

Selected Cases

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Peppercorn Dining★ (JoAnn Carmin, Cornell University; Todd Comen, Cornell University; Yariels Kerr, Cornell University)

The partners of Square One Consulting were having lunch at Peppercorn Dining on the campus of All-American University. Although Square One was headquartered nearby, most of the consultants' business was conducted in other cities. The partners were enjoying having the opportunity to attend a seminar on a campus in their hometown. By chance, Drew Randall, the manager of Peppercorn, noticed the trio and recognized Erica, who had worked her way through college as a student manager at the dining unit. Drew pulled up a chair and started to catch up on the two years that had transpired since she had graduated. The other consultants, Roger and Lynn, listened as they began to reminisce about the "good old days" at Peppercorn.

Erica recalled the time a swim test coincided with her first shift at the dining hall. She called to let the unit know she would be detained, and she finally arrived about an hour late. When Erica entered the unit, she was greeted by a supervisor who took her downstairs to change into the uniform of blue pants, blue-and-white-checkered shirt, a hair net, and a name tag, an outfit similar to what was being worn by the current employees. Erica was then taken to the dish room and informed she was receiving a verbal warning for being late. As the group laughed, the consultants chided Erica further by commenting that her sense of timing hadn't changed. Drew, however, suggested that times had changed.

Developing a Contract

The consultants were eager to learn about Peppercorn, and Erica, eager to learn about the changes Drew had alluded to, asked about current operations at the unit. Drew, sipping on his coffee, commented, "Staffing is a nightmare. We can't find qualified people anywhere; recruiting and retention has become a constant challenge." Drew went on to explain that the labor market in the county had become tight due to the prosperous Reagan years. Garden County had become a boomtown and, as a result, the university was having difficulty gaining employees. Roger wondered aloud about the general steps Peppercorn had taken to offset the current labor shortage.

Drew, sensing the consultant's interest, openly discussed his perceptions of the dining unit. He stated:

I would like to make Peppercorn a more pleasant place for everyone to work. I get great productivity out of these guys and they really care. It's just that there needs to be something more. Maybe morale is a little low. There's not much creativity involved in most of the tasks, but the cooks feel great when they sell out of stuff. However, when we sell out, it's probably because the forecast was incorrect rather than as a response to a good product. I take a humanistic management approach, maybe they just need some kind of support. On the other hand, I may give them too much autonomy since I let them manage themselves to a large degree.

I believe that scheduling is management's right. I base my scheduling on operational need. Ultimately, the manager is responsible for the success or failure of the operation, therefore, I should have the right to put the people where I deem best. You know, niche management. Although, I did inherit a lot of the schedule.

As Erica tentatively nodded her head in response to Drew's comments, Roger and Lynn caught each other's gaze and shrugged inquisitively. By the consultants' behavior, it was apparent they were wondering about the meaning behind Drew's words. However, because he was obviously in the mood to talk, the consultants did not interrupt.

Warming up to his listeners, Drew continued, "Some employees have been at Peppercorn, working in the same position, for 20 plus years. Bob, the day cook, has been working here for 28 years. Can you believe that Doug, the night cook, has been here for 10 years and is waiting for Bob to retire so that he can transfer to the day shift? Doug may have to wait a long time since Bob won't be retiring for at least 15 years. It's hard for me to believe that Doug looks forward to that time and that he refuses to transfer to another dining unit."

"That's amazing," said Roger. "You seem to have loyal employees. It must be easy to manage people who know their job so well."

Drew responded:

It's not that simple. The union contract forms a second set of rules and operating parameters. The contract deals with turnover, sick leave, pay, promotion, and all of the other usual stuff. It seems that there is no reward for non-sickness, but there is a reward for sickness. Now people get one and a half times the pay for sick days if they are on overtime. If they are on overtime, absenteeism is more of a contractual issue than a workplace issue.

Frankly, I believe that staffing affects attitudes and attitudes affect quality; both of which affect productivity. Increased productivity means making better use of time. Perhaps I should structure the tasks in a better way, but managing and working behind the lines makes it difficult for me to see the trees through the forest. There's no time for anyone to stand back and see what's happening.

Drew paused and, as if speaking more to himself than to the consultants, said, "Since I've been so busy, maybe I've lost track of some of my priorities." Turning to the consultants, Drew inquired about their experience with situations of this type and what advice they might offer.

The partners explained they are usually contacted by organizations when management believes an external opinion could provide a fresh outlook on operations. They went on to state they normally begin their work by performing an operations audit, the results of which are presented to management. Additionally, when the situation warrants, strategic interventions are designed to facilitate the achievement of management objectives. The partners further indicated they believe it is essential to become familiar with an organization before appropriate suggestions can be made.

Without hesitation, Drew said to the consultants, "The situation here at Peppercorn has been concerning me for quite some time. I know that you must be very busy, but perhaps you could find the time to work with me. Erica already knows a lot about the operation, and it wouldn't take long for her to become reacquainted."

Because the consultants were planning to be in the area for several days to attend the seminar and to complete some paperwork, Erica suggested they observe operations at Peppercorn. The group, discussing Erica's suggestion, agreed that the first stage should be a preliminary evaluation of the unit, followed by a feedback session with management. Then, based on the outcome, management could conduct an in-depth operations audit. Drew concurred that evaluation and feedback could be useful first steps in achieving his goals. He restated that his goals for Peppercorn were to increase productivity and to improve morale among the workers.

The consultants concluded their discussion by telling Drew they would drop off a written contract by the following afternoon. The contract would include their fee structure as well as a schedule of the dates and times they would like to be on the premises.

Reviewing Background Information

Two days later, the team gathered around the table in Roger's office to discuss the Peppercorn consultation. Roger and Lynn initiated the discussion by reintroducing the subject of Erica's objectivity. It became obvious that all three of the partners were concerned about how Erica's past experiences would bias her view of the operation. The partners also discussed the fact that Erica's views would influence Roger and Lynn's perceptions of the dining unit. Although Erica believed she could recognize and work with her bias, she suggested she focus on gathering current managerial data. Because their time was limited, Lynn recommended that Erica also conduct a few on-site interviews with people who would be more candid with an old friend than with strangers.

As he was reaching for a notepad, Roger asked Erica about the general operating procedures and the key personnel at Peppercorn. Erica began outlining the operation:

Peppercorn's hours are 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. When I first started, we served about 1,500 to 1,600 lunches and 900 to 1,000 dinners daily. By the time I graduated, the counts were down by about 30 percent at lunch and approximately 50 percent at dinner.

When I was a student worker at Peppercorn, there were full-time employees, all of whom were union members. There were also student workers, and we had our own student management staff. When I first started working, there were more student workers than when I graduated. Some of the gaps were filled by full-time temporary workers.

Lynn pointed out that it would be important to determine if these changes were affecting the operation. Erica agreed and indicated that by the time she had graduated, minor conflicts were arising between student and temporary workers at Peppercorn. Erica continued her briefing by providing an overview of the key personnel during her tenure with All-American Dining, the parent organization of Peppercorn.

Erica stated:

Drew is obviously the manager of Peppercorn. He was also the manager of the Salt Mill over at the "B"-School. He was responsible to Stan O'Malley, one of the assistant directors of All-American Dining. Stan supervised Drew and Beth Clarkson, the manager of food service in the student union.

John Cerrano was the receiving clerk. He always worked closely with Drew. There never seemed to be any problems with his work; he always knew where everything was because he received the goods and then put them in storage. John, or "Bo-bo"

as we called him, was the shop steward. He had a close relationship with most of the employees and a bunch of us used to go out drinking with him regularly.

