader perspective.
- Employees / Food Establishment managers are more likely to be satisfied and to support the final decision.
- Opportunities for discussion help to answer questions and reduce uncertainties for the decision makers.

These points are among the disadvantages:

- This method can be more time-consuming than one individual making the decision on his own.
- The decision reached could be a compromise rather than the optimal solution. However, consistency and policy will be likely developed.
- Individuals become guilty of *groupthink* — the tendency of members of a group to conform to the prevailing opinions of the group.
- Groups may have difficulty performing tasks because the group, rather than a single individual, makes the decision, resulting in confusion when it comes time to implement and evaluate the decision.
- This method defers responsibility from one individual to the group.

The results of dozens of individual-versus-group performance studies indicate that groups not only tend to make better decisions than a person acting alone, but also that groups tend to inspire star performers to even higher levels of productivity.

Two (or more) heads are better than one? The answer depends on several factors, such as the nature of the task, the abilities of the group members, and the form of interaction. Because an inspector often has a choice between making a decision

independently or including others in the decision making, he / she needs to understand the advantages and disadvantages of group decision making.

Analyze the Alternatives

The purpose of this step is to decide the relative merits of each idea. Inspectors must identify the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative solution before making a final decision.

Regardless, an inspector needs to evaluate each alternative in terms of its:

- **Feasibility** — Can it be done?
- **Effectiveness** — How well does it resolve the problem situation?
- **Consequences** — What will be its costs (financial and nonfinancial) to the business?

Select the Best Alternative

After an inspector has analyzed all the alternatives, he must decide on the best one. The best alternative is the one that produces the most advantages and the fewest serious disadvantages. Sometimes, the selection process can be fairly straightforward, such as the alternative with the most pros and fewest cons. Other times, the optimal solution is a combination of several alternatives.

Implement the Decision

Positive results must follow decisions. Everyone involved with the decision must know his or her role in ensuring a successful outcome. To make certain that food establishment employees understand their roles, food establishment managers (with the help of inspectors) must thoughtfully devise programs, procedures, rules, or policies to help.

Establish a Control and Evaluation System

An evaluation system should provide feedback on how well the decision is being implemented, what the results are, and what adjustments are necessary to get the results that were intended when the solution was chosen.

In order for an inspector to evaluate his decision, he needs to gather information to determine its effectiveness. Was the original problem resolved? If not, is he closer to the desired situation than he was at the beginning of the decision-making process?

If an inspector plan hasn't resolved the problem, he needs to figure out what went wrong. An inspector may accomplish this by asking the following questions:

- **Was the wrong alternative selected?** If so, one of the other alternatives generated in the decision-making process may be a wiser choice.
- **Was the correct alternative selected, but implemented improperly?** If so, a manager should focus attention solely on the implementation step to ensure that the chosen alternative is implemented successfully.

Management Philosophies and Motivation

Management philosophy can set the foundation for a positive work climate. The way a manager views employees and communicates with employees affects their behavior.

Workers want additional responsibilities, a variety of tasks, and the ability to participate in decisions. If not, the result can be employee absenteeism, apathy, and even alienation.

Motivation Strategies

To some extent, a high level of employee motivation is derived from effective management practices. To develop motivated inspectors, a manager must treat people as individuals, empower workers, provide an effective reward system, redesign jobs, and create a flexible workplace.

Empowering Individuals

Empowerment occurs when individuals in an organization are given autonomy, authority, trust, and encouragement to accomplish a task. Empowerment is designed to unshackle the worker and to make a job the worker's responsibility. The inspector must be given trust within the organization to make decisions in his work.

Providing an Effective Reward System

Rewards are used to reinforce employee behavior that works well and you want to continue. A *reward* is a work outcome of positive value to the individual. Organizations are rich in rewards for people whose performance accomplishments help meet organizational objectives. People receive rewards in one of the following two ways:

- **Extrinsic rewards** are externally administered. They are valued outcomes given to someone by another person, typically a supervisor or higher level manager. Common workplace examples are pay bonuses, promotions, special assignments, awards, verbal praise, and so on. In all cases, the motivational stimulus of extrinsic rewards originates outside the individual.
- **Intrinsic rewards** are self-administered. Think of the “natural high” a person may experience after completing a job. That person feels good because she has a feeling of competency, personal development, and self-control over her work. In contrast to extrinsic rewards, the motivational stimulus of intrinsic rewards is internal and doesn't depend on the actions of other people.

