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# Employees' Attitudes toward Acquiring Progressive Career Opportunities in a Retail Corporate Corporation

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**EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES TOWARD ACQUIRING PROGRESSIVE CAREER  
OPPORTUNITIES IN A RETAIL CORPORATE CORPORATION**

**A Research Paper**

**Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Department of STEM Education and Professional Studies**

**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Master of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies**

**By**

**Kasana J. Carter**

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## **APPROVAL PAGE**

This research paper was prepared by Kasana J. Carter under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational in Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies.

### **APPROVAL BY**

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**Dr. John M. Ritz**  
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**Date**

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Every year companies lose thousands of employees due to personal unfulfillment. Most managers believe that people leave for the money, when in fact 80 to 90 percent of employees leave for reasons related to the job, the manager, the culture, or work environment (Branham, 2005). Voluntary turnover is estimated to cost companies at least 150% or more of the annual salary of each person that leaves (Katcher, 2007). For example, if a company employs 200 and has a 20 percent turnover rate, with an annual salary of \$40,000, the cost of turnover for that year to the company is \$2.4 million.

Branham (2005) states that turnover is a result of disengagement in which 75 percent of the American workforce falls into this category. The cost of disengaged employees to the United States of America economy is between \$254 billion and \$363 billion annually (Branham, 2005). But, disengagement does not happen without cause. Some of the top reasons that employees started to disengage were due to limited career growth or promotional opportunity, poor management, and poor communications (Branham, 2005).

Regarding career growth, many employees felt that there was no perceived career path, that the company failed to fill jobs from within, and gave unfair promotions or favoritism to others (Branham, 2005). Employees were also angered by the lack of incompetent unprofessional managers putting them in the wrong job and then not making an effort to retain them (Branham, 2005). Employees also felt that communication from the senior leaders and managers to



the employees were disjoined, often mis-communicated, and lacked an openness of information (Branham, 2005).

However, voluntary turnover has slowed recently as it is difficult for employees to seek out other positions due to the contraction of the job market. But, once the economy corrects itself, employers will continue to have the same turnover and employee disengagement issues if they do not seek to correct their perceptions of their employees. This study concentrated on employees' attitudes regarding acquiring job growth within the company and whether that had any implication on their personal satisfaction with the company.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem of this study was to determine employees' attitudes at a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, Virginia, toward acquiring progressive employment opportunities within the organization and its relationship to employee satisfaction.

### **RESEARCH GOALS**

The completion of this study will answer the following goals:

1. What were employees' attitudes regarding progression within the company?
2. How did employees view personal satisfaction and potential retention in regard to employment opportunities within the company?
3. Did management's attitude affect the employee toward forward progression within the company?
4. How could management improve employees' attitudes regarding employment opportunities within the company?

## **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

As employees leave their companies to pursue other opportunities, they are usually greeted by an exit interview. Unfortunately, most employees do not report the true reason for leaving the company as they do not want to leave a bad impression (Branham, 2005). In fact, there are many articles displaying the proper way to exit a company which contradicts the purpose of the exit interview in the first place. One such article describes ways to redirect questions that may result in an answer that is too negative (Villano, 2005).

Another issue that companies are facing is brain drain. These types of turnover experiences are irreplaceable when employees leave the company. The Florida University State School System is attempting to combat this. The university system has increased its faculty salary by \$65.4 million in an effort to retain their top staff for the 2009-2010 school year (Winchester, 2008). Just recently, the University of South Florida lost renowned robotics instructor Robin Murphy to Texas A&M (Winchester, 2008). One could question if the salary increase could have been avoided if employees would have felt personally satisfied?

Katcher (2007) speaks of an example of his friend that owns a small dealership, yet, rarely loses employees with an average tenure of 15 years. Katcher (2007) states that this is due to his friend engaging his employees by making them feel valued, providing opportunities for the employees, regardless of the economy, and caring about the general well being of his employees.

Unfortunately, many companies do not understand that the exit interview does not always translate to the real reason the employee left the company. If companies explored possible turnover reasons and created solutions to those problems, it could save billions of dollars every year. This study explored a possible disengagement issue to understand employees' satisfaction in relation to their progressive job opportunities at a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, VA.

### **LIMITATIONS**

The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. Only employees at a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, VA, were surveyed.
2. The evaluation was limited to employees' attitudes toward progressive employment opportunities.
3. The sample was limited to 66 employees that have worked at the retail corporation corporate headquarters in the merchandise department for at least 18 months.

### **ASSUMPTIONS**

The following assumptions guided this study:

1. There were employment advancement opportunities available at a retail corporation corporate headquarters.
2. There were motivated employees working at a retail corporation corporate headquarters willing to progress further in their careers at a retail corporation corporate headquarters.

3. Employees that foresaw advancement at the retail corporation corporate headquarters were more easily retained than those that did not foresee advancement.
4. Managers played a significant role in whether an employee was prepared or unprepared for a progressive job opportunity.

### **PROCEDURES**

The total population for this study was 80 employees from the merchandise department. These employees have been at a retail corporation corporate headquarters for at least 18 months, are either male or female, and are between the ages of 18-65. The survey was composed of questions regarding attitudes about the Retail corporation corporate headquarters general practices, attitudes regarding their opportunities for advancement, attitudes regarding retention, and attitudes regarding their managers. The surveys were then analyzed for their data and the results were tabulated.

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following definitions should be applied when reading this research paper.

**Brain Drain** – Irreplaceable and extremely qualified employees leaving a company.

**Disengaged Employees** – Employees that have become uncommitted, marginally productive, frequently absent, or working against the interests of the company (Branham, 2005).