Matt Copperfield was definitely a key player. Matt was the professional supervisor who handled inventory, purchasing, scheduling, and other administrative tasks. It always seemed as if he was at the heart of the operation. I can't remember her name, but there was a secretary who was also in a pivotal position. She had access to a lot of information and she was the source and respondent of all official Peppercorn communication.

The student supervisors were the only other key players that I can think of at this point, and they had extensive responsibilities which included daily management, scheduling, and hiring of the student workers.

The partners' conversation shifted to the amount of time available for the investigation. Lynn asked her partners how much time they thought was necessary for conducting the initial investigation. "Well, Lynn," replied Roger, "based on the information we have so far, it's possible that the longtime employees may not be as open as we might like. They may be protective of their turf." Lynn agreed but added that they shouldn't jump to any conclusions. She noted that often it was the old-time employees who were most interested in talking about their work.

The consultants agreed that three days should be an ample amount of time to gather the necessary data and to develop a presentation for the management of Peppercorn Dining. The consultants concluded the meeting by agreeing that Lynn would concentrate on the production areas of the unit while Roger would survey front-of-house operations.

Day One: Interviews and Observations

Lynn was the first to arrive at Peppercorn the following morning. As she approached the facility, she noticed that three female employees were smoking cigarettes on the loading dock, joking around with a purveyor. Lynn introduced herself and lingered with the workers for a few minutes.

Back of House

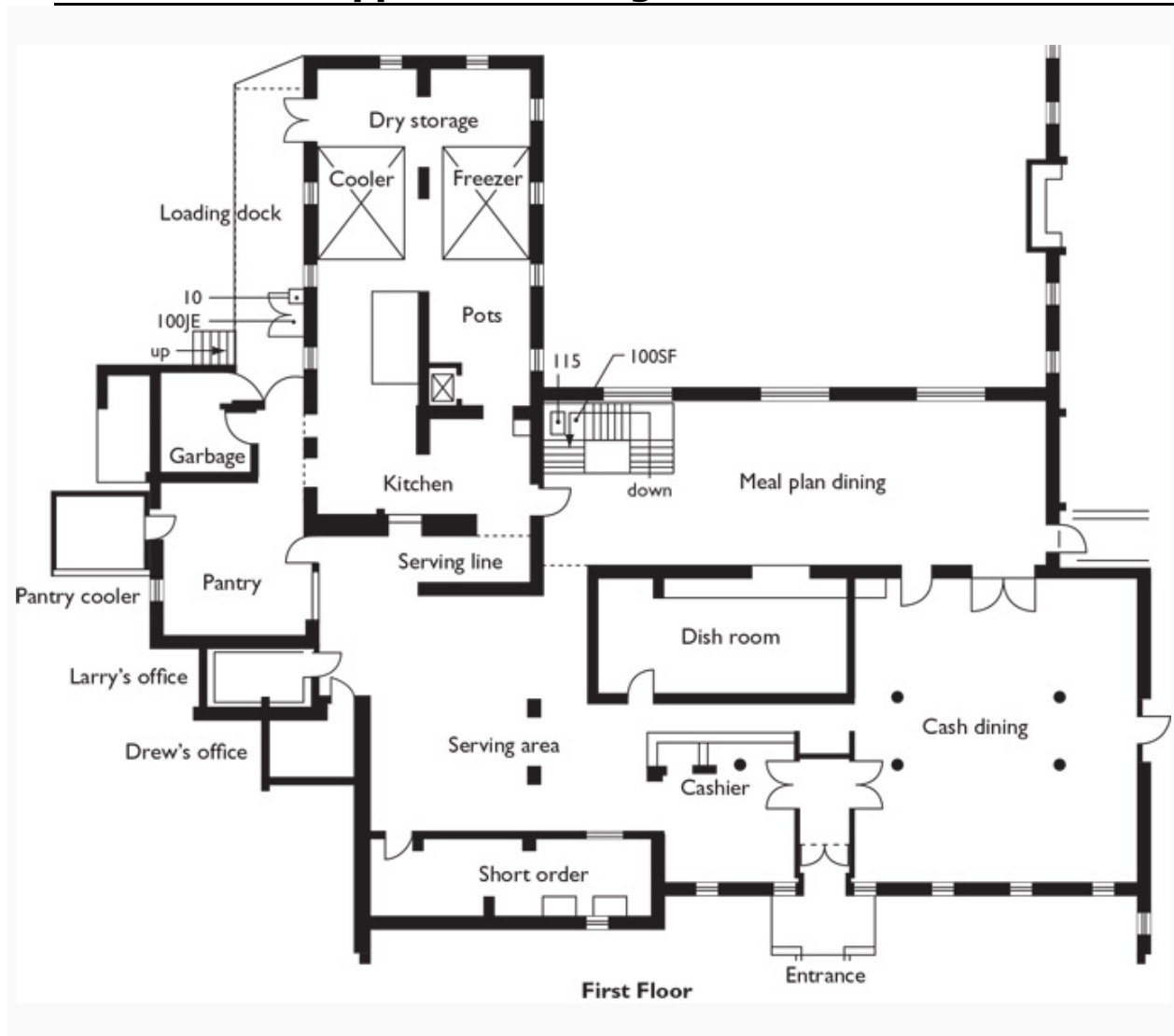
Entering the kitchen from the loading dock, Lynn noticed it was clean and most of the equipment looked relatively new. The kitchen had fairly good fluorescent lighting, and natural lighting was provided by windows in the pot washing and food preparation areas.

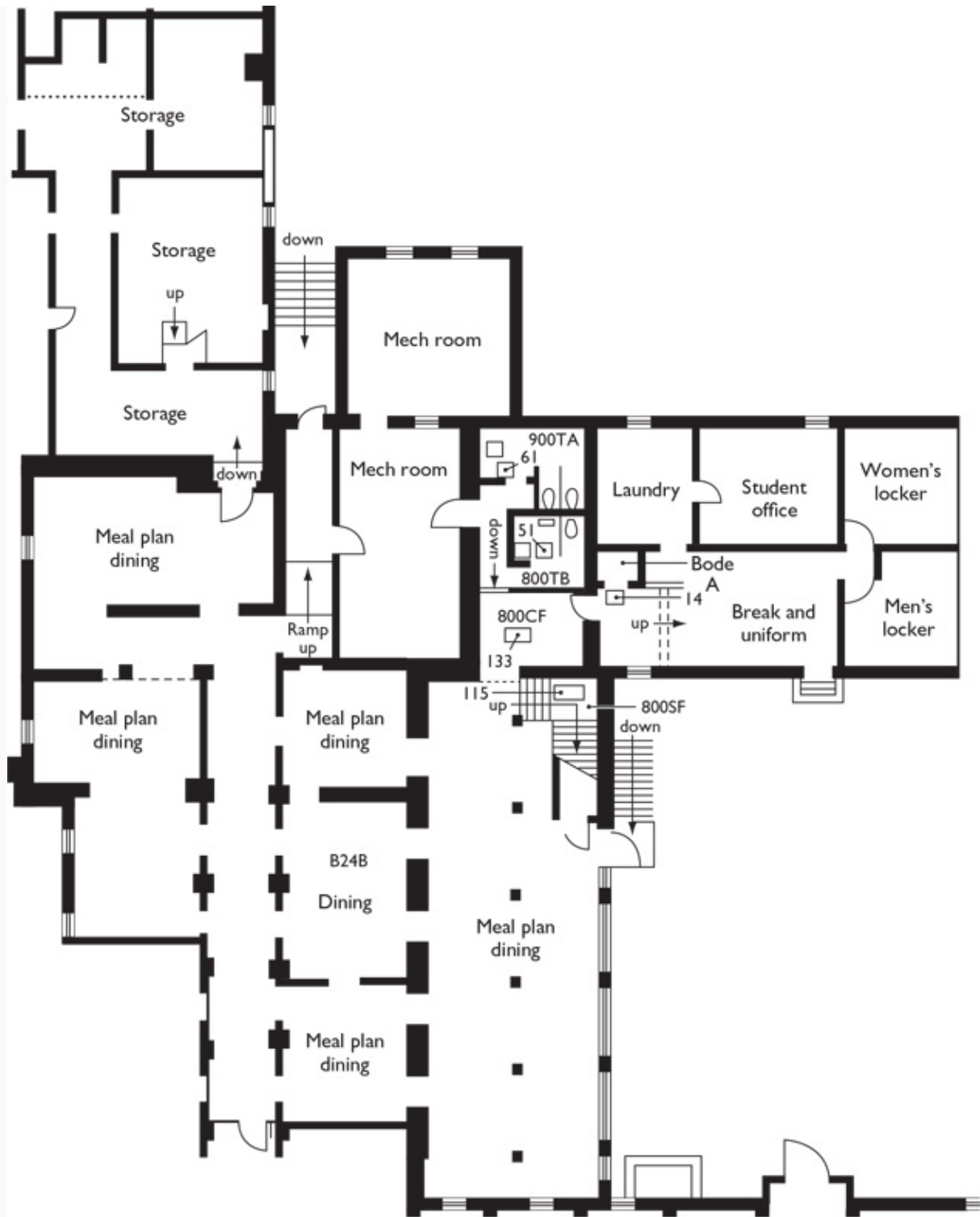
As Lynn placed her coat and briefcase on a rack in the storage area, she observed that the dry goods were neatly arranged, although the supplies were not plentiful. From the storeroom doorway, she could see that the workers were busy, but not rushed. The members of the kitchen staff chatted as they worked and they appeared to know what tasks to perform without needing direction.

