

THE IMPACT OF TRAINING EMPLOYEES OF A FORMAL WEAR
COMPANY IN THE SALE OF WEDDING STATIONERY

By

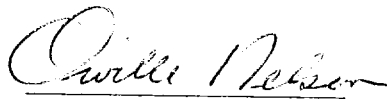
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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degreee
With a Major in

Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education

Approved: 2 Semester Credits


Investigation Advisor

The Graduate College
University of Wisconsin-Stout
August, 2000

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ABSTRACT

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THE IMPACT OF TRAINING EMPLOYEES OF A FORMAL WEAR
(Title)

COMPANY IN THE SALE OF WEDDING STATIONERY

<u>Vocational Education</u>	<u>Dr. Orville Nelson</u>	<u>08/00</u>	<u>47</u>
(Graduate Major)	(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)	(No. Of Pages)

American Psychological Association
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

A training program to resolve the problems experienced as employees of a purchased formal wear company were assimilated into the parent company was developed and followed to evaluate problems with orders, a training packet, and the training program itself. Informal interviews were conducted in order to obtain information on what was necessary to incorporate into the training program in order to facilitate the sale of wedding stationery. Previously, there was no formal training. The errors were tracked for a period of three months in order to target problem areas. The revenue generated was also tracked for the same time frame. Results were used to evaluate training effectiveness and to maintain and update the training program. The study itself was terminated after three months, but the training is an ongoing process due to the nature of employee turnover.

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CHAPTER ONE

Research Problem and Objectives

Introduction

Desmond's Formal Wear was founded in 1948 with the purchase of Howard's Mens Wear at 114 South 4th Street in Downtown LaCrosse, Wisconsin. John W. Desmond had returned from World War II and started as a bank clerk for State Bank of LaCrosse. With the help of his father, who was then the Treasurer of G. Heilman Brewery in LaCrosse, and along with a partner, he purchased Howard's when it became available. The partner was bought out within five years. The business name was then changed to Desmond's Mens Wear.

In the 1950's a tuxedo rental line was added to the business. Desmond's acted as an agent for Sherkow Formal Wear of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Delivery problems became a major issue. Desmond's decided in the late 1950's to purchase a few tuxes directly from the manufacturer in order to insure that orders would be filled even if delivery problems did not allow Sherkow's product to arrive in time. In order to cost justify the carrying of a complete size range in several colors, Desmond's sought out other stores in the immediate LaCrosse region to also use this stock to cover their shipping problems. This was the beginnings of Desmond's Formal Wear.

By 1969, the eldest son of John W. Joined the firm. John G. Desmond began to expand the "wholesale" nature of the business by seeking new clients to use the firm's tuxes. The evolution of this effort resulted in the company moving away from Sherkow's. By the end of the 1970's, the company had close to 900 clients. Its annual purchase of tuxes expanded many fold. Because UPS shipping network was also expanding rapidly during this

same period, the area being covered by Desmond's had grown to all of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and the Dakotas.

In 1974, the company expanded its retail presence by purchasing two stores from an operator in Minneapolis. By the end of the 1970's, the firm had six stores in the Twin Cities. The company was now firmly established in LaCrosse and the Twin Cities as a retailer of formal wear. The Twin Cities outlets were all small specialty stores of approximately 1,000 square feet doing only formal wear. The majority of these were located in regional malls. By the end of the 1970's, the company had established a production facility separate from its downtown store in a North LaCrosse industrial park and had appointed a manager of the Twin Cities operation separate from the LaCrosse store.

In 1981, John G. Desmond purchased individually Sherkow's Formal Wear of Milwaukee which had fallen on hard times. The firm had over 1,800 wholesale clients and eight retail stores in Milwaukee. Within the year, the plant operations were consolidated into the LaCrosse facility. Then in 1983, the firms were merged and the name changed to Desmond's Formal Wear. This established the company that operates to the present. Further minor acquisitions were made during the 1980's, but these only added store locations to the operation.

By the end of the 1980's, the firm was doing 52% of its business through the wholesale branch and 48% through its own stores. Most expansion was by the company establishing new store locations in major metro areas throughout the upper Midwest. The firm adopted a strategy of identifying all major regional malls in a community and then establishing a company owned store in that location. Kansas City and Des Moines were first, then Chicago, Then St. Louis and finally Omaha. By 1995, the firm had 55 stores in 10

states and 12 communities. It was becoming obvious that further growth sites were limited and the economies of scale to run the plant facility still needed more sites. The decision was made to identify an operation of significant mass and of a different geographic location to allow growth. This resulted in the purchase of Russell's Tuxedos of Toledo, Ohio at the end of October, 1997. Russell's was a 42 store operation with a production facility in Toledo.

The Russell's management did not have a cohesive philosophy as it related to the types and locations of stores. Some were mall located, but many were free standing. A free standing location changes the advertising and promotion requirements raising the cost of operation. Desmond's management decided to implement a long range plan which would result in the mall based store philosophy. It was also determined that as many as 11 stores should be closed as leases expire due to poor performance. Planning began almost from the beginning to relocate stores which were producing well, or had the resources to perform well, to malls.

To aid in revenue enhancement, the retail sales program used by Desmond's stores was introduced to the Russell's locations. Desmond's is an industry leader with approximately 20% of store revenue coming from retail sales and add on sales. The better companies in the industry are doing less than 12%. An important component of this revenue source for Desmond's is sales of wedding stationery by Carlson Craft.

Problem Statement

The problem of this study was to develop a training program to resolve the problems experienced as employees of a purchased company were assimilated into the parent company and evaluate its effectiveness.

Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. Identify problems experienced by employees transferring to the parent company.
2. Develop a training packet for individual employees who are hired Throughout the year.
3. Use immediate feedback to see if new information was obtained from Training session.
4. Use hands-on mock ordering during training to evaluate understanding Of pricing structure.
5. Develop a questionnaire to evaluate the training session after the Employees have begun selling the product.
6. Increase sales and decrease errors or reprints for both sides of the company.

Significance of the Study

The study was done in order to provide important information to upper management to determine what training was needed and the amount of time required to eliminate problems and assimilate the employees into Desmond's as well as to judge effectiveness of training as to whether or not to continue selling the wedding stationery products. This was important to judge cost effectiveness and to roughly measure how much time and effort was needed to successfully sell the products without taking away from the main focus of the business which is to sell and rent tuxedos and accessories.