**retail corporation corporate headquarters** – The generic name for the retailer that is being studied.

**Forward Progression** – Advanced movement in a company, could be compared to promotion.

**Employee Retention** – The length of time that an employee stays with a company.

**Employment Opportunities** – Careers or jobs that an employee may be qualified for, usually a lateral or progressive movement from the employee's current position.

**Employment History** – The historical work data of an employee.

**Management** – Senior level employees, usually with direct reports.

**Turnover** – the number of people management hired within a period to replace those leaving or dropped from a workforce (Merriam-Webster.com, n.d.).

## **OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter I reviewed the details of the problem which was to determine employees' attitudes at a retail corporation corporate headquarters, in Chesapeake, Virginia, toward acquiring progressive employment opportunities within the organization and its relationship to employee satisfaction. With this knowledge, the researcher determined employees who were personally satisfied and those not personally satisfied with the way that a retail corporation corporate headquarters management handles progressive employment opportunities. The level of retention was also reviewed along with ways that management could improve employees' attitudes.

A review of literature comprises Chapter II. It presented information regarding psychological levels of employees, causes of turnover, and ways to improve employee morale. Chapter III presented the methods and procedures used by the researcher to gather the data. These data were used to determine the amount of satisfied vs. dis-satisfied employees regarding internal employment opportunities. Chapter IV described the results of the study. It reports the results of the questionnaire. Chapter V summarized the study and made recommendations for future uses.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This research study had multiple goals. They included exploring employees' attitudes regarding progression within the company, discovering how employees felt regarding personal satisfaction and potential retention in regard to employment opportunities within the company, discussing how management's attitudes affect an employees' progressing forward in the company, and reviewing how management could improve employees' attitudes regarding employment opportunities within the company. This study was important because it explored the sensitive topic of the lack of employee retention that is costly to thousands of companies. Employees typically do not express their true reasons for turnover or disengagement from a company. This study provides an outlet for the employee to do so without any repercussions from the company.

To understand these goals, materials was analyzed and reported that included the employee psyche in regards to progressive movement within a company, how employee morale affected a company, and further explained employee turnover that led to work outside the company.

### **PROMOTION**

Many Americans have experienced waiting on a position to open at their current employer. The opportunity for additional responsibility, money, and status, thrilled and encouraged many to be the most productive at their job that they could be (Katcher, 2007).

The ability to move in forward progression is so important to employees, that a survey by Towers-Perrin stated that 85 percent of employees rank career advancement as a career reward, yet only 49 percent said that their company provided it (Branham, 2005). The Conference Board, another organization that conducted research, showed that limited career opportunities account for 59 percent of overall employee dissatisfaction (Branham, 2005).

When employees are disappointed with the promotion ability in their company, it tended to fall into six categories. Those included not promoting from within, favoritism, disorganized job posting process, inefficient training, and other (Branham, 2005). Some signs of frustration among employees were the constant act of applying for positions outside the department that the employee may not be qualified for, constantly asking for new challenges, or the employee seemingly bored or under challenged (Branham, 2005).

Unfortunately, the problem of promotion ability is compounded on the company side. Companies are offered less opportunities for employees to be promoted. This was due to companies contracting out jobs, instead of expanding, mergers and acquisitions that led to downsizing, organizations becoming flatter, and baby boomers working longer in management positions which disallowed younger employees to move forward (Katcher, 2007).

There is a way for employers to combat this. It is by making a shared responsibility for the employee, manager, and company to ensure that employees' have career growth. The expectations and responsibilities become unbalanced when employees expected the organization to create their own



career path, when a manager did not discuss career plans with a direct report, or when the company did not provide the necessary training to help the employee grow.

Branham (2005) speaks of Lands' End which developed an online self-service career development and learning management system called PeopleComeFirst for all 8,000 employees. This system allows the employee to create a career development plan that was available online for revision and reference. Twice a year employees met with their managers to speak about their development plans and discuss training and career growth.

### **EMPLOYEE'S AFFECT OF COMPANY MORALE**

Employee morale is extremely important in relation to how the employee performed and the effect that the employee can have on others around them. Morale can tend to take on a group think characteristic. When one person feels misused and decides to share that information with others, it could make the other people begin to question their morale with the company. If the morale in a group declines significantly, it could affect the company.

For example, Tenneco, an auto-parts manufacturer, had low company morale in 1999 (Washkuch, 2008). In fact, less than 40% of their worldwide employees had trust and confidence in senior management strategy which led to high turnover. The company dramatically changed its vision with a new management team and a new communications focus. The company became extremely candid with the employees, reporting the good, and bad, and

employees felt that they can trust the company. As of the article's date, 80% of the employees feel that the company is on the right track (Washkuch, 2008).

Branham (2005) mentions that mistrust, being underpaid for a job, or non-performers that received bonuses like performers contribute to morale issues. Continued negative morale is a definite factor to disengagement.

## **TURNOVER**

According to Branham (2005) a shocking event, such as being passed over for a promotion by someone less qualified, can be the turning point that can lead to turnover. Sixty-three percent of voluntary turnovers are precipitated by an event instead of the common misconception that people leave due to pay related issues (Branham, 2005). Disengagement that leads to turnover takes days, weeks, months, or years (Branham, 2005). Figure 1 (Branham, 2005) shows that there are several steps that an employee takes from engagement to departure.

In Figure 1, the employee is initially engaged by starting the new job with enthusiasm and then later when faced with disengagement, decides to physically quit the company and leave, or mentally quit the company and stay. According to Branham (2005), this process did not first begin without a major stimulus, such as "being passed over for promotion, realizing the job is not as promised, learning they may be transferred, being asked to do something unethical, an incident in sexual harassment" (12-13), or even "a close colleague being fired" (12-13). Sometimes, employees leave due to reasons unrelated to their current job such as marriage, inheritance, pregnancy, or even paying off the mortgage.