The kitchen was divided into five areas (as shown in Figure 1). After introducing herself to the workers and taking a brief tour of the kitchen, Lynn positioned herself near the walk-in cooler where she could easily see most of the kitchen operations. She noticed that the walk-in cooler and freezer were clean and were stocked with a moderate amount of supplies. She also observed that the workers' uniforms were clean. However, some of the workers were wearing aprons and some were not. As if reading her thoughts, a student worker passing through the room commented to no one in particular, "We're out of aprons again. Oh well, it's no big deal." Lynn wondered what else might not be a "big deal" to the workers.

Figure 1

Floor Plan of Peppercorn Dining





Basement

The doors to the dining facility were opened at 10:55 a.m. at which time the pantry workers took a break.

Bob, the day chef, was grilling sandwiches in the tilt brazier while Robert, the day cook, was breading pork. Robert moved between food preparation, the fryer, and the steamer. During lunch service, the kitchen staff appeared to be relaxed. Although there was not much talking, they did joke with each other from time to time.

Shortly after 11 a.m., a man wearing a chefs uniform entered the kitchen and greeted the other workers. He then took a clipboard and a stack of computer printouts to a table near where Lynn was standing. Lynn felt a bit awkward until he introduced himself as Doug, the dinner chef.

Lynn explained she was observing the facility in order to become familiar with the operation. Doug showed interest in Lynn's curiosity and stated:

I want the kitchen to run as smoothly as possible. I believe that it takes organization, morale, communication, and a system to have an efficient operation. Communication is important. I ask the servers how things are working out so that I know if I should change anything. I try to maintain a routine system so there won't be many questions during service. I train all of my workers and I enjoy having the opportunity to teach. I've been in food service for 25 years and at Peppercorn for 10 years. I started working in the food service industry when I was about 11.

I think that Peppercorn has the best food on campus. Some of my own recipes have been accepted by management and are now a part of the menu database. I've also developed ideas that have been adopted here and at other campus dining facilities. For example, I started the trend of keeping plastic tasting spoons by the steam kettles. I'm also the person who started using a yellow marker to highlight important items on the computer printouts.

As Lynn and Doug were talking, a man came over and listened to their conversation. Doug's speech became hesitant in this man's presence. After only a few minutes, the man left. Lynn wondered who the man was and why he had such an effect on Doug. From the way he was dressed, there was no way to determine if he worked at Peppercorn, was from the union, or was part of the All-American management staff.

Coincidentally, Doug explained to Lynn that the man was Larry, the professional supervisor. He went on to say Larry plans the menus and tries to balance the use of ovens and kettles so the equipment is not overloaded. According to Doug, Larry prints out the menus from a computer located in the office. Doug added

that the system does not always work the way it should. It is supposed to print menus, compile order lists, and check the inventory. Doug commented, "Sometimes it works well, and sometimes not. Sometimes the menus have to be changed at the last minute because of short stock. We haven't had any salt all semester. This is mostly a result of computer errors."

Doug went on to talk about some of his coworkers. Bob, the lunch chef, has been at Peppercorn for 28 years. Chris, the assistant dinner chef, has been with the unit for about three years. Chris, who moved to the kitchen from the short-order station, was trained by Doug. They enjoy sharing ideas and they always try to prepare the food a day in advance.

While Lynn was talking with Doug, she could see the cafeteria line by way of a pass-through window. She noticed that a steady flow of diners was entering the facility. Realizing that Doug enjoyed talking about the unit and being curious about Doug's responses, Lynn felt comfortable continuing the conversation. Observing a student supervisor restocking the hot food line, Lynn asked Doug how he felt about working with students.

He replied, "Some student workers are reliable, while others are less committed." Lynn asked Doug about the role of the student supervisor and in response Doug called the student over. The student seemed unhurried and went on to explain that student supervisors do not have any power over the regular workers; only over temps and other students. Students have their own management structure that includes a student coordinator, managers, and pay clerk. The student personnel coordinator handles complaints. Temps and regular workers take complaints to the regular personnel worker. More temps have been needed recently since there are less student workers at Peppercorn than in previous years.

As Lynn, Doug, and the student were talking, Larry entered the kitchen again. When the student noticed him, he quickly went back to work restocking the food line.

The activity in the kitchen seemed to be getting busier, and Lynn decided she should move to another position so Doug could continue his work. Before she left, Doug commented about the union. He stated, "Skilled workers are on the same union contract as unskilled workers. I think that this arrangement holds back the skilled workers and helps the unskilled to get ahead. It doesn't work well, and we don't even have a shop steward. The only way that I can move up in the organization is to become part of management."

Lynn bid Doug farewell and went into the service area to get some lunch. As she went through the cafeteria line, she noticed Roger observing the cafeteria service. Lynn invited him to join her for lunch, but Roger declined, saying he had just begun his observation and he wanted to spend some time watching service during the busiest hours.

Service Areas

Roger immediately noticed the line servers interacted a great deal with the customers. He also noted there was no portion control. The students would ask the line servers for “a little more spaghetti, just meatballs, no corn, more sauce, or a small cup of soup.” Each customer wanted the standard portions or combinations of food items altered to meet their personal needs, and they were accommodated.

The first line server plates the entrees and the second worker serves the side dishes (see Figure 2). The workers must communicate in order to properly fill each order. The overall atmosphere in the serving area was relaxed. Roger timed the service and discovered it took two to four minutes for a customer to enter the line and be served during a busy period.