Significance of Communication

Organizations are totally reliant on **communication**, which is defined as the exchange of ideas, messages, or information by speech, signals, or writing. Lacking communication, organizations would cease to function. If communication is weakened or hampered, the entire organization suffers. When communication is thorough, accurate, and timely, the organization tends to be vibrant and effective.

Communication is central to the entire management process for four primary reasons:

Communication is a linking process of management. Communication is the way managers conduct the managerial functions of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Communication is the heart of all organizations.

Communication is the primary means by which people obtain and exchange information. Decisions are often dependent upon the quality and quantity of the information received. If the information on which a decision is based is poor or incomplete, the decision will often be incorrect.

The most time-consuming activity a manager engages in is communication.

Managers spend between 70 to 90 percent of their time communicating with employees and other internal and external customers.

Information and communication represent power in organizations. An employee cannot do anything constructive in a work unit unless he or she knows what is to be done, when the task is to be accomplished, and who else is involved. The staff members who have this information become centers of power.

The ability to communicate well, both orally and in writing is a critical managerial skill and a foundation of effective leadership. Through communication, people exchange and share information with one another and influence one another's attitudes, behaviors, and understandings. Communication allows managers to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships, listen to others, and otherwise gain the information needed to create an inspirational workplace. In many cases, the inspector is the person filling this role for the food establishment program. No inspector can handle conflict, negotiate successfully, and succeed at leadership without being a good communicator.

Communication Types

The standard methods of communication are speaking or writing by a sender and listening or reading by the receiver. However, most communication is oral, with one party speaking and others listening.

However, some forms of communication do not directly involve spoken or written language. **Nonverbal communication** (body language) consists of actions, gestures, and other aspects of physical appearance that, combined with facial expressions (such as smiling or frowning), can be powerful means of transmitting messages. At times, a person's body may be "talking" even as he or she maintains silence. Sometimes when people do speak, their bodies may say different things than their words convey. A *mixed message* occurs when a person's words communicate one message, while nonverbally he or she is communicating something else.

Although technology such as e-mail has lessened the importance of nonverbal communication, the majority of governmental communication still takes place through face-to-face interaction. Every verbal message comes with a nonverbal component. Receivers interpret messages by taking in meaning from everything available. When nonverbal cues are consistent with verbal messages, they act to reinforce the messages, but when these verbal and nonverbal messages are inconsistent, they create confusion for the receiver.

The actions of management are especially significant because subordinates place more confidence in what managers do than what they say. The same goes for regulatory inspectors who are looked up to at a higher level of authority. Unless actions are consistent with communication, a feeling of distrust will undermine the effectiveness of any future social exchange.

Oral Communication Skills

Because a large part of an inspector's day is spent conversing with business managers and fellow employees, the abilities to speak and listen are critical to success. Also, oral communication is useful for conveying the viewpoints of others and promotes an openness that encourages people to communicate. In general, inspectors prefer to rely on oral communication because communication tends to be more complete and thorough when speaking in person. In face-to-face interactions, a person can judge how the other party is reacting, get immediate feedback, and answer questions. In general, people tend to assume that talking to someone directly is more credible than receiving a written message. Face-to-face communication permits not only the exchange of words, but also the opportunity to see the nonverbal communication.

However, verbal communicating does have its drawbacks. It can be horribly inconsistent, unless all parties hear the same message. The downside, it is a weak tool for implementing a policy or issuing directives where many specifics are involved.

Here are two of the most important abilities for effective oral communication:

- **Active listening.** Listening is making sense of what is heard and requires paying attention, interpreting, and remembering sound stimuli. Effective listening is active, requiring the hearer to “get inside the head” of the speaker so that he or she can understand the communication from the speaker's point of view. Effective listeners do the following:
 - Make eye contact.
 - Schedule sufficient, uninterrupted time for meetings.
 - Genuinely seek information.
 - Avoid being emotional or attacking others.
 - Paraphrase the message you heard, especially to clarify the speaker's intentions.

- Keep silent. Don't talk to fill pauses.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Avoid making distracting gestures.
- **Constructive feedback.** Inspectors often do poor jobs of providing food establishment managers with performance feedback. When providing feedback, inspectors should do the following:
 - Focus on specific behaviors rather than making general statements.
 - Keep feedback impersonal and goal-oriented.
 - Offer feedback as soon after the action as possible.
 - Ask questions to ensure understanding of the feedback.
 - Direct negative feedback toward behavior that the recipient can control.
 - Be clear and concise on the expected performance expectations.