### Thirteen steps in the engagement-to-departure process.

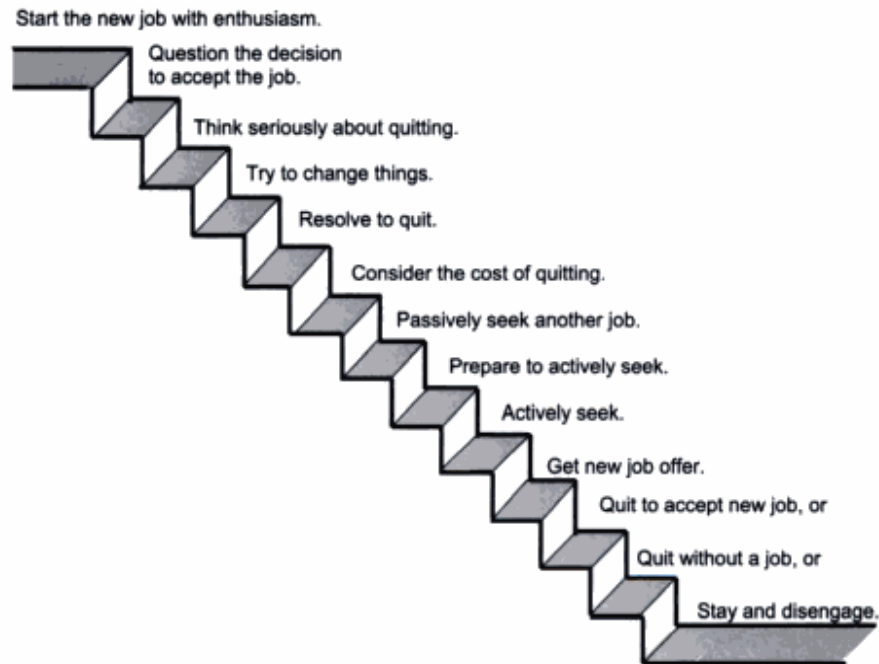


Figure 1. Thirteen Steps in the engagement-to-departure process. From *The Seven Hidden Reasons Employees Leave: How to Recognize the Subtle Signs and Act Before It's Too Late*, By Branham, 2005.

Yet, during the disengagement process a deliberation is used. It is usually during this time that two distinct time periods occur to the employee (Branham, 2005). The first time is the time period between when the employee had his/her first thoughts of quitting and the decision to decide to leave the company (Branham, 2005). Branham (2005) mentions an example of a man that was promoted without any mention of it to the other employees of the organization. The man felt slighted by the company and at that point began to first have thoughts regarding leaving the company. He then became extremely bitter when he asked for more responsibility and was denied. He felt that in the past he showed sacrifice, especially when he lived abroad for a year away from his family. It was at this point that he decided to leave. It is extremely important for

management to recognize the signs of an unhappy employee during this period because it is here that the employee could be reengaged and encouraged to stay on staff.

The second time in the deliberation process is the time between the employee deciding to leave and the actual event of leaving (Branham, 2005). Management has a much lower probability of revitalizing the employee because the employee has already mentally checked out from the current job.

Some preventive measures that management could do to alleviate the turnover is to first watch the warning signs. If the employee had not shown any form of emotion, a manager should sit with their direct report and ask the employee how they are doing or even open dialogue with the employee to reestablish rapport and reengage the employee (Branham, 2005).

Unfortunately, until employees and employers work together to resolve problematic situations, disengagement will continue to be a costly issue. It is not only on the employers to make changes, but the dialogue and action must also come from the employees so that employers know what to change or could at least explain the rationale behind certain actions.

## **SUMMARY**

Chapter II provided a Review of Literature exploring the employees' motivation for promotion, the effect of employee's morale to the company, and the turnover process. These topics were discussed to explain the importance of how the stimulus of an event can cause an employee to feel unappreciated.

The research in Chapter II served as the foundation to explain the goals in the study. Chapter III provided an explanation of the methods and procedures used to collect and evaluate the data regarding employees' attitudes at a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, Virginia, toward acquiring progressive employment opportunities within the organization and its relationship to employee satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

This chapter describes the methods and procedures used to collect and analyze the data from a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, Virginia. The population, instrument design, data collection, and statistical analysis are also described and included so that the audience understood the parameters of the study. The information was imperative in conducting the study and ensuring valid results.

#### **POPULATION**

This study encompassed a population of eighty employees at a retail corporation corporate headquarters. A sample of sixty-six employees out of this group was used for the survey. All of these employees worked in the Merchandise Department and have been working there for at least eighteen months. The population includes male and female, and the age ranged from 18-65.

#### **INSTRUMENT DESIGN**

A survey was used to gather the data for the research. The survey questions identified employees' attitudes and perceptions regarding progressive movement. A Likert survey was used as the attitudinal measuring technique. The survey included closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. The closed-ended questions that were asked have five options for each question, strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The open-ended question asked for any additional comments that the participant would like to make. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

The survey was hand delivered to each employee at the corporation. With each survey was a copy of the cover letter, see Appendix B. The cover letter provided directions to complete and return the survey. The participants were notified that all answers were strictly confidential. The completed surveys were used by the researcher to compile the data for analysis.

### **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The responses to the survey questions were analyzed and tabulated to determine the attitudes of the employees at a retail corporation corporate headquarters. Using the Likert Scale, the answer from each question was analyzed and the results were tabulated. A number, frequency, and mean were calculated by attaching a value to the different responses.