Figure 2Line Servers Setup

Starch	Vegetable	Backup	Entree	Entree
Soup	Vegetable	Entree	Entree	Entree

Server 2 Server 1

As the flow of customers slowed, Roger initiated a conversation with a line worker who introduced herself as Carrie. She told Roger she had been at Peppercorn for 10 years and was a door checker for 9½ of those years. She explained the door checker made sure that only diners on the university meal plan were allowed in the noncash dining area. She went on to say she had become bored with her position. She was also dissatisfied with her former hours, which were from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Carrie attained her new position with Drew's help. He facilitated a trade between her and a line server. Now that the swap is final, Carrie believes the other woman, who is now the door checker, may not think the trade was equitable.

During his conversation with Carrie, Roger saw the chef come out of the kitchen and pick up an empty pan. The chef lingered for a minute. He appeared to be watching the line service. Roger returned his attention to Carrie and continued

the conversation by asking her about line staffing. Carrie explained, "Usually there are three main workers on the line, two full-timers at one station and one student or temp at the other. We choose our own positions on the line and we usually stick to the same spots. When it gets busy, additional student workers fill in. Today one full-timer is sick, so a temp from another area filled the position. Sometimes they can't find substitutes, so we just have to work that much harder."

Roger stepped aside as a student worker carrying a tray of soup cups began to restock the service line. Roger apologized for any inconvenience and explained he was a member of a group learning about the operations at Peppercorn. Roger asked the student if he could take a moment to tell him about the relationship between student and nonstudent workers.

The student explained that Peppercorn is supposed to be staffed primarily by students. The students are grouped into three segments: student managers, student supervisors, and student workers. However, he said, "Since the supply of students has been diminishing over the years, more temps have had to fill the positions. There's a lot of tension between students and temps as well as between students and full-timers. This isn't surprising since the students supervise the operation. They call us 'students' as opposed to 'supervisors' and we seem to be stereotyped."

He clarified his statement, saying, "There's a discrepancy with age, economic status, and experience in many cases. Only the full-timers and the professional managers are not under the supervision of students. Students have a difficult time supervising older people, and older people have a difficult time taking orders from young people who they probably consider similar to their own children."

The student went back to work, leaving Roger to his thoughts. He was reminded of the conversation that he had with his partners about the conflicts between student and nonstudent workers. It was becoming clear to Roger that this was an important issue.

Just as Roger was beginning to consider the problems that can arise from role conflict and role ambiguity, he was startled by the sound of shattering glass. Roger turned in time to notice a student stepping away from a broken glass, acting as if nothing had happened. Several dishwashers, on their way to the drink station, also saw the broken glass as they walked by. Roger was curious to see how long it would take for someone to clean up the mess. Two minutes later, a dishwasher returned and swept up the glass. During this time, a student

supervisor was informed of the problem. Roger noted she never returned to make sure the situation was corrected.

Roger followed the dishwasher toward the dish room. As he rounded the corner of the serving area, Roger heard the sound of blaring music. He had to weave his way through a narrow passage that was blocked with customers at the cashier's station.

As he entered the dish room through an open doorway, Roger was greeted by a mixture of machinery noise, loud music, and a hot, humid atmosphere. The machinery was arranged in a pattern that allowed many people to perform different tasks simultaneously. The five workers gave Roger a cursory glance and continued with their tasks.

Roger, feeling a bit out of place and self-conscious, stood to one side of the work area and watched the activity. There was a lot of joking, talking, and interacting as the workers sorted and cleaned dishes, silverware, glasses, and trays. Full dish trays were stacked at the rinse station. Each rack was rinsed and then sent through the dishwashing machine. When the dishes completed their cycle, a worker sorted the dishes. Roger noted the worker put several freshly washed dishes into racks with dirty dishes. He also noticed the silverware was run through the dishwasher twice.

Roger wanted to know why the silverware had to go through the wash cycle two times, so he asked the dish sorter who was positioned at the end of the line. The sorter said, "We're concerned that plates and especially the silver are clean. We wouldn't want people catching something from someone else."

The sorter asked Roger what he was doing in the dish room. Roger explained and then asked the worker how long he had been at Peppercorn. The worker said he had been at Peppercorn for a year. Further discussion revealed the worker is on a split shift. He works from noon to 4 p.m. and then from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. He said he likes having a midday break in order to get things done in his personal life. He explained that he knew three of the other workers before he started the job. Because he was the newest employee in the dish room, he was stationed at the hottest position. He pointed out that the two full-timers he worked with had held their positions for four and two years, respectively. The other three workers, including him, were temps.

The worker finished sorting and left the dish room to get his coworkers a cold drink. Roger went over to the area where workers were scraping and sorting dirty plates. The dishes and filled racks were piling up. Roger noted the dish

machine was not able to keep up with the demand. He also saw that the paper items were shredded with the food scraps and that Styrofoam was sorted separately.

The oldest woman in the dish room yelled out from time to time, "Come on, keep it movin'." Roger spent a few more minutes observing. As he recalled Erica's story about her first day at Peppercorn, Roger wondered why there were no students working in the dish room. As he was leaving, a student supervisor came in to get trays for the service area.

Roger proceeded to the cashier station where he found the dish sorter chatting with the cashier. After a minute, the sorter returned to the dish room. Roger struck up a conversation with the cashier. After briefing her about his project, the cashier proceeded to tell Roger about some of her observations and experiences at Peppercorn.

She explained that the cashier's job is a full-time, nonunion position she has held for two years. She replaced the person who is currently the secretary. She enjoys having the opportunity to meet people and getting to know the regulars, but she has found that some of the students are rude.

The cashier stated, "I usually get along well with management. Everyone has their good and bad days. I was a manager in my previous job, so I understand what Drew has to deal with. I also understand the problems that the student supervisors have." Roger wondered what the cashier meant by this statement. What does Drew have to deal with and what problems do the student supervisors really have to deal with? Thus far, he had noted that the operation appeared effective, although some communication problems were evident.

The cashier, seeing Drew passing by, stopped him and asked him for more change and small bills. Roger asked if it was standard procedure for her to ask managers for more money, or if she was able to get it herself. She replied she is authorized to get cash, but it is difficult for her to leave her station.

While the cashier was waiting for Drew to return, Roger asked her about work conditions. The cashier replied:

I get cold in the winter because I'm so close to the entrance and the wind blows in. It's ironic because the rest of the workers complain about it being too hot at their stations. Peppercorn is built over heating ducts, so it's very hot everywhere except at my station. People's biggest complaint is the heat. There isn't adequate ventilation or air flow. Another common complaint is that there's not enough room

in the dining, kitchen, and service areas. This is because Peppercorn used to be a riding stable.

In the winter I get sick easily, but I only miss about five days per year. I've learned to live with not feeling well on the job. I have a sore back every night because I sit on a bar stool all day.

Before Roger could inquire if she had ever talked to management about her work conditions, she stated, "I'm the only cashier. I have to call on the secretary when it's really busy, but I know she has a lot of work to do. I also restock silverware. This entails shutting down the register, running to the dish room, and then restocking before the register line gets too long. Our job descriptions say that if someone sees something that needs doing, they are supposed to do it. Therefore, during slow periods I help clean tables, do the menu board, and look around for other things to do."

Roger asked the cashier about her plans for the future, and she explained she would like to have a secretarial job so she could get away from food service for a while. The cashier went on to say there are temps and students that make more money than she does as a full-timer and this disparity makes her resentful. The wages seem to be based on job position or union membership. Only four positions are nonunion. These positions include the cashier, secretary, supervisor, and manager. The rest of the workers at Peppercorn are temporary, union members, or students. The cashier added there are only five single people on the staff.