Limitations

Due to the fact that only one company was the center of the study it has to be considered as a limitation. A second limitation is that the study dealt with stationery products only and the formal wear company was a dealer for only one printing company, Carlson Craft, a division of Taylor Corporation out of Mankato, Minnesota. One training packet was developed and distributed to every employee. Each employee was given the same questions, samples and processing procedures.

Assumptions

Because the formal wear company was a dealer for the stationery company the company had to offer what the stationery company delivers. By using catalogs it has to be assumed that the products were available and current. The study was not able to control the turnover of employees yet every employee had to deal with stationery sales. It was too difficult to factor an exact ratio between turnover and errors.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

In attempting the task of evaluating a program, the evaluator's judgment is very important. While some of the sociological and/or political ramifications and parallels are necessarily included in an evaluation, one's role as a diligent evaluator is to put aside emotions and personal opinions, or at the very least, put them at a professional arm's-length as researchers. Thus, as opposed to an Armageddon mindset, where one's humanity is the prime directive, in an assessment, a specific environment is the guide.

This said, environment could be anything from a Military evaluation on personal performance, an evaluation on the efficacy of newly proposed business on a small town's economic prosperity, or an evaluation on the survivability of an ecological niche with an introduction of new construction project, etc. To wit, in an evaluatory process, specificity is the overriding concern whereas generality is primary in an Armageddon-like scenario.

On a recent information junket to the Black River Falls, Wisconsin, Indian Mission, this author had a chance to gather some informal insights into the nature of the evaluation process. Some of the more prescient comments are paraphrased throughout this chapter to provide a more rounded gestalt of the evaluation and training process.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section I deals with the ADDIE and 4-step evaluatory models. Section II focuses on the evaluation from a human resources departmental perspective. Finally, Section III is concerned with the appropriateness of the concepts contained in the Chapter in relation to this study as a whole.

Training Models

A large portion of the research material for this Chapter is culled from the magazines Training and Training & Development. It would seem from these articles that the evolutionary process of evaluations has culminated in an approach that is dynamic and individual to the specific company culture concerned. A general evaluation model is used only as a guide, with concomitant specifics shaping the subject matter.

For instance, training of employees of a company is (hopefully) no longer subject to the following Dilbertism: “Dilbert’s boss would use the training department to hide funds that could be cut during the next budget adjustment. You can always cut training and be safe in assuming that direct negative impact will show up for a few months.” (Abernathy, 1999, p.19).

It is now realized, due in no small measure to the research and follow-up of training evaluations, that matters such as the soft data referred to above can have a value (monetary or otherwise) that is hard to pin down in dollars. Nevertheless, this worth can easily surpass that of hard data, such as equipment downtime or rework. The following table describes some of this hard and soft data with specific terms applicable to a corporation. Phillips makes a case for the value of both types of data.

Hard and Soft Data

According to Jack J. Phillips, founder of Performance Resources Organization, it’s useful to divide training results into two measurement camps--hard data and soft data. Hard data is the traditional messier of organizational performance, it’s objective, and it’s easy to measure and transfer to monetary values. Soft data, on the other hand, is typically the measure of soft skills such as communication. It is subjective and more difficult to measure and to transfer to monetary values.

Here are some examples of hard and soft data.

Hard Data	Soft Data	*frequency in using new skills
Output	Work Habits	
-units produced	*employee absenteeism	Development and Advancement
-items assembled or sold	*tardiness	
-forms processed	*visits to the dispensary	*number of promotions or pay increases
-tasks completed	*safety-rule violations	
Quality	Work Climate	*number of training programs attended
-scrap	*employee grievances	
-waste	*employee turnover	*requests for transfer
-rework	*discrimination charges	*performance appraisal ratings
-product defects or rejects	*job satisfaction	
Time	Attitudes	Initiative
-equipment downtime	*employee loyalty	*implementation of new ideas
-employee overtime	*employee's self-confidence	
-time to complete projects	*employees' perceptions of job responsibilities	
-training time	*perceived changes in performance	
Cost	New Skills	*successful completion of projects
-overhead	*decisions made	*number of employee suggestions
-variable	*problems solved	
-sales expenses	*conflicts avoided	(Abernathy, 1999, p.19)

Yet another example of soft data is provided by Menard Rave, tribe elder and executive in charge of security for the Black River Ho-Chunk Casino. "Respect for your elders is something that most of us have. From the little kids to my middle-aged sons, I only have to tell them to do something once, and they do it (1999)." This respect is evident in the company culture of the Ho-Chunk Nation. These Native American employees and executives bring their traditions to the workplace: an ethic of attention-to-detail and an impressive work attitude. Try to attach a dollar amount to this respect, and one will experience much difficulty. However, take a look at the profit prospectus of the Casino and there can be no doubt that this ethic is making the Ho-Chunk nation a great deal of profit.

Putting aside this hard and soft measurement problem for a moment, two models utilized in an evaluation process are now considered. Specifically, the ADDIE model and the 4-Level model, proposed in a 1959 paper by Donald Kirkpatrick will be reviewed.

The ADDIE model is an acronym for Analyze, Design, Develop, Instruct, and Evaluate. This linear approach to designing a training program is an 'old, assembly-line' approach and that 'just doesn't make it anymore' (Gayeski, 1998, p.36). The reason this rigid approach is no longer applicable to evaluations in today's marketplace is that sometimes it causes an evaluator to miss the forest for the trees, as it were. The evaluator or trainer may spend such an inordinate amount of time adhering to protocol, that he or she may do so at the cost of ignoring important feedback elements of training, e.g. levels of job satisfaction, or even differing amounts of comprehension among various student or trainees.

It has been established that the best method for instilling training into the workforce is a nonlinear approach. This method is an approach much likened to the technique of a successful manager's practices. His or her technique is a nonlinear approach: who is best

for the job?; who has the most motivation and self-confidence?; who has the most practical experience? These decisions do not lend themselves to easy analysis, no streamlined and rigid 'list of management practices' can be jotted down and disseminated to the practitioners. So too, an evaluation works best when undertaken in this nonlinear mode.