### **SUMMARY**

Chapter III explained the methods and procedures used to determine the attitudes of employees at a retail corporation corporate headquarters regarding progressive movement. The method used to collect the data was the Likert scale. Various statistical methods were used to understand the responses to the surveys. Along with instrument design and data collection, population, and statistical analyses were also discussed. Chapter IV will present the analysis of the data and the findings.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This chapter explains the findings that resulted from the research. It presents the statistical results of the survey determining employees' attitudes at a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, Virginia, toward acquiring progressive employment opportunities within the organization and its relationship to employee satisfaction. The survey data that is reported is the mean. The frequency of the survey questions is also presented and is analyzed on a percentile basis.

#### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

The population size was 80 employees at a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, VA. This population included male and female whom have been working at a retail corporation corporate headquarters for at least 18 months and were between the ages of 18-65. From this population, a sample size of 66 was used. Of the sample size, 54 people responded giving an 82 percent response rate. See Table 1 for response rate.

Table 1

#### Response Rate

<b>Number of Surveys</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Completed Surveys</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>82%</b>



## RESULTS

There are four groups that the survey questions are divided: Employee Morale, Retention, The Role of Management, and Management Improvement. The survey had 24 closed-ended questions that required one answer each and one open-ended question. Each survey question response is discussed as follows.

### EMPLOYEE MORALE

#### **Question 1: I feel that I am an important part of this organization.**

Fifteen percent (8) of the participants strongly agreed that they were an important part of the organization; 52 percent (28) agreed, 15 percent (8) neither agreed nor disagreed; 0 percent (0) disagreed; and 15 percent (8) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean score for this question was 3.41. This indicates that the average response felt that they were undecided regarding feeling important to the organization.

#### **Question 2: I clearly understand my job duties and my role within this organization.**

Twenty-two percent (12) strongly agreed that they understood their job duties and role within the organization; 63 percent (34) agreed; 0 percent (0) neither agreed nor disagreed; 7 percent (4) strongly disagreed; and 4 percent (2) disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean score for this question was 3.81. This indicates that the average response agreed that their job duties and role within the organization was clear.

**Question 3: I know that my skills and talents are recognized and appreciated.**

Zero percent (0) strongly agreed; 56 percent (30) agreed; 22 percent (12) neither agreed nor disagreed; 11 percent (6) disagreed; and 11 percent (6) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 3.22. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that their skills and talents are recognized and appreciated.

**Question 4: I feel free to express my opinion to coworkers and management.**

Four percent (2) strongly agreed with this statement; 52 percent (28) agreed; 4 percent (2) neither agreed nor disagreed; 33 percent (18) disagreed; and 7 percent (4) strongly disagreed. The mean for the question was 3.11 indicating that the average response was neither agree or disagree.

**Question 5: I look forward to coming to work.**

Four percent (2) strongly agreed; 37 percent (20) agreed; 30 percent (16) neither agreed nor disagreed; 15 percent (8) disagreed; and 15 percent (8) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 3.00. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they look forward to coming to work.

**Question 6: I am provided opportunities for training and cross-training.**

Four percent (2) strongly agreed with this statement; 63 percent (34) agreed; 15 percent (8) neither agreed nor disagreed; 11 percent (6) disagreed;

and 7 percent (4) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 3.44. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they are provided opportunities for training and cross-training.

**Question 7: I am involved in decisions at work that affect me.**

Four percent (2) strongly agreed; 33 percent (18) agreed; 11 percent (6) neither agreed nor disagreed; 37 percent (20) disagreed; and 15 percent (8) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 2.74. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they are involved in decisions at work that affect them.

**Question 8: I am satisfied with my salary and benefits at this organization.**

Zero percent (0) strongly agreed with this question; 48 percent (26) agreed; 19 percent (10) neither agreed nor disagreed; 15 percent (8) disagreed; and 19 percent (10) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 2.96. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they are satisfied with their salary and benefits.

**Question 9: I am satisfied with my assessment rewards on a yearly basis.**

Zero percent (0) strongly agreed; 44 percent (24) agreed; 15 percent (8) neither agreed nor disagreed; 22 percent (12) disagreed; and 19 percent (10) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 2.85. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they are satisfied with their assessment rewards on a yearly basis.

## RETENTION

**Question 10: There are opportunities for advancement at this corporation.**

Seven percent (4) strongly agreed; 30 percent (16) agreed; 15 percent (8) neither agreed nor disagreed; 30 percent (16) disagreed; and 19 percent (10) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 2.78. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that there are opportunities for advancement at the corporation.

**Question 11: Advancement from within the organization is encouraged.**

Seven percent (4) strongly agreed; 22 percent (12) agreed; 26 percent (14) neither agreed nor disagreed; 30 percent (16) disagreed; and 15 percent (8) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 2.78. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that advancement from within the organization is encouraged.

**Question 12: I feel that I am qualified to be promoted for an advanced position at this company or another company.**

Thirty-seven percent (20) strongly agreed; 37 percent (20) agreed; 22 percent (12) neither agreed nor disagreed; 4 percent (2) disagreed; and 0 percent (0) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 4.07. This shows that the average response agreed that they feel qualified to be promoted for an advanced position at this company or another company.

**Question 13: I feel that those promoted within the organization deserved those promotions.**

Zero percent (0) strongly agreed with this statement; 44 percent (24) agreed; 37 percent (20) neither agreed nor disagreed; 19 percent (10) disagreed; and 0 percent (0) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 3.26. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that those promoted within the organization deserved those promotions.