When Roger asked the cashier about the relationship between student and full-time workers, she replied there is a lot of pressure in the dish room. She believes the pressure builds up because the student supervisors never send student workers in to help. The supervisors' excuse is that they are short of help elsewhere. Drew returned with the cash, and Roger went to see if he could find his partners.

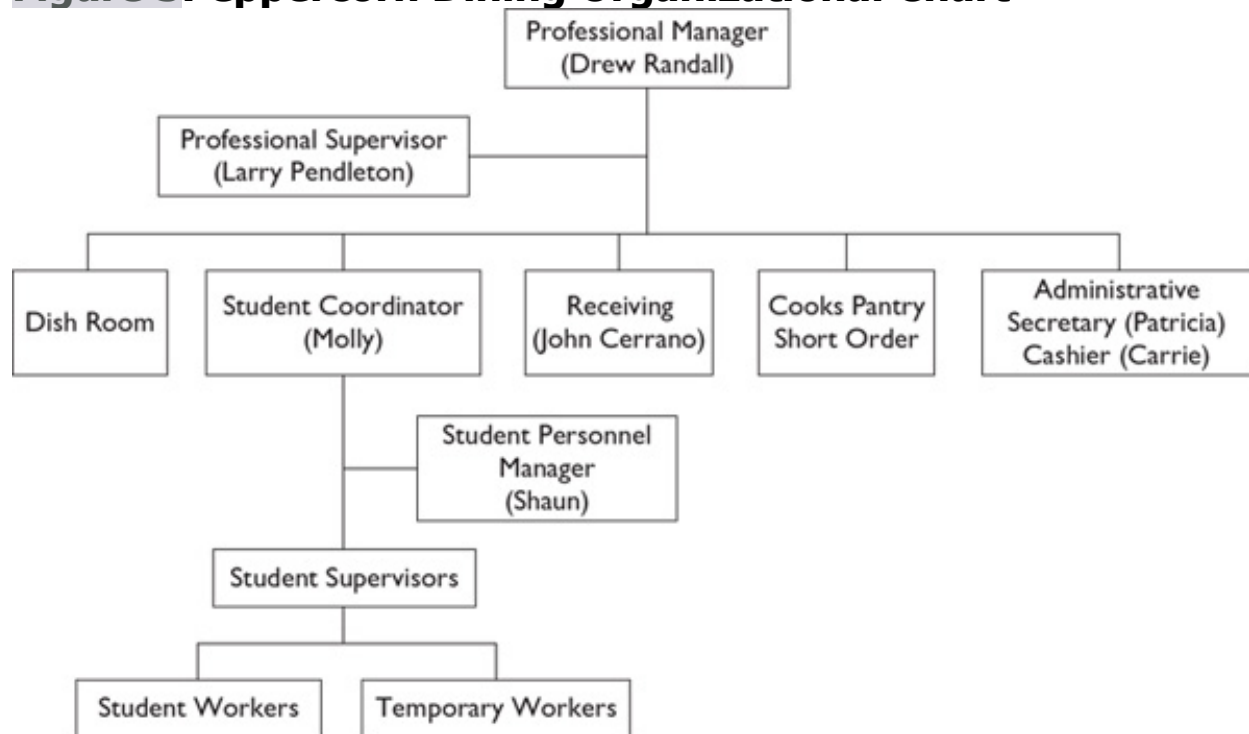
Administrative Information

Roger found Lynn and Erica sitting in the dining area. Erica was telling Lynn she had arranged for them to have dinner with some students that evening. Roger sat down with his partners and asked Erica if she could clarify some details about the organizational structure.

Erica responded, "There are three tiers of management at Peppercorn (Figure 3). There is the professional management staff, which consists of Drew and Larry. They oversee the full-time workers. There are also student managers and student supervisors. The student managers oversee student supervisors as well

as the student workers. The student supervisors are responsible for daily operations. The student workers and the temporary employees report to them. It seems, however, that the temporary workers also report to, and are trained by, the professional managers.”

Figure 3Peppercorn Dining Organizational Chart



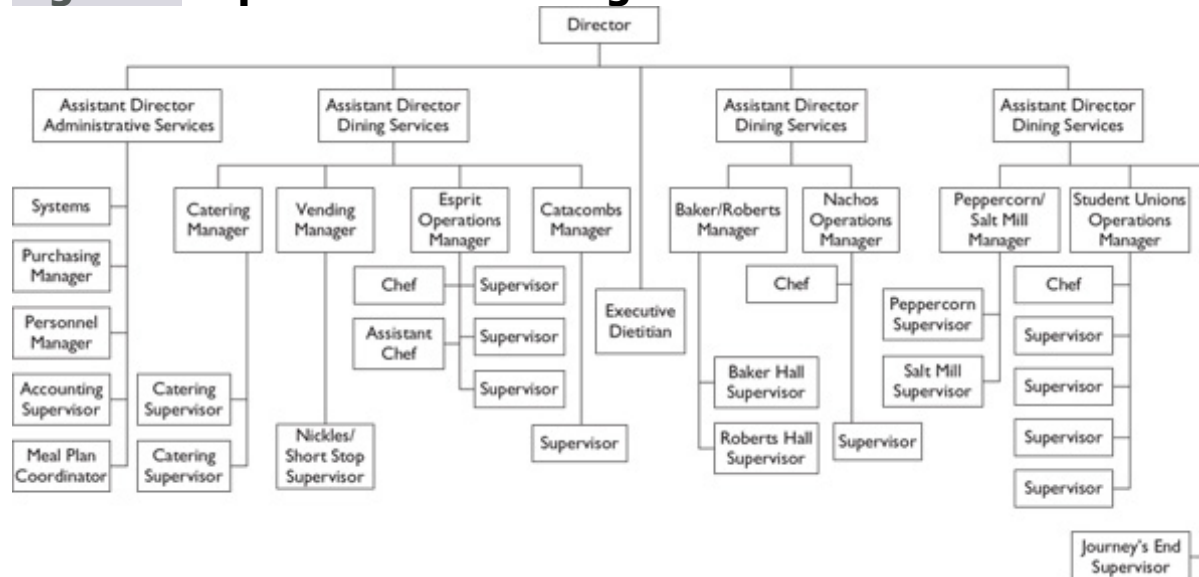
Roger and Lynn interjected that they had noticed difficulties between the students and the other workers at Peppercorn. Lynn asked Erica if she would clarify the distinction between the different levels of employees. Erica clarified the organizational structure stating:

There are full-time union employees, full-time nonunion temporary employees, and student labor. Full-time employees hold the positions of cooks, short order chefs, pantry workers, and cashiers. In past years, students filled all the other supplementary positions, including dishwashers, servers, cooks, helpers, short order helpers, pantry helpers, beverage servers, and serving area floaters. For the past four to five years, fewer students have wanted jobs at Peppercorn. This phenomena has resulted in the addition of the third type of employee, the full-time temporary worker.

Erica went on to tell her partners that she had gathered enough information to update them on the key players at All-American Dining. She explained that Larry Pendleton is the new professional supervisor, replacing Matt Copperfield at Peppercorn. In the central office, Nancy Lawrence is still the director of All-American Dining (Figure 4). She has been spending a great deal of time traveling

to different universities in order to analyze their food service operations. Stan O'Malley is still an assistant director of All-American Dining. Although there is a central office, each unit is independently operated.

Figure 4 Department of Dining Services



Roger asked Erica if she had the opportunity to speak with any employees and if she had been able to uncover any information about management-employee relations. Erica told her partners she had spoken with John Cerrano and some of the pantry workers.