Written Communication Skills

Written communication has several advantages. First, it provides a record for referral and follow-up. Second, written communication is an inexpensive means of providing identical messages to a large number of people.

The major limitation of written communication is that the sender does not know how or if the communication is received unless a reply is required.

Unfortunately, writing skills are often difficult to develop, and many individuals have problems writing simple, clear, and direct documents.

The following are some guidelines for effective written communication:

- Use the P.O.W.E.R. Plan for preparing each message: Plan, Organize, Write, Edit, and Revise.
- Draft the message with the readers in mind.
- Give the message a concise title and use subheadings where appropriate.

- Use simple words and short, clear, sentences and paragraphs.
- Back up opinions with facts.

Improving Communications

Communication touches everything that takes place in an organization and is so intermingled with all other functions and processes that separating it for study and analysis is difficult. Because communication is the most time-consuming activity that an inspector engages in, improving management strongly depends on improving communication.

The responsibility to strengthen and improve communication is both individual and organizational. Senders should define the purpose behind their message, construct each message with the reader in mind, select the best medium, time each transmission thoughtfully, and seek feedback. Receivers must listen actively, be sensitive to the sender, recommend an appropriate medium for messages, and initiate feedback efforts.

Challenges of Change

Planning and managing change, both cultural and technological, is one of the most challenging elements of an inspector's job. Obviously, the more an inspector can plan in anticipation of a change, the better he can serve the organization. Inspectors need to be aware that organizations change in a number of dimensions that often relate to one another. These dimensions include:

Extent of planning: Although experts differ about how much change can be planned, program managers still need to take steps to set up conditions that permit and even encourage change to occur. This may be a recent trend discovered such as a disease outbreak in a neighboring community that your agency needs to prepare. Whatever the element, a plan will need to be formed.

Degree of change: Changes may be incremental (relatively small, involving fine-tuning processes and procedures) or quantum (significant change altering how a company operates).

Degree of learning: This dimension relates to the degree to which organizational members are actively involved in learning how to plan and implement change while helping solve an existing problem.

Target of change: Programs can vary with respect to the hierarchical level or functional area of which the change is targeted. Some changes may involve basic learning, such as coding a violation or developing a handout for distributing so a consistent message is delivered.

Organization's structure: Is it very stiff and bureaucratic? Is there a need for emphasis on policies, procedures, and rules? Some organizations are very stiff and bureaucratic and may need to “loosen up.” Other organizations may suffer from lack of organization structure. They may need to emphasize policies, procedures, and rules.

Challenges for Leaders

Organizations today place multiple demands on leaders, requiring them to impart vision, initiate change, and make difficult decisions. To handle these demands, leaders must be flexible and adaptable.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership blends the behavioral theories with a small amount of trait theories. Transactional leaders, such as those identified in contingency theories, guide followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying role and task requirements. However, transformational leaders, who are charismatic and visionary, can inspire followers to exceed their own self-interest for the good of their organizations.

Transformational leaders appeal to followers' ideals and moral values and inspire them to think about problems in new or different ways. These leaders influence followers through vision, framing, and impression management.

Vision is the ability of the leader to bind people together with an idea. Framing is the process whereby leaders define the purpose of their movements in highly meaningful terms. Impression management is an attempt to control the impressions that others form of a leader by practicing behaviors that make him or her more attractive and appealing to others.

A transformational leader instills feelings of confidence, admiration, and commitment in his or her followers. This type of leader is charismatic, creating a special bond with followers and articulating a vision with which his or her followers identify and for which these followers are willing to work. Each follower is coached, advised, and delegated some authority. The transformational leader stimulates followers intellectually, arousing

them to develop new ways to think about problems. This leader uses contingent rewards to positively reinforce performances that are consistent with his or her wishes. Management is by exception. Transformational leaders take initiative only when problems occur and are not actively involved when things are going well. He or she commits people to actions and converts followers into leaders.

Research indicates that transformational, as compared to transactional, leadership is more strongly correlated with lower turnover rates, higher productivity, and higher employee satisfaction.

Transformational leaders are relevant to today's workplace because they are flexible and innovative. Although it is important to have leaders with the appropriate orientation defining tasks and managing interrelationships, it is even more important to have leaders who can bring organizations into futures they have not yet imagined. Transformational leadership is the essence of creating and sustaining competitive advantage.