**Question 14: I plan to still be working here in two years.**

Fifteen percent (8) strongly agreed; 37 percent (20) agreed; 22 percent (12) neither agreed nor disagreed; 19 percent (10) disagreed; and 7 percent (4) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 3.33. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they plan to be working at the organization in two years.

**Question 15: I plan to still be working here in five years.**

Seven percent (4) strongly agreed; 26 percent (14) agreed; 26 percent (14) neither agreed nor disagreed; 19 percent (10) disagreed; and 22 percent (12) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 2.78. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they plan to be working for the company in five years.

## THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT

**Question 16: There is consistent feedback from managers about job performance.**

Zero percent (0) strongly agreed; 33 percent (18) agreed; 15 percent (8) neither agreed nor disagreed; 41 percent (22) disagreed; and 7 percent (4) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean for this question was 2.67. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that there is consistent feedback from managers about job performance.

**Question 17: Management communicates clear expectations to all employees.**

Four percent (2) strongly agreed; 30 percent (16) agreed; 15 percent (8) neither agreed nor disagreed; 33 percent (18) disagreed; and 15 percent (8) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean for this question was 2.63. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that management communicates clear expectations to all employees.

**Question 18: My manager is taking an active role in preparing me for advancement.**

Four percent (2) strongly agreed; 37 percent (20) agreed; 19 percent (10) neither agreed nor disagreed; 15 percent (8) disagreed; and 22 percent (12) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean for this question was 2.74. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor

disagreed that they feel that their manager is taking an active role in preparing them for advancement.

**Question 19: Management offers challenges and opportunities for professional growth.**

Zero percent (0) strongly agreed; 30 percent (16) agreed; 11 percent (6) neither agreed nor disagreed; 37 percent (20) disagreed; and 19 percent (10) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean for this question was 2.44. This shows that the average response disagreed that they plan to be working that management offers challenges and opportunities for professional growth.

**Question 20: I feel that my managers want me to succeed and advance.**

Four percent (2) strongly agreed; 44 percent (24) agreed; 30 percent (16) neither agreed nor disagreed; 11 percent (6) disagreed; and 7 percent (4) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean for this question was 3.15. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they feel that their managers want them to succeed and advance.

**Question 21: I trust that my manager has my best interest at heart.**

Seven percent (4) strongly agreed; 44 percent (24) agreed; 26 percent (14) neither agreed nor disagreed; 7 percent (4) disagreed; and 11 percent (6) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean for this question was 3.19. This shows that the average response neither agreed nor disagreed that they feel that their manager has their best interest at heart.

## **MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT**

### **Question 22: Training methods need to be improved by management.**

Thirty percent (16) strongly agreed; 30 percent (16) agreed; 26 percent (14) neither agreed nor disagreed; 7 percent (4) disagreed; and 4 percent (2) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean for this question was 3.63. This shows that the average response agreed that training methods need to be improved by management.

### **Question 23: Management needs to communicate advancement opportunities better.**

Forty-eight percent (26) strongly agreed; 30 percent (16) agreed; 11 percent (6) neither agreed nor disagreed; 7 percent (4) disagreed; and 0 percent (0) strongly disagreed. Four percent (2) did not answer the question. The mean for this question was 4.07. This shows that the average response agreed that management needs to communicate advancement opportunities better.

### **Question 24: Obtaining information from Human Resources can be improved.**

Forty-eight percent (26) strongly agreed; 30 percent (16) agreed; 15 percent (8) neither agreed nor disagreed; 4 percent (2) disagreed; and 0 percent (0) strongly disagreed. The mean for this question was 4.11. This shows that the average response agreed that the Human Resources department can improve upon giving information.

### **Question 25: Please list your feelings regarding advancement opportunities at your company.**



The answers given were reported as follows:

1. With all the downsizing, there is less of a pyramid-less jobs to be promoted into-nothing between VP and manager. They also don't post all the jobs they create, so you don't even know when to apply.
2. They [the company] almost always hire from outside.
3. I don't feel that my immediate supervisor stands in the way of my advancement. I believe her hands are tied and the roadblocks come from a much higher level.
4. At this company, the only way to advance is to leave, or know somebody of importance.
5. I am in a unique position that doesn't have much opportunity for advancement, but I am relatively content with my job. Some of my co-workers, however, have been repeatedly passed-over for advancement when they are more qualified than the person that was hired. Others have been promoted when it was well-deserved.
6. I feel there is a lot of opportunity here from within the company and outside.
7. The opportunity for advancement sometimes depends on your current position. Certain departments have more room for advancement.
8. Bias
9. There are always new positions available in many departments. I feel I will change my position within the upcoming year.

See Table 2 for the results of the Progressive Career Movement Survey.

**Table 2**  
**Progressive Career Movement Survey**

Raw Score, Mean, and Percentage of Responses for each question.							
Likert Score	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	
Numbers	5	4	3	2	1	0	
<b>EMPLOYEE MORALE</b>							
<b>Question 1</b>							
<b>I feel that I am an important part of this organization.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	8	28	8	0	8	2	54
Percentage	15%	52%	15%	0%	15%	4%	100%
Likert Score	40	112	24	0	8	0	184
Mean Score							3.41
<b>Question 2</b>							
<b>I clearly understand my job duties and my role within this organization.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	12	34	0	4	2	2	54
Percentage	22%	63%	0%	7%	4%	4%	100%
Likert Score	60	136	0	8	2	0	206
Mean Score							3.81
<b>Question 3</b>							
<b>I know that my skills and talents are recognized and appreciated.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	0	30	12	6	6	0	54
Percentage	0%	56%	22%	11%	11%	0%	100%
Likert Score	0	120	36	12	6	0	174
Mean Score							3.22
<b>Question 4</b>							
<b>I feel free to express my opinion to coworkers and management.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	2	28	2	18	4	0	54
Percentage	4%	52%	4%	33%	7%	0%	100%
Likert Score	10	112	6	36	4	0	168
Mean Score							3.11
<b>Question 5</b>							
<b>I look forward to coming to work.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	2	20	16	8	8	0	54
Percentage	4%	37%	30%	15%	15%	0%	100%
Likert Score	10	80	48	16	8	0	162
Mean Score							3.00