Erica went on to say she and John spoke about changes that had occurred at Peppercorn since she had left. John told Erica the lack of student help has hurt operations at the unit. For example, a special dining event that Peppercorn sponsored last night was difficult for the workers. There were virtually no students on the staff. As a result, the full-time workers and temps had to pick up the slack.

John also commented that Larry doesn't listen to his advice about ordering food. John spends a lot of his time getting food items that should have come in from the suppliers from the other units on campus. According to John, Larry doesn't have the respect of the staff. He doesn't take anyone's advice and acts like a know-it-all. The situation is made worse because Larry doesn't do his job very well.

Erica went on to discuss the pantry workers stating:

The workers seemed to indicate a general belief that the management of All-American Dining, as well as the management at Peppercorn, doesn't really care about them. They mentioned how All-American's previous personnel director used

to visit the different dining units at least once a month and talk with the full-time employees. During that time, the workers felt that someone cared about them. They said that the new personnel director doesn't come around at all and probably doesn't even know who the full-time employees are.

The workers also told me that there is minimal union representation for food service employees. According to the workers, food service members are a minority faction of the union and aren't considered important unless a strike is in progress. Apparently, the union's primary concern is with maintenance workers, groundskeepers, janitors, and bus drivers. There's no shop steward and union officials don't come to Peppercorn unless there is an official grievance.

Lynn added that Doug had also commented on the union. She stated, "Based on what we have heard so far, no one is thrilled with the union. Workers and management alike seem to find the union a burden."

Roger asked Erica about how each unit on the campus was staffed. Erica explained that the units were independently staffed and at the beginning of each semester, the different units held recruitment campaigns.

Erica became quite excited as she stated, "OK, enough of the routine stuff. One thing that I found out today is that the university is building a new 400-seat dining facility. Also, a privately funded food service operation that will include a variety of dining concepts is opening nearby. Of course, these things will impact Peppercorn, but the scoop is that Drew will be the manager of the new facility!"

Erica, acting quite pleased, sat back, smiled, and waited for her partners to respond. Lynn paused only for a moment and then, turning to Erica, said, "This isn't making much sense, but, before I ask the obvious, why don't you tell us the rest of the facts?"

Erica, a little disappointed at the response her comment evoked, went on to explain that Drew would be leaving Peppercorn in about five months and that Eric Weston, the current vending manager, would take charge of the unit as soon as Drew left.

As Lynn and Erica began to engage in an intense discussion about the future of Peppercorn Dining, Roger, in true form, looked at his watch and stated, "Well, not only do we have a contract, we also have a dinner engagement in 20 minutes. Let's get some fresh air before we meet with the students!" The partners began laughing and, recognizing the sanity of Roger's comment, decided a break was in order.

Dinner with Student Managers

After freshening up, the trio returned to Peppercorn to meet the students for dinner. Molly, the student coordinator, and Shaun, the student personnel manager, were waiting for the consultants at Peppercorn's main entrance. The five of them went through the cafeteria line and then entered the dining room, where they found a quiet table to have their dinner.

Shaun seemed to know why the consultants had asked them to dinner and began to tell them about his tenure at Peppercorn. Shaun explained that when he had started at Peppercorn four years ago, there were two to three times the number of student workers. He went on to say more students made the work fun and the operation ran more efficiently. Shaun explained it is hard for the students who have been at Peppercorn for a long time because they know how it used to be.

Molly agreed with Shaun, saying students would work at Peppercorn because it had a reputation for being social. "To attract student workers," Molly said, "Peppercorn must become special, more conducive to meeting students' needs. In the early days, students were proud to be Peppies and looked forward to seeing their coworkers." She proceeded to say they have to treat students well because they can't risk alienating anyone. They can't afford to fire students or give them too many warnings.

Erica asked the students to comment on working with the temporary workers. Shaun said, "The temp-student relationship is not great. Temps are under the student supervisors' authority, but it doesn't really work that way. Temps are less efficient than students, but they are needed to fill the vacant positions. They are probably not as efficient because they have less loyalty to Peppercorn than the students."

Molly interjected, "This year, no students and temps work in the same areas except for emergencies. Temps are trained by the professional management but are supervised by students. Last year, it was unclear who was in charge of the temps. This year it is better. Most things are written in manuals."

"The regular and temporary workers don't talk much to the students," continued Molly. "Temps and full-timers think students are stupid; they have an attitude toward students. It's hard for the students to get cooperation and respect from the temps."

Lynn asked the students about their relationships with Drew. Shaun and Molly explained that while most students don't interact with Drew frequently, they, as supervisors, meet with him regularly. Most of the students think Drew is rude

and cold and unapproachable, but they have found he can be very patient. Additionally, many students don't believe Drew is knowledgeable about food service operations. Molly and Shaun have discovered that he is, in fact, an astute person. They attributed his reputation to a lack of accessibility, noting that Drew is generally more accessible to the full-time and temporary workers than to the students.

Lynn further inquired about the students' reactions to the forthcoming management changes. Molly replied, "Since most of the students don't work closely with Drew, we really can't foresee the change having much of an effect on them. Most students don't have any preconceived ideas about the new management."

Shaun disagreed with Molly stating, "It's going to be hard for a new manager to come in mid-year. The transition will cause problems since the new manager won't have the experience. I think that the new manager should change things quickly. New student workers are recruited by us in the spring and meet their supervisors when they begin working in the fall. They immediately have some respect for their supervisor. I think that the new manager will be in a bind."

Molly said she believed the change would have a greater effect on the full-time and temporary workers than on the students. She has heard some workers mention they are concerned because Peppercorn's future is unclear. Many of the full-time workers are loyal to Drew; they have become comfortable with his management style.

Roger, addressing Molly, asked about communication at Peppercorn. Molly responded:

Communication has been a major problem. The students thought that if they left me notes, things would get done. I would take the notes to management, but important things were not noted as being important. Mostly, the problems were repair and maintenance issues. People brooded that things didn't get done quickly. They didn't realize that most things have to go through a lot of channels, which takes time. There is so much paperwork involved. Now the students make special notations when issues are urgent so that I can establish priorities.

An area that is related to communication is ordering. There are a lot of problems with Larry. Last year, we had a problem with the person who filled a similar job but the job description has changed. Last year, the kitchen workers were getting burnt out. Larry revised the menus and for a while the kitchen seemed better. Larry just doesn't do his job well and we constantly run out of things.

Roger asked about the student pay structure at Peppercorn. Molly told him the pay rate has been changed twice. The effect is that workers are kept on the same pay grade because the raises push people back to level one. The only workers who benefit from the changes are the student managers.

Shaun noted that one of the most frustrating situations at Peppercorn was the lack of student interest, something that could not be controlled. Even when the wages were raised, no one applied for jobs. Shaun added that the student supervisors are upset about paying for their meal plan tickets because many of them worked their way through school.

It was getting late and the students had to attend classes the next morning. The consultants thanked the students for being so candid with them. After the students left, the consultants discussed their impressions of Peppercorn.

Roger commented that their earlier concerns about the willingness of employees to speak with them were unfounded. Lynn agreed, noting that although most of the workers seemed to be quite open, Doug was an exception. He was eager to talk, but the discussion seemed contrived. He seemed to be conveying information that he thought she should know and was careful to portray himself and the operation in a favorable light. Lynn said she thought he was concerned about possible repercussions from his responses.

Lynn went on to recount the interactions she had observed earlier in the day between Larry, Doug, and the student supervisor. She then commented, "Larry is an interesting player. All of the workers mention him. He seems to have a lot of power over the other workers, yet he seems to govern by fear. The workers become timid in his presence, nonetheless, they don't appear to have much respect for him."