Leadership Change

Today's business world is highly competitive. The way for an organization to survive is by reshaping to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. Resistance to change is a dead-end street for employees and for the organization. Leaders need to emphasize action to make the change as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Organizations go through a four-stage life cycle. For some organizations, the four periods of growth come and go very rapidly; for others, that process may take decades. Failure to follow through with the needed changes in any of the four growth periods could mean the end for a business.

Throughout these periods of change, which is just about all the time for a good organization, leaders must concentrate on having their people go from change avoidance to change acceptance. The five steps that accompany change—for individuals facing life-altering circumstances and for organizations facing fundamental shifts—are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally, acceptance.

Often a worker's first reaction to change is to resist it. An employee becomes comfortable performing tasks and processes a certain way. These comfort levels provide employees with the security of knowing that they are the masters of their work environment. Employees fear that change could disrupt their lives by making their jobs harder or causing them to lose their sense of control.

Leaders can help the change process by changing their employees' attitudes from avoidance into acceptance. This change is accomplished by managers as strong leaders transforming their employees' avoidance questions and statements into acceptance questions:

From “Why?” to “What new opportunities will this change provide?” When employees ask “why,” a manager should focus on the benefits that the change will provide employees and the organization.

From “How will this affect me?” to “What problems will this solve?” Managers should let employees know what the problem is and how they will be part of the solution.

From “We do not do it this way” to “What will be the result if we do it this new way?” One of the first reactions is that a process never has been done this way. Managers should provide explanations and empathy.

From “When will this be over so that we can get back to work?” to “What can I do to help?” Managers should get employees involved in implementing the change.

Managers need to keep in mind that feelings are contagious. By positively promoting a change, a leader makes others want to be part of it. Managers should also give employees the necessary authority and control to help bring the change about. So that employees do not feel powerless, managers should share their responsibilities. A manager should want his or her team members to feel useful and enthusiastic. Employees should be made to feel as though the change could not have happened without them.

This same change is noticed many times when a new inspector arrives, introducing himself at a food establishment. Many times managers are uneasy and nervous, not knowing how this new person is going to react. Make the experience a positive one.

Effective Organizational Control Systems

The management of any organization must develop a control system tailored to its organization's goals and resources. Effective control systems share several common characteristics. These characteristics are as follows:

A focus on critical points. For example, controls are applied where failure cannot be tolerated or where costs cannot exceed a certain amount. The critical points include all

the areas of an organization's operations that directly affect the success of its key operations.

Integration into established processes. Controls must function harmoniously within these processes and should not bottleneck operations.

Acceptance by employees. Employee involvement in the design of controls can increase acceptance.

Availability of information when needed. Deadlines, time needed to complete the project, costs associated with the project, and priority needs are apparent in these criteria. Costs are frequently attributed to time shortcomings or failures.

Economic feasibility. Effective control systems answer questions such as, "How much does it cost?" "What will it save?" or "What are the returns on the investment?" In short, comparison of the costs to the benefits ensures that the benefits of controls outweigh the costs.

Accuracy. Effective control systems provide factual information that's useful, reliable, valid, and consistent.

Comprehensibility. Controls must be simple and easy to understand.

The Implementation of TQM

The implementation of total quality management is similar to that of other decentralized control methods. In developing TQM, regulators and industry need to understand how consumers define quality in both the goods and services offered. If a company pays more attention to quality in its production process, fewer problems will occur later when the product is in the consumers' hands. One way to measure product performance and quality is through customer surveys, which can help managers identify problems.

Commitment Throughout the Organization

To be effective, the TQM philosophy must be supported at the top and embraced at all levels. TQM must be integrated at all levels if the agency and industry are to realize any real improvements in quality. In addition to commitment from the top, the organization must meet these requirements if TQM is to succeed:

- A change in corporate attitude about the importance of quality service.

- Developing more partnerships to achieve better quality products by improving processes and creation of external partnerships with community leaders and Academia.
- Complete Audits to assure quality techniques (a.k.a. Accreditation).
- Removal of obstacles to successful implementation, such as lack of time or equipment.

Typically, two to ten years are needed to reap the benefits of a successful TQM program.

Relationship Building

Relationship building requires inspectors to follow a philosophical systematic planning and implementation process to assess whether the relationship can improve the organization's goal attainment; to remove barriers to relationship building; and to build effective relationships through training, empowerment, and communication.