<b>Question 6</b>							
<b>I am provided opportunities for training and cross-training.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	2	34	8	6	4	0	54
Percentage	4%	63%	15%	11%	7%	0%	100%
Likert Score	10	136	24	12	4	0	186
Mean Score							3.44
<b>Question 7</b>							
<b>I am involved in decisions at work that affect me.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	2	18	6	20	8	0	54
Percentage	4%	33%	11%	37%	15%	0%	100%
Likert Score	10	72	18	40	8	0	148
Mean Score							2.74
<b>Question 8</b>							
<b>I am satisfied with my salary and benefits at this organization.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	0	26	10	8	10	0	54
Percentage	0%	48%	19%	15%	19%	0%	100%
Likert Score	0	104	30	16	10	0	160
Mean Score							2.96
<b>Question 9</b>							
<b>I am satisfied with my assessment rewards on a yearly basis.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	0	24	8	12	10	0	54
Percentage	0%	44%	15%	22%	19%	0%	100%
Likert Score	0	96	24	24	10	0	154
Mean Score							2.85
<b>RETENTION</b>							
<b>Question 10</b>							
<b>There are opportunities for advancement at this corporation.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	4	16	8	16	10	0	54
Percentage	7%	30%	15%	30%	19%	0%	100%
Likert Score	20	64	24	32	10	0	150
Mean Score							2.78
<b>Question 11</b>							
<b>Advancement from within the organization is encouraged.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	4	12	14	16	8	0	54

Percentage	7%	22%	26%	30%	15%	0%	100%
Likert Score	20	48	42	32	8	0	150
Mean Score							2.78
<b>Question 12</b>							
<b>I feel that I am qualified to be promoted for an advanced position at this company or another company.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	20	20	12	2	0	0	54
Percentage	37%	37%	22%	4%	0%	0%	100%
Likert Score	100	80	36	4	0	0	220
Mean Score							4.07
<b>Question 13</b>							
<b>I feel that those promoted within the organization deserved those promotions.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	0	24	20	10	0	0	54
Percentage	0%	44%	37%	19%	0%	0%	100%
Likert Score	0	96	60	20	0	0	176
Mean Score							3.26
<b>Question 14</b>							
<b>I plan to still be working here in two years.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	8	20	12	10	4	0	54
Percentage	15%	37%	22%	19%	7%	0%	100%
Likert Score	40	80	36	20	4	0	180
Mean Score							3.33
<b>Question 15</b>							
<b>I plan to still be working here in five years.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	4	14	14	10	12	0	54
Percentage	7%	26%	26%	19%	22%	0%	100%
Likert Score	20	56	42	20	12	0	150
Mean Score							2.78
<b>THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT</b>							
<b>Question 16</b>							
<b>There is consistent feedback from managers about job performance.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	0	18	8	22	4	2	54
Percentage	0%	33%	15%	41%	7%	4%	100%
Likert Score	0	72	24	44	4	0	144
Mean Score							2.67
<b>Question 17</b>							
<b>Management communicates clear expectations to all employees.</b>							

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	2	16	8	18	8	2	54
Percentage	4%	30%	15%	33%	15%	4%	100%
Likert Score	10	64	24	36	8	0	142
Mean Score							2.63
<b>Question 18</b>							
<b>My manager is taking an active role in preparing me for advancement.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	2	20	10	8	12	2	54
Percentage	4%	37%	19%	15%	22%	4%	100%
Likert Score	10	80	30	16	12	0	148
Mean Score							2.74
<b>Question 19</b>							
<b>Management offers challenges and opportunities for professional growth.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	0	16	6	20	10	2	54
Percentage	0%	30%	11%	37%	19%	4%	100%
Likert Score	0	64	18	40	10	0	132
Mean Score							2.44
<b>Question 20</b>							
<b>I feel that my managers want me to succeed and advance.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	2	24	16	6	4	2	54
Percentage	4%	44%	30%	11%	7%	4%	100%
Likert Score	10	96	48	12	4	0	170
Mean Score							3.15
<b>Question 21</b>							
<b>I trust that my manager has my best interest at heart.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	4	24	14	4	6	2	54
Percentage	7%	44%	26%	7%	11%	4%	100%
Likert Score	20	96	42	8	6	0	172
Mean Score							3.19
<b>MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT</b>							
<b>Question 22</b>							
<b>Training methods need to be improved by management.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	16	16	14	4	2	2	54
Percentage	30%	30%	26%	7%	4%	4%	100%
Likert Score	80	64	42	8	2	0	196

Mean Score							3.63
<b>Question 23</b>							
<b>Management needs to communicate advancement opportunities better.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	26	16	6	4	0	2	54
Percentage	48%	30%	11%	7%	0%	4%	100%
Likert Score	130	64	18	8	0	0	220
Mean Score							4.07
<b>Question 24</b>							
<b>Obtaining information from Human Resources can be improved.</b>							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered	Totals
Raw Score	26	16	8	2	0	2	54
Percentage	48%	30%	15%	4%	0%	4%	100%
Likert Score	130	64	24	4	0	0	222
Mean Score							4.11

## SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of employees' attitudes at a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, Virginia, toward acquiring progressive employment opportunities within the organization and its relationship to employee satisfaction. This was accomplished through a confidential survey. The results of the survey were presented and the mean was tabulated using the Likert Scale. The results of the open-ended question asking employees to list their feelings regarding advancement opportunities at the company were listed. The findings were used to determine the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter will summarize the research study. Conclusions from the findings will be drawn to answer the research goals. Recommendations for future studies will then be provided.