Picking up on Lynn's train of thought, Roger noted that in his conversations and observations throughout the day, he had begun to wonder about the social system at the unit. He commented, "Although the organization was highly stratified, operations still seem to run smoothly. While workers may be timid around Larry and even fear Drew, the fact that operations are smooth and that the workers appear to be loyal indicates that personality conflicts and role ambiguity are symptoms of a larger problem."

"That's true," said Erica. "The unit always had a reputation for being a social environment. In the past, we were able to overlook personality and role conflicts because there was a strong culture at the unit."

Noticing that the cleaning crew was beginning to break down the dining room, the partners decided to call it a night.

Day Two: Interviews and Observations

Erica arrived at the dining hall at 10:30 a.m. As she climbed the stairs beside the loading dock, she noticed a worker was in the car wash, hosing down the trash cans. As she entered the kitchen, Erica spotted Drew helping out in the pantry. They greeted each other cordially and chatted for a few minutes. Drew, taking off his lab coat, said he was due at a meeting on the other side of the campus.

Erica left the kitchen and went into the office to gather more information on the structure and operations of Peppercorn. When she entered through the open office door, she found Larry working at the computer, placing orders with the central purchasing system. Larry explained to Erica that the computer system had not been working properly. It is supposed to generate order lists and inventories based on the menus that he inputs. He indicated, however, there must be some problem with the system because the orders are not coming in, and when they do, they frequently are late. After providing Erica with some literature such as employee handbooks, Larry suggested she talk to Patricia, the secretary at the main office.

Erica followed Larry's suggestion and on her way out of the unit she met Roger. She explained she was planning to visit the main office and said she would meet her partners in the late afternoon to discuss her findings.

Roger wandered around the unit for over an hour, observing the lunch service. During the first hour, the cafeteria was packed with customers. Roger noticed the student supervisors were busy refilling the salad and beverage stations. Shaun helped by restocking glasses and trays. The cafeteria line became long and at one point, Drew, having returned from his meeting, helped serve food. Roger noted that by the end of the lunch period, the cafeteria was short on silverware.

As the lunch service slowed, Roger decided to take a look at the student office. As he entered the downstairs dining room, he immediately noticed it was very hot, that a large percentage of the tables were dirty, and that many of the light bulbs in the dining room needed replacement. Roger located the student office and what appeared to be a small gathering or meeting area.

From the open office doorway, Roger could see a bank of time cards on the wall. Roger also noted the office contained a suggestion box. As he peered in the door, he was greeted by the sound of a woman's voice. Roger entered and introduced

himself. In response, the woman identified herself as Sarah Lange. Roger asked Sarah if she would be willing to discuss her work experiences at Peppercorn.

Sarah began by saying she had worked at Peppercorn for three years and had been a student supervisor two years. Sarah stated, "Working at Peppercorn is not as much fun as it used to be. Although the job was never easy, it has become increasingly difficult. As supervisors, we don't really manage any more, and the upper-level student managers like Shaun don't work and don't care. He won't even help out when we are short staffed."

Sarah described an incident when Naomi, another student supervisor, was working a snack shift that was understaffed. Shaun, aware of the problem, stayed downstairs at his desk. When Naomi went downstairs to ask him for help, he acted ambivalent. Shaun finally helped in the dining room for about 20 minutes.

"In contrast to Shaun," Sarah commented, "Molly is willing to pitch in when we are short staffed, but this has caused her to become burnt out. Molly has a hard time dealing with problems that arise among the student supervisors. A few days ago, she called a meeting and told us there was a new policy restricting the snacks that we were allowed to eat. She also told us that we were scheduled to work on special dining programs, which are always at dinnertime. The whole time that Molly spoke with us, she was really curt and acted like she was annoyed. We don't even have a student rep to complain to anymore. At least Molly is leaving at the end of the school year."

Sarah said that although she is not very happy working at Peppercorn, she does not want to quit. She has loyalty to both her fellow workers and to the unit. Sarah said she would definitely quit if some of her friends, who are also supervisors at Peppercorn, stopped working at the unit.

Roger thanked Sarah for talking with him and wished her luck in the future. As he walked up the stairs to the service area, Roger made a mental note to talk to his partners about information flow and to further discuss coalitions within the unit.

While Roger had been observing service, Lynn, who arrived at 12:30, had entered the unit from the loading dock. Hoping the workers would be less self-conscious if she was undetected, Lynn quietly observed operations for almost an hour. During that time, Lynn noticed the steam kettles were draining, and much like the previous day, the kitchen workers appeared unhurried but attentive to their tasks. The manner in which they worked seemed highly professional and reflective of the long years the employees had worked together.

When Doug finally noticed Lynn, he greeted her warmly and began to chat with her. As Doug and Lynn were talking, a man who Doug said was a short-order cook walked through the kitchen. He stopped and stared at Lynn for a moment and then asked, "Are you with the health department or the union?" Lynn introduced herself and explained the nature of her project. The man stared at her again briefly and then walked away.

Doug excused himself and Lynn, left to her thoughts, wondered if the man had accurately stated the paranoia she had perceived in Doug the previous day. Doug returned a few minutes later with a cup of soup and offered it to Lynn, saying he thought she should have the opportunity to taste Peppercorn's good food. As Lynn was finishing the soup, she saw two students walk through the kitchen carrying tacos. They proceeded to the loading dock and began to eat their meal. Lynn, wanting some fresh air, went out to the dock and began to converse with the students.

The students told Lynn they had worked at Peppercorn for three years. One of the students said, "Peppercorn used to be a better place to work. We used to have more students working here. The unit always used to be cheerful, and they used to buy beer and have parties on Friday nights."

Lynn asked what had caused the situation to change and the second student replied, "Drew is much tighter about things. The management is only concerned about customers and not about workers. When I first started working here, we had to mop the floor, but there were a lot of students so it was more fun. Then they didn't make us mop any more. Now we have to mop again, but there is not as much camaraderie among the workers."

The worker continued, "What makes the situation worse is that we can't even mop properly because we are always short of supplies. We haven't had any bleach for a week."

Doug came out to the loading dock and said he was going on break. He wanted the students to come inside so he could give them instructions before he left. Doug told the students that because there was not much work to be done, they could work at a slow pace or even sweep the floor so they could work their full shift.

Lynn followed Doug and the students back into the kitchen. Bob and Robert were finishing the lunch cleanup, and Chris was looking at the dinner menu while eating a snack. When Chris saw Lynn standing alone, he approached her and

immediately began to tell her about his work experiences and views of Peppercorn.

Chris told Lynn he likes working at Peppercorn. In the same breath, he said he had recently seen ads for positions at a hotel and plans on applying for jobs. Chris said, "I think the food service industry is hard. We're always working when other people are off, and it's hard to get good financial compensation."

Chris went on to explain that the management at Peppercorn does not give the kitchen staff feedback. He believes this is because management does not eat at Peppercorn often. He also said the management is very cost oriented and won't bring in the best quality products.

Chris went on to state:

Dining used to pay for us to attend professional culinary classes. Now they don't want to spend the money, so they present lectures by campus chefs. It doesn't accomplish much since we are usually taught things that we already know how to make or things that are not within the budget constraints. It doesn't make sense that they are willing to shell out bucks for things like unit specials and management classes and not spend any money on us.

It's hard to get new recipes on the menu. I've tried, but I'm usually met with resistance. I guess that in large quantities they can't afford mistakes. Once, they let us try to test market a new recipe by putting out small chaffing dishes in the meal plan dining room and then asking students for comments on the product. It worked out fairly well and we've used the recipe several times.