To put the matter in perspective, consider the ADDIE model in practice, and some of the pitfalls that may ensue. While the analyze-design-develop process of the ADDIE model is taking place, time is necessarily elapsing. Thus, a time lag ensues between the production of an instructional program and the instruction itself. While some of the changes in applicability of the training can be foreseen, others are not so readily evident. Hence, the trainer is implicitly hoping that no dynamics have taken place that would make the desired training much less effectual. Of course, by the time the last stage of the ADDIE model is implemented, evaluation, the aforementioned changes have again made any results of the evaluation suspect. This is no way to do efficient business.

In today's corporate niche, the buzzwords are speed, performance, collaboration, flexibility, continuous improvement, and diversity. Surely, efficiency must be added to the list of desirable characteristics of success. Consequently, that time lag in the ADDIE model is an undesirable inefficiency. There must be a better way to produce knowledgeable and trained employees according to the tenets of an economically equivalent or even cheaper evaluatory/training model than the ADDIE model.

The question now becomes: Is the 4-level Model the ultimate model for training? The quick answer is obviously not, as an evolutionary model is dynamic, so any current model for training must be like any theory: sufficient until a better one is proffered. The detailed answer is revealed upon analysis of the model itself.

In 1959, Donald Kirkpatrick published a paper that classified training outcomes into four levels: reaction, learning, behaviour, and results. Kirkpatrick's classic model has weathered well. But it has also limited our thinking regarding evaluation and possibly hindered our ability to conduct meaningful evaluations. (Bernthal, 1995, p.41)

Unfortunately, from the standpoint of a 'Perfect Model perspective', the preceding quote would seem to reiterate some of the more thorny pitfalls contained in the ADDIE model. Perhaps the 4-level Model is substandard as well; it was published in 1959 after all. However, we shall explore the Model a bit nevertheless, if for no other reason than to further demonstrate its futility. This is not to say that there is no perfect model for evaluations, as it were, just that the more dynamic, evolutionary process described in the next section has its roots in both of these models. Kevin Oakes of Asymetrix Learning Systems sums up the Kirkpatrick levels this way:

Level 1: Smile-sheet evaluation. *Did you like the training?*

Level 2: Testing. *Did you understand the information and score well on the test?*

Level 3: Job Improvement. *Did the training help you do your job better and increase performance?*

Level 4: Organizational improvement. *Did the company or department increase profits, customer satisfaction, and so forth as a result of the training?* (Bernthal, 1995, p. 41)

This alternative wording (or interpretation) of the 4-Level Model will serve as another description of the process. Nevertheless, this Model, per se, will not be detailed

further. Keeping these models on the forefront of our consciousness, the true (seemingly) most perfect model for the process of training evaluations is revealed in the next section.

HRD Perspective

All of the principles or characteristics described previously as desirable and optimal for business; the networking buzzwords and entrepreneur speak; apply to the Human Resource Department of the respective enterprise. Not only does the HR department deal with these cultural practices and rites, but it is also ultimately responsible for all of the training and evaluation for the business. Inasmuch as this is evident, the HR staff have the added responsibility of choosing aspects of that evolving and elusive perfect model to put into actual practice.

It is this author's opinion that part of this perfect model for evaluation and training can be found in the Individualized Instructional Program. Hindsight being easy and inviolable, this process seems intuitively obvious:

Each IIP, with its associated written methods and reporting materials, helps the trainer follow a thoughtful, sequentially arranged, systematic presentation with a group of up to five adult students or on a one-to-one basis. The IIP program emphasizes administrative quality control, student learning awareness, and ongoing feedback to company managers during training. (Gordon, 1995, p. 52-60)

So, a smaller teacher-to-pupil ratio is desirable to produce expected results, and one-to-one tutoring works best. It would seem that business has been a step behind the educational community on this particular issue until presently.

Relevant Evaluation Concepts

Ultimately, what is the perfect model for training and evaluating training? There is no one answer to this question, it is a philosophical unknown.

The proper question to ask may be, what is the perfect process? A process can be described, albeit somewhat clumsily. As a bonus, a process is by nature changing, which was made abundantly clear in the foregoing sections as one of the primary characteristics needed in the 'perfect model'; in the evolving evaluation and training process.

In attempting to capture with word-symbols this process for evaluation or merely process, seemingly unrelated fields of endeavor must be culled. These disciplines include, but are not limited to psychology, mathematics, ecology, and even tautology.

Psychology, mathematics, and tautological methodology applying to the process of evaluation is simple enough to visualize. These human fields are to be addressed by their order of descriptiveness. Without wandering intellectually too far off the mark, what with definitions and descriptions of the elusive term complexity, mathematical efforts are the simplest to link to the process.

Math gives us our economic curves, our employment levels, and our profit margins. Statistical methods require a representative sample to gauge generalities of results, so too does the process require many and varied evaluations from differing representatives. CEO's, managers, and entry-level persons must have their say in relation to and to affect the process.

Tautology, or the meaning of the words we use, is a bit more difficult to link to our process. We must have our buzzwords, our business terms. They must mean the same thing in their usage to all; customers/clients and employees alike. The process is a thing, a term, that is defined as a method for evaluation; however, it is also a method for training, and

training evaluations. The process is this entire Section. It is also this entire Chapter, and this paper in its entirety. Thus, tautologically speaking, the process is defined in a general encompassing manner, yet evaluators know its meaning and intent.

Finally, the entire field of psychology is requisite to shape our process. To train, the pupils/trainees need to be comfortable, in order to be willing to learn, and to retain the knowledge so attained. The psychotherapeutic results of positive feedback, self-confidence (a greatly desired form of soft data), is paramount to obtaining desired outcomes.

That said, the relation of ecology to the process is almost self-evident. A familiar, constant location, known to the practitioners, makes for the most conducive environment in which to train. It is apparent that these separate fields intertwine in the process.

The Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel, and other technological informational cable venues do an excellent job of explaining esoteric topics to the lay person. Subjects like quantum mechanics, physics, and astronomy can be comprehended fairly thoroughly by an intelligent person. With detailed pictures and animations, literally anything can be understood at some level; even eventually the process.