#### **SUMMARY**

The problem of this study was to determine employees' attitudes at a retail corporation corporate headquarters in Chesapeake, Virginia, toward acquiring progressive employment opportunities within the organization and its relationship to employee satisfaction. Research goals were created to answer this problem.

They included:

1. What were employees' attitudes regarding progression within the company?
2. How did employees view personal satisfaction and potential retention in regard to employment opportunities within the company?
3. Did management's attitude affect the employee toward forward progression within the company?
4. How could management improve employees' attitudes regarding employment opportunities within the company?

The limiting factors of this study included that only employees at a retail corporation corporate headquarters were surveyed, the evaluation was limited to employees' attitudes toward progressive employment opportunities, and the sample was limited to 66 employees that have worked at a retail corporation

corporate headquarters in the merchandise department for at least 18 months. The study assumed that there was employment advancement opportunities available at a retail corporation corporate headquarters, there were motivated employees working at a retail corporation corporate headquarters willing to progress further in their careers at a retail corporation corporate headquarters. Employees that foresaw advancement at a retail corporation corporate headquarters were more easily retained than those that did not foresee advancement, and managers played a significant role in whether an employee was prepared or unprepared for a progressive job opportunity. Data were then collected from the employees with 54 surveys received at an 82% response rate at a retail corporation corporate headquarters, Inc and the frequency and mean were tabulated.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions were derived based on the research study and its goals.

### **Goal 1: What were employees' attitudes regarding progression within the company?**

Survey Questions 10-13 from the Retention Section addressed employees' attitudes regarding progression within the company. As indicated with a mean of 4.07 to Question 12, most employees agreed that they were qualified to be promoted for an advanced position within the company or externally. Yet, there were low mean scores of neither agree nor disagree answers at 2.78 to questions 10 and 11 regarding opportunities presented at A



retail corporation corporate headquarters and the question regarding if advancement from within the organization is encouraged, and a high mean score of Question 13 of neither agree nor disagree at 3.26 of employees feeling that those promoted deserved those promotions. This could mean that most of the respondents felt qualified to be promoted to the next level, but the attitude regarding promotion may vary by sub-department within the total Merchandise Department.

For example, in Question 10, if one looks at the frequencies of the answers, 20 (37%) people strongly agreed or agreed and 26 (48%) people strongly disagreed or disagreed with only eight people in the neither category. So, it is not that the overall department has a lack of opinion to questions 10, 11, and 13, but, that the department opinions vary by subset. Questions 11 and 13 prove the same results. Question 11 has 16 (30%) people strongly agree or agree that advancement within the organization is encouraged, while 24 (44%) people strongly disagree or disagree. There were only 14 (26%) people neither agreed nor disagreed. Question 13 show that most employees agreed, 24 people (44%), that those promoted within deserved those promotions. While only 10 (19%) people disagreed and 20 (37%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

These differences were also reflected in the open-ended question. There were clear opinions on most of the open-ended comments addressing the attitudes regarding progression. For example, there is a comment stating that "There are always new positions available in many departments. I feel I will change my position within the upcoming year." This comment is in stark contrast

to the comment, “At this company, the only way to advance is to leave or know somebody of importance.”

**Goal 2: How did employees view personal satisfaction and potential retention in regard to employment opportunities within the company?**

Questions 1-9 in the Employee Morale section and 14 and 15 from the Retention Section addressed this goal. All of the scores to the questions with the exception of Question 2 provided a mean of neither disagree or agree. The mean for Question 2 at 3.81 indicates that employees can agree that they clearly understand their job duties and role within the organization.

Even though the mean for the other questions fall into the neither agree nor disagree category, the spread of the scores vary much like in Goal 1. For example, Question 1 showed that 36 (66%) people strongly agreed or agreed that they feel that they are an important part of the organization. So, even though the mean showed 3.41 which is neither agree nor disagree, most of the respondents felt important to the company in some capacity. Over half of the respondents at 30 (56%) people agreed to Question 3 that they felt that their skills and talents were recognized and appreciated despite the mean score of 3.22.

Another example of this is under the Retention Section, Question 15 displays close to half of the respondents, 26 (48%) people disagreed or strongly disagreeing to staying with the company five years from now. This is significant because even though the mean showed that there is no opinion in relation to the

question, when one looks closer at the numbers, close to half of the people surveyed intended on leaving the company in the next five years.

Overall, the mean regarding the questions for the goals with the exception of Question 2 fell into the neither agree nor disagree category, but the spread of the responses fell into multiple categories. Those questions and means included that employees neither disagreed nor agreed to expressing their opinion to co-workers and management (3.11), that employees look forward to coming to work (3.00), that opportunities are provided for training and cross-training (3.44), and regarding decisions at work that affect the respondent (2.74). Other questions receiving the neither disagreed nor agreed mean consisted of the statement that employees were satisfied with their salary and benefits at this organization (2.96), that employees are satisfied with the rewards on a yearly basis (2.85), and that employees intend to continue to work at the corporation in two years (3.33).