To create relationships, inspectors and managers need to be aware of the following four relationship building blocks:

1. **Operate as a team.** Rather than focusing on a single aspect of team functioning, such as communication practice, the team must look at multiple elements which are critical to team success and effectiveness, and a team is only as strong as its weakest component.

At a minimum, the following must be considered for team effectiveness:

- Clearly stated and commonly held vision and goals.
 - Talent and skills required to meet the goals.
 - Clear understanding of team members' roles and functions.
 - Efficient and shared understanding of procedures and norms.
 - Effective and skilled interpersonal relations.
 - A system of reinforcement and celebration.
 - Clear understanding of the team's relationship to the organization.
2. **Long-term intervention.** Some inspectors think that a one-day retreat or team-building exercise will resolve issues causing tension and frustration. One day, no

matter how good it is, is not going to make much of a change in the norms, culture, or practices of a team. Plan a long-term strategy for team building. One year is a good time frame for this plan.

3. **Evaluation of progress.** Because team building is a long-term process, both inspectors and team members need to know whether it is succeeding. A mechanism for regular evaluation of team functioning needs to be in place so that the team leader can identify barriers and eliminate them. Plan regular evaluations of team progress.
4. **Leadership attachment.** The manager looks at team development as something that will help others change so that the team will function more effectively. However, the most influential person in most teams is the formal leader or manager who sets the tone for the team, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

An inspector must be willing to hear from employees about how his behavior impacts the team, whether negatively or positively. The worst thing that an organization can do is to start the process and refuse to acknowledge that a manager is a key player in the process.

In Midland County, we try hard to establish relationships with food managers. We are sympathetic to the managers' challenges and offer potential solutions in many cases. Many times solutions are long term so we help develop a "Shared Plan" within the confines of our regulatory requirements.

Over the past years, we have teamed up with Northwood University, Hospitality Management program to have students as a project, develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Midland's food service industry. Our staff reviewed the students' projects for completeness to ensure a quality product for each of the food service facilities. In a matter of five years nearly all non-chain food services had an operation manual designed that is used for training purposes and a resource.

Out of the SOP student project Midland County Health Department designed a comprehensive SOP resource CD that is used by new Midland County Food Establishments and offered to the industry at our training seminars.

Training seminars are held in Midland County typically bi-annually. Useful topics discussed come from a compilation of requests for topics that consumers and local food industry have interest. Specialized meetings for interested groups such as Relay for Life and Midland Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC), and both Northwood and Central Michigan University as guest speakers, have helped build the key to Midlands' success.

Conclusion – Managing for Better Outcomes and Experiences

When we look at the root causes for environmental and social factors that impact health, we must have community involvement. The trust that is built by an individual inspector with a Food Establishment operator will have lasting impressions. However, years of hard work may be ruined by a single bad experience. Everyone in your organization needs to be committed to excellence and have the ability to articulate issues through the lens of public health.

Communication is the key to every relationship no matter personal or business. When communication is thorough, accurate, and timely, your organization tends to be vivacious and effective. The ability to communicate well, both orally and in writing, is a vital skill and foundation of effective leadership. Since most of our communication is done orally or “face to face”, non-verbal communication can be a confusing factor for some because our non-verbal cues may state something else. Effective communication involves being an active listener and giving constructive feedback, too.

Positive reinforcement is needed no matter how difficult the situation. Focus on specific behaviors rather than making general statements. Be a transformational leader showing encouragement to make changes and giving praise to others to continue improvement. Midland County inspectors strive to be transformational leaders for the industry.

Change is difficult and people’s first reaction is to resist it. Whether it is a law, process, or a staff change we do not like our lives disrupted. The quicker we transform from avoidance to acceptance, the benefits of change will be redeemed for being a part of the solution. Quick change implementation gives the industry a competitive advantage.

As a trusted community leader, you will continue your legacy for many years to come. You don’t have to give your authority away because of the respect that you have shown and earned by the food industry. Do something special for your restaurant owners, offer local training opportunities, and help keep your businesses informed on local event issues. Encourage the support of using other local business for service or suppliers. Total Quality Management is about developing connections with the community and the industry. Staff obtains self-worth and works on a common goal for all.

Midland County Health Department has gained community support and achieved great success because of this inherent program management style. Utilizing Total Quality Management practices have not only assisted with gaining compliance in the food program, but have carried over to all programs in the environmental sector. Plainly, we

support our food industry, their ideas, and goals; and they respect our authority as a regulator. Challenges are a part of any regulator. How we deal with those opportunities during an inspection have a huge effect on our future.

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