In sum, it can be seen that the perfect process for evaluation and training is a work-in-progress. The desired characteristics include a common descriptive language, a maximized environment in which to practice the process, efficiency in our methodology, and other matters that are business related. However, to truly realize the desired results that the process is trying to achieve, more esoteric and not immediately obvious fields of human endeavor must be drawn upon. These include but are not limited to: psychology, mathematics, ecology, and even tautology.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methods

Introduction

The problem of this study was to develop a training program to resolve problems experienced as employees of a purchased company were assimilated into the parent company and evaluate its effectiveness.

Informal interviews were done with employees of one region in the parent company as a form of a needs assessment in order to obtain information on the most important areas that would need attention in the area of wedding stationery sales. The people and interview responses were not used as an official control group but their errors were followed for a short time frame and used as areas of concern when training on sales procedures.

A training packet previously developed by staff at Carlson Craft was redesigned by Carlson Craft and Desmond's to specifically focus on Desmond's procedures and the sale of wedding stationery and accessories only. Carlson Craft provides opportunities to sell various other products so, therefore, incorporate those items into their general training, but Desmond's chose only the one line of product.

The sessions were not limited to, but due to staffing circumstances had 8-12 employees per session. Each region has about 15-20 employees, counting managers, assistant managers, full time associates, and part time associates. With a relatively high turnover rate, the average employment time frame with Desmond's was one year to eighteen months and an average age in the mid-twenties. The percentage of female and male employees was actually just about even.

Research Design

The research design was initially descriptive based on what was previously used and done with employees of the parent company. Informal interviews were done in order to gather data from employees of the parent company. The design then changed to quasi-experimental to evaluate the impact of the redesigned training program and packet.

The employees of the acquired company all participated initially in group training programs narrowed to groups of 8-12 depending on geographic region. Each employee was given a training packet which would later be used individually as new employees were hired. The initial groups also had the added benefit of hands-on mock ordering and the opportunity to provide immediate feedback to the trainers. All employees, meaning those in the initial group as well as those subsequently hired, also had the opportunity to fill out a short evaluatory survey.

Data Collection Techniques

Following the training session in each separate region, immediate feedback in the form of general, open discussion was noted. The employees had the opportunity to sell wedding stationery products prior to the formal training in some cases due to the fact that the delivery and set up of the catalogs had started.

The impact of the training program was also evaluated by a short post-program questionnaire. This included aspects of presentation as well as content. The trainees could also provide personal comments on what was liked, disliked, or what could be done for improvement. A copy is included in appendix A.

Finally, the total sales and total errors in terms of dollar amounts were followed for the three month period as a form of evaluation. Whether or not sales increased and errors decreased was used as positive outcome of the training session.

Data Analysis

The frequency of errors was not specifically followed, but the repetition of a particular error was noted. Any error caused by an employee, meaning Carlson Craft did not make a printing error or the customer did not write something wrong, was charged against an employee's commission. Examples of cost to an employee are included.

For this study, the errors on sales as well as the dollars in sales were followed for a three month period following the training session.

The sales dollars were tracked using daily sales worksheets, which had a breakdown category for Carlson Craft.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results of the Study

Introduction

Several areas were looked at in order to acquire the necessary information on whether or not the training was effective. These included the training problems within the actual training session, the content of the physical training package, verbal immediate feedback, the number of errors and the amount of sales in dollars. These will be broken down by objective and discussed in further detail in this chapter.

Research Results

1. Training Problems Experienced by Transferred Employees

Information on problems associated with previous training programs was collected mainly by obtaining information from employees in the parent company. Problems noted with the actual training program were that: 1) due to the fact that training was done during open store hours, one employee from each store was not able to attend, 2) time constraints allowed for only general information on the printing company's history and the formal wear company's requested procedures, and 3) time constraints also cut short time for employee questions.

In addition to the problems associated with the actual training program, the employees were faced with the fact that the sale of wedding stationery was a totally new facet of their expected sales associate duties. These employees had to adjust to the way the parent company, Desmond's, wanted all procedures accomplished as well as learn about a new area of the business. The employees also had the problem of no previous sales to

compare to except from the sales of the parent company which had been selling the product for years.

2. Develop a Training Package

Actually due to the fact that Carlson Craft has been in the business for many years, the company already had an existing training package. Due to the nature of Desmond's business, the training package was modified to accommodate the circumstances surrounding wedding stationery clientele. A copy of the package is included in Appendix B.

The content specifically needed for the sale of wedding stationery was identified and incorporated into the package. Information from Carlson Craft as well as from the sales from the parent company was used to identify the content associated with wedding stationery. All other products, such as regular stationery, graduation stationery, birthday stationery, and business stationery, were eliminated. Upper management also included certain procedural methods that were to be followed. Specific expectations in regards to filling out paperwork and receipts was also part of the presentation.

3. Use Immediate Feedback to Evaluate Training

As far as the actual training, the package was used when the sessions were broken down into small groups of two or three. This provided an opportunity for interaction and immediate feedback. The trainer also had the opportunity for one-to-one interaction. This allowed some time for personal clarification among those in attendance.

Because of the small group atmosphere, some observational feedback was obtained immediately in regards to the group interaction. There was no formal detailed survey, but a short, general one on content and presentation was filled out by participants. A copy is included in appendix A. Using the training package during the session also provided the

opportunity for those in attendance to judge whether or not the package could be used independently for new hires.

The perceived impact of the training program as observed during the interaction period was that the program was basically beneficial. The employees seemed to feel that many aspects of the sale of wedding stationery began to make sense once the parts of the albums and the expected procedures were broken down and discussed. It was also noted that the employees preferred the small group interaction. As discovered during the small group activity, the employees thought that by taking a couple of orders in the store, many of the pieces of the training program would fall right into place.

The mock ordering portion of the small group activity was when employees seemed to feel that the training program and the albums began to make practical sense. The advantage of this portion was that they had a chance to “order” a wedding invitation ensemble and at the same time incorporate Desmond’s required procedures. A major disadvantage was that even though the mock ordering provided much clarification, each employee who participated in the training program, due to time constraints, only had time for one mock order. Another disadvantage was that the Carlson Craft company offers many more wedding products other than just the invitation. This missing part of the mock ordering would prove to provide many questions as the employees began to sell all the products in the albums.