**Goal 3: Did management's attitude affect the employee toward forward progression within the company?**

Questions 16-21 addressed this particular goal. Once again, most of the means had a neither agree nor disagree response with the exception of Question 19. In Question 19, the mean of 2.44 indicates that most respondents disagree with the statement that management offers challenges and opportunities for professional growth. As indicated by one of the comments, "I don't feel that my immediate supervisor stands in the way of my advancement. I believe her hands are tied and the roadblocks come from a much higher level. This comment shows

that employees feel that some form of management does affect the employee receiving additional opportunities for professional growth.

Questions 16-18 and 20 and 21 all have means that fall into the neither agree nor disagree category, but when the question is looked at on a deeper level, the scores vary greatly. In Question 16, most of the respondents, 26 (48%) people either disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was consistent feedback from managers about job performance. While on the other hand, most respondents, 26 people (48%), did agree or strongly agreed that their manager wanted them to succeed and advance. This is another goal that has varying answers once the researcher looks past the mean.

**Goal 4: How could management improve employees' attitudes regarding employment opportunities within the company?**

Questions 22-24 addressed this goal. All of the questions provided a mean that they agreed with the statements. Question 22 has a mean of 3.63 indicating that on average, the respondents felt that managers need to improve training methods. Question 23 has a mean of 4.07 indicating that on average, the respondents agreed that management needs to communicate advancement opportunities better. Question 24 has a mean of 4.11 indicating that on average, the respondents felt that Human Resources need to improve delivering information to employees. There were comments made about the inefficiency of receiving information from Human Resources and Management. Comments included, "With all the downsizing, there is less of a pyramid-less jobs to be promoted into-nothing between VP and manager. They also don't post all the

jobs they create, so you don't even know when to apply," and, "They [the company] almost always hire from the outside."

This is important, because this mean that collectively, the group all has the same opinion regarding improvements that management can make. These opinions are not segregated by sub-department, and that overall the respondents from the Merchandise department feels that management needs to improve training and communication for the employee to change their opinion.

In conclusion, most of the responses showed a mean of neither agree nor disagree. This could be the case because there was an even distribution on the Likert Scale.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Management should implement additional training methods for employees. Possibly sitting or talking with employees to understand the deficiencies of the group or even extending additional cross training to employees so that they can continue to be developed and challenged. This may also help employees feel well prepared when an opportunity for career movement is presented.
2. Management needs to communicate potential opportunities better. One of the comments mentioned that some jobs are filled without even being posted or that the company continues to hire from outside the company.

3. Human Resources should improve the way they communicate job information and employment opportunities to the employees of a retail corporation corporate headquarters. This could occur through monthly notification sent via email, in-house job postings, job descriptions, and salary information if available.
4. Finally, additional research needs to follow-up on the findings of this study. It appears that the study analyzed too many employees and that turnover and retention can vary greatly by sub-department. The next study should have a defined focus, possibly analyzing groups under Vice Presidents of the department instead of by a department of the company. Also, research can be conducted on the attitudes that management has toward their employees regarding their advancement. It is possible that management may think that the employees do not speak up enough about their happiness or lack thereof at the company.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A

Research Survey

Appendix B

Cover Letter for Survey



## APPENDIX A

### Employee Survey

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey. Your survey responses are strictly confidential and are anonymous. There are five options to choose from, Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither (Neither Agree or Disagree), Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Please pick the one that best suits you.

#### EMPLOYEE MORALE

I feel that I am an important part of this organization.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I clearly understand my job duties and my role within this organization.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I know that my skills and talents are recognized and appreciated.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I feel free to express my opinion to coworkers and management.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I look forward to coming to work.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I am provided opportunities for training and cross-training.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I am involved in decisions at work that affect me.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I am satisfied with my salary and benefits at this organization.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I am satisfied with my assessment rewards on a yearly basis.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

#### RETENTION

There are opportunities for advancement at this corporation.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Advancement from within the organization is encouraged.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I feel that I am qualified to be promoted for an advanced position at this company or another company.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I feel that those promoted within the organization deserved those promotions.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I plan to still be working here in two years.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I plan to still be working here in five years.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT**

There is consistent feedback from managers about job performance.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Management communicates clear expectations to all employees.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

My manager is taking an active role in preparing me for advancement.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Management offers challenges and opportunities for professional growth.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I feel that my managers want me to succeed and advance.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

I trust that my manager has my best interest at heart.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT**

Training methods need to be improved by management.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Management needs to communicate advancement opportunities better.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Obtaining information from Human Resources can be improved.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neither      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Please list your feelings regarding advancement opportunities at your company.

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**Thank You for your participation in this survey.**

## APPENDIX B

Greetings!

You are invited to participate in a study. This study is being conducted by Kasana Carter of the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies at Old Dominion University in order to better understand Employees Attitudes towards Progressive Movement in a Company. This research will help companies better understand when employees leave a company because of the way a company markets advancement opportunities.

I would greatly appreciate your completing the enclosed survey and returning it to a specified area on my desk. Since the validity of the results depends on obtaining a high response rate, your participation is crucial to the success of this study. The survey will focus on employee and management's attitudes, employee satisfaction, and management's improvement areas. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Your return of the survey indicates your consent to participate in this study. Please be assured that your responses will be held in the strictest confidence, and is anonymous. As soon as I receive your completed survey, I will lock it in a safe place where it is password protected. All surveys will be on file until the study is completed, then they will be destroyed after the data are recorded. If the results of this study were to be written for publication, no identifying information will be used.

### **Contact information.**

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact the persons below:

Investigator  
Kasana Carter  
1316 Hardy Cash Dr  
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This study has been reviewed and approved by Old Dominion University- Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study please contact the Investigator or Advisor.

I hope that you will be able to participate in this study.

Sincerely,  
Kasana Carter