As Lynn was wondering about Drew's comment on being a participatory manager, Erica entered the kitchen and came over to tell her she was able to gather some information from the main office. Lynn thanked Chris for speaking with her, and she and Erica went into the service area to find Roger. Roger was chatting with some customers near the salad bar. When he saw his partners approaching, he concluded his conversation.

The consultants each purchased a beverage and on their way to the dining room, Roger told his partners that customers generally had a favorable impression of Peppercorn. They like the food but thought the service was too slow. The only other comment the customers made was that the dining areas were too warm. Erica added that when she had worked at Peppercorn there were rarely any complaints about the food, but they constantly received negative feedback about the heat.

After the consultants were seated, Roger asked Erica what she was able to discover about the structure of the All-American Dining organization. Erica showed her partners copies of the organizational chart, mission statement (Figure 5), and goals and objectives (Figure 6). Erica went on to describe a few of the things she had discovered that day. For example, menu and staffing changes had to be approved by the central office. She also found out that managers are frequently transferred between units.

Figure 5

Mission

The mission of All-American Dining is to meet the nutritional, social, aesthetic, and economic needs of the university community with varied and innovative dining services. By meeting these needs we:

- Exert a strong and positive influence on community life.
- Provide educational opportunities for students, staff, and faculty.
- Create a living environment that will help maintain All-American's position as an outstanding center of learning.

The challenge is to accomplish all this within the framework of the enterprise concept.

Figure 6

Goals and Objectives

The goals of All-American Dining are closely interwoven with those of the Division of Campus Living and the University. These goals and related objectives are outlined below.

- I. **Customer Satisfaction.** The primary goal is to provide the All-American community with a nutritious, economical, and quality dining program. The objectives are to:
 - Provide high-quality cuisine at an affordable price.
 - Conduct surveys to determine customer satisfaction and provide guidelines for change.
 - Maintain a variety of quality dining services, including: cafeterias, professional catering, vending, and retail food outlets.
 - Offer special dining experiences such as gourmet cuisines, unit specials, and community dining events.
 - Create flexible and cost-effective meal plans and options that give customers a wide choice of dining times and locations.
 - Maintain the highest standards of health and safety.

II. **Excellent Facilities.** The department's goal is to maintain dining facilities in superior condition. The objective is to continually assess and maintain the functional and aesthetic design of facilities in the comprehensive context of the following:

- An ever-changing and varied customer market.
- The need to assure that production and service areas are clean, safe, efficient, and comfortable.
- Budgetary constraints.
- Department and university master facilities planning processes.
- Energy conservation goals.

III. **Professional Management.** Recruit and maintain a professional management staff that can meet the challenges of a dynamic food service enterprise. The objectives are to:

- Encourage a participatory, decentralized management style.
- Recruit exceptional talent and support internal promotions.
- Provide a stimulating work environment through interunit transfers, challenging staff assignments, and intradepartmental competition of programs and services.
- Maintain a compensation program that attracts and motivates an innovative, skilled staff.
- Maintain open and positive lines of communication among management, staff, and customers.
- Provide and encourage education and training opportunities that promote professional and personal growth.
- Conduct regular performance evaluations that are based on predetermined goals and objectives.
- Maintain policy and procedural manuals that will ensure consistent and efficient administration.

IV. **Sound Financial Management.** Develop and maintain effective financial accounting and reporting systems that facilitate effective planning, decision making, and accountability. The objectives are to:

- Be financially self-sufficient.
- Encourage financial responsibility by providing timely, accurate statements, emphasizing the management budget process and requiring managers to be financially accountable.
- Maintain an effective system of internal controls.

- Control labor costs through efficient use of employee time and control the costs of goods with purchasing, menuing, forecasting, and precosting policies and procedures.
 - Protect the department against fluctuation in meat costs through hedging in the commodities market.
 - Evaluate and budget effectively for future facilities and equipment replacement needs.
 - Conduct thorough cost-benefit analyses of potential programs and products.
 - Cut costs with a comprehensive energy conservation program.
 - Use resources in a reasonable manner.
 - Evaluate short-term possibilities with long-range perspective.
- V. **Contribution to the University Mission.** Dining's program must contribute to the educational, economic, and community service goals of the University. The objectives are to:
- Support the educational goals of the University through staff teaching and lecturing.
 - Provide educational opportunities for the students.
 - Use the diverse dining facilities as laboratories for student research and job training.
 - Contribute professional time in support of the community.
 - Encourage staff participation in University committees and projects.
- VI. **Industry Leadership.** Maintain Dining's position as a leader through continual educational and professional contributions to the food service industry. The objectives are to:
- Develop active and creative food service leaders.
 - Participate in professional organizations and committees.
 - Communicate our ideas and problem-solving techniques to others in the industry.

Erica then asked her partners what their thoughts were on the structure of All-American Dining and what effect it had at the unit level. Roger suggested that from the information that Erica had gathered, the organization seemed highly centralized. However, workers at the unit level are interested in making their own decisions. He added that the structure of the organization could be contributing to the problems that Drew perceived with productivity and morale.

Lynn, looking over the mission and goal statements that Erica had collected, commented, "All-American professes to be decentralized. Also, Drew believes he

is a participatory manager. It seems as if this organization doesn't play by its own rules. I haven't seen any indication of participation, let alone adequate communication between management and line employees."

The consultants continued to talk for a while about the tension they had noticed at the unit. Since Drew was leaving, they wondered if their presence at the unit would have any affect and if the feedback session would really serve its purpose. The consultants decided they would spend several hours the following morning reviewing the information they had gathered. In order to facilitate their meeting, they quickly constructed a partial list of the individuals they had encountered during their observations. This list included characteristics the consultants believed might be important to their analysis (Figure 7).

Figure 7

All-American Dining and Peppercorn Dining Personnel Chart (partial)

Name	Job Title	Education	Seniority	Age	Full-time	Part-time Student	Management
Peppercorn							
Drew	Manager	A.S.-Restaurant	8 yrs.	37			X
Bob	Day chef		28 yrs.	48	X		
Robert	Day cook	Navy cook	11 yrs.	44	X		
Doug	Night chef	Navy cook	10 yrs.	36	X		
Chris	Night cook		3 yrs.	31	X		
Carrie	Server		10 yrs.	28	X		
Larry	Supervisor	A.S.-Mgmt.	1 mo.	32			X
John	Receiving		11 yrs.	35	X		
Bonnie	Cashier		2 yrs.	28	X		
Molly	Coordinator	Senior-A&S	4 yrs.	21		X	
Shaun	H.R. manager	Senior-E.E.	4 yrs.	21		X	

Name	Job Title	Education	Seniority	Age	Full-time	Part-time Student	Management
Sarah	Supervisor	Senior-Gov't.	4 yrs.	21		X	
All-American Dining							
Nancy	Director	A.S.-Restaurant	12 yrs.	41			X
Stan	Asst. director	B.S.-Hotel	9 yrs.	32			X
Larry	Supervisor	A.S.-Mgmt.	6 yrs.	32			X
Eric	Vending manager	B.A.-English	8 yrs.	34			X



As the consultants sat at the table, several of the employees came over to speak with them. The workers seemed relaxed and joked with the consultants. Doug commented he was working on putting his résumé together, and Chris told the partners about some new recipes he was developing. The pantry workers and dish room workers made small talk until the consultants said they had to depart. Roger, Lynn, and Erica thanked the workers for being so cooperative and said they hoped to see them sometime soon.

Questions

1. How effective was the OD consultants' data gathering? The content of the data? The process of how the data were collected?
2. What concepts or models might help you analyze the data? What conclusions would you draw from the analysis?
3. How should the feedback session be designed?