4. Post-Training Evaluation

There was no follow-up survey as part of this training program due to the fact that it was known ahead of time that this would be an ongoing, self-instructed training portion of each new hire packet. Employee turnover, as known from the parent company’s history,

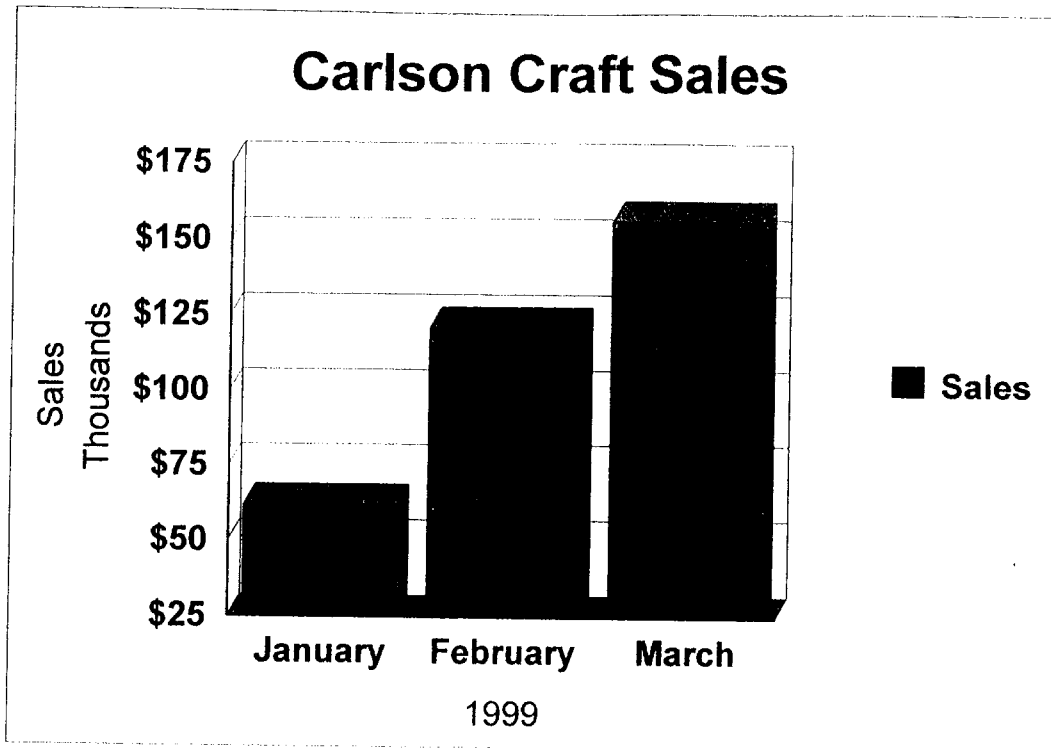
would make it too difficult to obtain accurate results from the same employees over a reasonable time frame.

5. Impact on Sales and Errors

The evaluation method that followed was to informally track the number of repeated errors and the actual revenue dollars for a three month period. Copies of errors were made and grouped together to be used as examples. The revenue was followed using daily worksheets that breakdown the money taken in for the day for Carlson Craft sales. There is a copy of the sales worksheet in appendix C.

Because the sale of wedding stationery was a new area of business for the acquired company, there really was no pre-training numerical data. What was used to obtain numerical results was a three month follow-up. This time frame began with first full month following the training session.

As noted in the graph (see Figure 1), the sales revenue definitely increased over the three month period. It could be assumed that as employees became more comfortable with the product, sales increased. The employees could have also expanded the sales to the other products available in the albums. These are the factors that could be followed as more time passed.



Carlson Craft Sales

	Sales
January	\$61,894
February	\$120,973
March	\$156,063

Figure 1: Three Month Post-Training Results

The assumption that sales increased as employees became more adept could be deduced from the fact that over this same three month period, employee errors decreased. For every twenty-five orders in the first month, there were ten errors relating to the employee writing part of the invitation copy wrong. Of those same average twenty-five orders, an average of eight orders were delayed due to not faxing the order to the main office.

In order to combat errors, a general memo was sent out to all stores pointing out the most common errors in hopes that this would help employees focus on problem areas. The areas were discovered simply by tallying errors over this time frame and looking for the ones that were repeated. Following this memo, in the second month, for every twenty-five orders, five were wrong due to employee spelling and five were delayed due to not faxing. In the third month, the “writing” errors dropped again to two and the delayed orders dropped to one.

Company procedure relating to these kinds of errors is that only the customer is to write the actual copy because of the personalization of the wedding information and names and the employee is to write the Carlson Craft item numbers and order specifics, such as ink color and typestyle. The procedure on faxing is that once completed, the order is held in the store for one day to accommodate last minute changes and then is faxed to the main office for processing. This procedure allows the sales associates to guarantee a fourteen business-day delivery.

The other categories followed for errors still related to not following procedure, but on different parts of the order such as the RSVP card, the reception card, the napkins or programs.

Summary

The overall results of the study proved that the training program was successful. The major intent of increasing sales over time was definitely accomplished. Over the same time, errors decreased, but both areas need to be followed over a longer time frame. That is because for one, a past history would be beneficial to compare to and over the course of time, one would be able to focus on market fluctuation.

The other major factor was that due to employee turnover, a training package that could be used independently needed to be developed. This was also accomplished by looking at the parent company's problems and intertwining the Carlson Craft training module to the Desmond's Formal Wear procedures. The conclusions deducted from the training session and subsequent results will be looked at further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

As stated throughout this paper, the problem of this study was to develop a training program to resolve the problems experienced as employees of a purchased company were assimilated into the parent company and evaluate its effectiveness in regards to the sale of wedding stationery. The major objective, due to the nature of the general employee training procedure, was to make sure the training packet could be used independently as new employees were hired.

Summary

The research design of this study was initially descriptive based on what was previously used and done with employees of the parent company. The design then changed to quasi-experimental to evaluate the impact of the redesigned training program and packet.

The sources of data began with collecting information from employees of the parent company. This proved to be beneficial because it provided the necessary data to be able to pinpoint existing problem areas. The final numbers regarding sales and number of errors were collected solely from the acquired company.

The major results included the positive feedback during the actual training program which led to the finalization of the packet that would be used for new hires. Another obvious result was the definite increase in sales and the decrease in errors over the three month follow-up.

Conclusions

It was discovered that by tracking the errors of the parent company simply by tallying numbers in repetitive categories that this proved to be an effective form of needs assessment. This provided a focus for the actual training session.

Due to a cooperative effort among the parent company, Carlson Craft, and this author, the training packet was able to be developed. It was customized for the formal wear company as part of the training program and to be used as a self-study for newly hired employees.

Those in attendance seemed to be in agreement that the training program itself was beneficial. Many of the questions they had prior to the training had been answered or clarified. Following the training, there was a noticeable difference in the amount of orders taken and on the number of errors associated with those orders.

Recommendations

Because of the general, positive feedback during the training session, it would seem to be beneficial to continue the program. With the revenue increasing and the errors decreasing it would definitely appear to be a success.

Employee turnover rates should be monitored in order to decide which region could use the formal training program versus just having the new hires do the self-study training packet. Each program does not have to include the participation of the Carlson Craft staff; rather, more time should be allotted to the procedures required by the formal wear company. This would also help reduce errors.

The sales should be followed each month in order to provide continual feedback as to whether or not selling wedding stationery is a profitable area for the company. By

continuing to track the revenue, the company will also eventually be provided with a sales history, which could lead to evaluating whether or not sales trends exist. Another major advantage of following the sales by store is that it will be easier to see which store or region needs additional training.

Finally, the study should be repeated in a couple of years to ensure the same conclusions. This would also provide the opportunity to do another needs assessment to see if any other problem areas were identified.

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Appendix A

Training Program Evaluation

*Desmond's Formal Wear of Ohio
Carlson Craft Training Evaluation*

Circle One:

E Excellent

S Satisfactory

N Needs Improvement

ORGANIZATION

Clear statement of objectives	E	S	N
Well thought-out opening	E	S	N
Good Structure and logical flow	E	S	N
Used attention-getting techniques and kept interest	E	S	N
Good summary with strong close	E	S	N
Good distribution of time	E	S	N

PREPAREDNESS

Well prepared, well rehearsed, knows material	E	S	N
---	---	---	---

PRESENTATION SKILLS

Friendly, relaxed, confident	E	S	N
Enthusiastic, inspiring	E	S	N
Humor, appropriate for personality	E	S	N
Good questions and audience participation	E	S	N
Used good examples and analogies	E	S	N
Strong voice and good eye contact	E	S	N

VISUAL AIDS

Neat and easy to read	E	S	N
Color enhanced	E	S	N
Good examples of problem areas	E	S	N
Good examples of paperwork required	E	S	N

APPEARANCE

Professional appearance	E	S	N
Comfortable, relaxed posture	E	S	N
Body language complemented presentation	E	S	N

Please Feel Free To Use The Back Of This Form For "General Comments"

Thank You Very Much For Your Attendance At This Training Session.

Appendix B

Training Packet



together with *Carlson Craft*[®]

35A

Pricing Worksheets and Keys

New This Year...

This pricing test and key includes pricing questions from ALL of your Carlson Craft[®] albums. Including.... your ecru with gold "Wedding Invitations for Today's Bride", your gold with black "Invitation Collection", your black with gold "Invitation Collection" and your "Blue" album. If there's an album your location doesn't have, simply skip those pricing questions. Don't hesitate to call us with your questions!! Good Luck!

After completing your pricing worksheets, please complete this sheet and fax your completed answer pages (and cover sheet) to Carlson Craft[®] at 800-562-6661. When we have received and reviewed your answer worksheets, we'll contact you if there are any questions about your answers, we'll then send your Sales Associate Certificate of Recognition.

Date: _____

Total Number of Pages Including this Page: _____

Attention: Ruth Ferch, Carlson Craft[®] Social Division

Name of Person Sending This Information: _____

Your Store Name: _____

Your Account Number: _____

Your Store Address: _____

Program Participant's Name (please print name as you want it to appear on certificate):

Pricing Worksheets

PLEASE ANSWER AND/OR FIGURE THE RETAIL PRICE FOR EACH ITEM AS LISTED BELOW:
Important: When determining a customer's pricing, be sure you are aware of all applicable Desmond's promotional discounts. Show your work as needed to the left, and final answer on the right.

Pricing Questions for your black with gold, "Invitation Collection" album

1. 125 FG5931-68 invitations with 15 lines of copy in photo lettering AJA with taupe ink. Include 125 white sheer bows FGKMJWH. Also 125 taupe lined envelopes FGTP68. Page 28

Work *Answer*
2. 125 FGE2593-15 respond cards and envelopes with 5 lines of copy in photo lettering AJA in taupe ink. Page 28

Work *Answer*
3. 125 FGR2593 reception cards with 5 lines of copy in photo lettering AJA in taupe ink. Page 28

Work *Answer*
4. 275 FGP2241 wedding programs with 67 lines of copy in taupe ink. The front copy to be printed in photo lettering AJA with design WPL. Include 275 white tassels, FGFSWH. Page 117

Work *Answer*
5. 275 FGX7075 translucent thank you scrolls, verse as shown in taupe ink. Include 288 gold scroll rings FGK92G. Page 123

Work *Answer*
6. 300 FGWHSB white luncheon napkins with taupe ink, two lines of copy in lettering D with design FHL. Page 139

Work *Answer*
7. 1 set FGK4723P personalized gold swirl flutes. Page E (in back of album)

Work *Answer*

Pricing Questions for your gold with black, “Invitation Collection” album

1. 100 VR1116-68 invitations with 12 lines of copy in traditional lettering PI with fuchsia ink. Include 100 VRPR68 pearl lined inner envelopes. Also the 100 outer envelopes are to have the return address blind embossed on the flaps. Page 62

Work

Answer

2. 100 VRE2116-15 respond cards & envelopes with 5 lines of copy in traditional lettering PI with fuchsia ink. Page 62

Work

Answer

3. 100 VRR2116 reception cards with 5 lines of copy in traditional lettering PI with fuchsia ink. Page 62

Work

Answer

4. 150 VRI2116-15 informals with one line of copy on the front in traditional lettering PI in fuchsia ink. Page 62.

Work

Answer

5. 250 VRHTSB fuchsia beverage napkins with 2 lines of copy & design ULP in silver foil. Page 134.

Work

Answer

6. 250 VRK41FVP personalized favor boxes with 2 lines of copy in fuchsia foil, page 138A. Also include 250 gold theme seals VRK6308, page 3.

Work

Answer

7. 250 VRN879 place cards with 4 lines of copy in traditional lettering PI with fuchsia ink. Page 140

Work

Answer

***Pricing Questions for your ecru with gold,
"Wedding Invitations for Today's Bride" album***

1. 275 AM4811-87 invitations with 14 lines of copy in combination lettering CPG/RKS with sage ink. Also include 275 AMSE87 sage lined inner envelopes. Page 48

Work

Answer

2. 275 AME2481-15 respond cards & envelopes with 4 lines of copy on the respond cards in photo lettering CPG with sage ink. Page 48

Work

Answer

3. 275 AMR2481 reception cards with 5 lines of copy in photo lettering CPG with sage ink. Page 48

Work

Answer

4. 175 AMP2641 wedding programs with 74 lines of copy in photo lettering AMZ with red ink. Page 75.

Work

Answer

5. 200 AMPDSB white pearl daisy beverage napkins with 2 lines of copy printed in purple foil. Page 91.

Work

Answer

6. 1 set AMK2255P personalized two-tone goblets. Page F.

Work

Answer

Pricing Questions for your Carlson Craft® “Blue” album

1. 100 WL1331-70 invitations with 14 lines of copy printed in photo lettering CAS in black ink. Also 100 WLK1769B translucent wraps. Include 100 WLPR70 pearl lined inner envelopes. Page 25.

Work

Answer

2. 100 WLR3571 reception cards with 4 lines of copy printed in photo lettering CAS in black ink. Page 25.

Work

Answer

3. 100 WLE3571-21 respond cards/envelopes with 5 lines of copy on the respond card printed in photo lettering CAS in black ink. Page 25.

Work

Answer

4. 150 WL5921-71 invitations with 15 lines of copy printed in photo lettering AVA in plum ink. Also 150 WLPM71 plum lined inner envelopes. Page 82

Work

Answer

5. 200 WL12592-01 informals with 1 line of copy printed in photo lettering AVA in plum ink. Page 82.

Work

Answer

6. 300 WLP4135 wedding programs with 72 lines of copy printed in photo lettering SFF in lilac ink. Page 121

Work

Answer

7. 150 WLN061 place cards with 4 lines of copy in traditional lettering PA printed in hunter ink. Page 146

Work

Answer

8. 350 WLECPCSB ecru pearlized lily beverage napkins with 2 lines of copy printed in hunter ink. Page 153

Work

Answer

Answer Keys For your use only. Do not fax to Carlson Craft®.

Please call our Customer Service Representatives at 800-851-5226 with any questions.

ANSWERS for your black with gold, "Invitation Collection" album

1. 125 FG5931-68 invitations with 15 lines of copy in photo lettering AJA with taupe ink. Include 125 white sheer bows FGKMJWH. Also 125 taupe lined envelopes FGTP68. Page 28

	<u>Album List Price</u>
125 invitations	\$165.90
Colored ink	\$6.50
Extra line (x1)	\$1.00
125 sheer bows	\$150.00
125 lined inner envelopes	\$24.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$347.90

2. 125 FGE2593-15 respond cards and envelopes with 5 lines of copy in photo lettering AJA in taupe ink. Page 28

	<u>Album List Price</u>
125 respond cards/envelopes	\$77.50
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$84.00

3. 125 FGR2593 reception cards with 5 lines of copy in photo lettering AJA in taupe ink. Page 28

	<u>Album List Price</u>
125 reception cards	\$65.40
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$71.90

4. 275 FGP2241 wedding programs with 67 lines of copy in taupe ink. The front copy to be printed in photo lettering AJA with design WP1. Include 275 white tassels, FGTSWH. Page 117

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 programs	\$98.30
Add 125 x 5 programs	\$73.50
Colored ink	\$6.50
275 white tassels	\$66.00
TOTAL PRICE:	\$244.30

5. 275 FGX7075 translucent thank you scrolls, verse as shown in taupe ink. Include 288 gold scroll rings FGK92G. Page 123

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 scrolls	\$54.10
Add 125 x 5 scrolls	\$40.50
Colored ink	\$6.50
288 scroll rings	\$13.00
TOTAL PRICE:	\$114.10

6. 300 FGWHSB white luncheon napkins with taupe ink, two lines of copy in lettering D with design FHL. Page 139

	<u>Album List Price</u>
300 napkins	\$50.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$50.50

7. 1 set FGK4723P personalized gold swirl flutes. Page E.(in back of album)

	<u>Album List Price</u>
1 set of personalized flutes	\$46.95
TOTAL PRICE:	\$46.95

ANSWERS for your gold with black, "Invitation Collection" album

1. 100 VR1116-68 invitations with 12 lines of copy in traditional lettering PI with fuchsia ink. Include 100 VRPR68 pearl lined inner envelopes. Also the 100 outer envelopes are to have the return address blind embossed on the flaps. Page 62

	<u>Album List Price</u>
100 invitations	\$121.90
Colored ink	\$6.50
100 lined inner envelopes	\$21.20
100 blind embossed flaps	\$43.90
TOTAL PRICE:	\$193.50

2. 100 VRE2116-15 respond cards & envelopes with 5 lines of copy in traditional lettering PI with fuchsia ink. Page 62

	<u>Album List Price</u>
100 respond cards/envelopes	\$60.90
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$67.40

3. 100 VRR2116 reception cards with 5 lines of copy on the reception card in traditional lettering PI with fuchsia ink. Page 62

	<u>Album List Price</u>
100 reception cards	\$52.90
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$59.40

4. 150 VRI2116-15 informals with one line of copy on the front in traditional lettering in fuchsia ink. Page 62

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 informals	\$75.30
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$81.80

5. 250 VRHTSB fuchsia beverage napkins with 2 lines of copy and design ULP in silver foil. Page 134.

	<u>Album List Price</u>
250 beverage napkins	\$60.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$60.50

6. 250 VRK1FVP personalized favor boxes with 2 lines of copy in fuchsia foil, page 138A. Also include 250 gold theme seals VRK6308, page 3.

	<u>Album List Price</u>
50 favor boxes	\$41.00
Add 150 x 4 favor boxes	\$168.00
250 seals	\$43.00
TOTAL PRICE:	\$255.00

7. 250 VRN879 place cards with 4 lines of copy in traditional lettering PI with fuchsia ink. Page 140

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 place cards	\$66.90
Add 150 x 4	\$40.00
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$113.40

ANSWERS to questions for your ecru with gold, "Wedding Invitations for Today's Bride" album

1. 275 AM4811-87 invitations with 14 lines of copy in combination lettering CPG/RKS with sage ink. Include 275 AMSE87 sage lined inner envelopes. Page 48

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 invitations	\$184.10
Add'l 25 x 5 invitations	\$138.00
Colored ink	\$6.50
150 lined inner envelopes	\$29.40
Add'l 25 x 5 lined envelopes	\$24.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$382.50

2. 275 AME2481-15 respond cards and envelopes with 4 lines of copy in photo lettering CPG with sage ink. Page 48

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 respond cards/envelopes	\$98.30
Add'l 25 x 5 cards/envelopes	\$73.50
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$178.30

3. 275 AMR2481 reception cards with 5 lines of copy in photo lettering CPG with sage ink. Page 48

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 reception cards	\$82.70
Add'l 25 x 5 cards	\$62.00
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$151.20

4. 175 AMP2641 wedding programs with 74 lines of copy in photo lettering AMZ with red ink. Page 75

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 programs	\$125.30
Add'l 25 x 4	\$18.70
Extra lines (\$1.00 x 4)	\$4.00
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$154.50

5. 200 AMPDSB white pearl daisy beverage napkins with 2 lines of copy printed in purple foil. Page 91.

	<u>Album List Price</u>
200 beverage napkins	\$73.00
TOTAL PRICE:	\$73.00

6. 1 set AMK2255P personalized two-tone goblets. Page F

	<u>Album List Price</u>
1 set of goblets	\$58.95
TOTAL PRICE:	\$58.95

ANSWERS to questions for your ***“Blue”*** album

1. 100 WL1331-70 invitations with 14 lines of copy printed in photo lettering CAS in black ink. Also 100 WLK1769B translucent wraps. Include 100 WLPR70 pearl lined inner envelopes. Page 25.

	<u>Album List Price</u>
100 invitations	\$76.90
Translucent Wraps (\$15.90 x 4)	\$63.60
100 lined inner envelopes	\$19.60
TOTAL PRICE:	\$160.10

2. 100 WLR3571 reception cards with 4 lines of copy printed in photo lettering CAS in black ink. Page 25.

	<u>Album List Price</u>
100 reception cards	\$46.90
TOTAL PRICE:	\$46.90

3. 100 WLE3571-21 respond cards/envelopes with 5 lines of copy on the respond card printed in photo lettering CAS in black ink. Page 25.

	<u>Album List Price</u>
100 respond cards/envelopes	\$56.90
TOTAL PRICE:	\$56.90

4. 150 WL5921-71 invitations with 15 lines of copy printed in photo lettering AVA in plum ink. Also 150 WLPM71 plum lined inner envelopes. Page 82

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 invitations	\$172.70
Extra line (x 1)	\$1.00
Colored ink	\$6.50
150 lined inner envelopes	\$29.40
TOTAL PRICE:	\$209.60

5. 200 WL12592-01 informals with 1 line of copy printed in photo lettering AVA in plum ink. Page 82.

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 informals	\$79.70
Add'l 25 (x 2)	\$23.80
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$110.00

6. 300 WLP4135 wedding programs with 72 lines of copy printed in photo lettering SIT in lilac ink. Page 121

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 programs	\$101.10
Add'l 25 (x 6)	\$90.60
Extra line (x 2)	\$2.00
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$200.20

7. 150 WLN061 place cards with 4 lines of copy printed in traditional lettering PA in hunter ink. Page 146

	<u>Album List Price</u>
150 place cards	\$58.30
Colored ink	\$6.50
TOTAL PRICE:	\$64.80

8. 350 WLECPCSB ecru pearlized lily beverage napkins with 2 lines of copy printed in hunter ink. Page 153

	<u>Album List Price</u>
300 napkins	\$97.00
Add'l 50 (x 1)	\$14.00
TOTAL PRICE:	\$111.00

Appendix C
Daily Worksheet

36A

DAILY SALES WORKSHEET

Date _____

Store Name _____

By _____

Store # _____

Taxable Non-Taxable

Outs # _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ Total Rental

Cash \$ _____

Prepay Rentals # _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

Checks \$ _____

Retail Sales \$ _____ \$ _____ Total Retail

Total To Bank \$ _____

Retail Shipping \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

Charge Cards \$ _____

Sales Tax \$ _____

B = \$ _____

Late Fees \$ _____

Z Number _____

Total Income \$ _____

Z Tape Total \$ _____

Subtract Paid Outs \$ (_____)

Bookings _____

Subtract Rental Refunds \$ (_____) Cash / Chg

Receipt #'s _____

Subtract Retail Refunds \$ (_____) Cash / Chg

A = \$ _____

Over/(Short) B - A \$ _____

Prepaid Outs # _____
\$ _____

Groom Free # _____ \$ _____	Employee # _____
Employee Family # _____ \$ _____	Other \$ _____

*****CIRCLE ALL DISCOUNTED SALES*****

	Employee # _____	Employee # _____	Employee # _____	Employee # _____	Employee # _____	Employee # _____	Total
	Qty \$	Qty \$	Qty \$	Qty \$	Qty \$	Qty \$	Qty \$
Pocket Squares	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Socks	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Garters	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Shirts							
Tuxedos							
Btn Cvr #/Jewelry	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Accs - Mfg							
Accs - Pur							
Carlson Craft							
Used - Mfg Accs							
Used - Pur Accs							
Used Coats							
Shipping							
Total							