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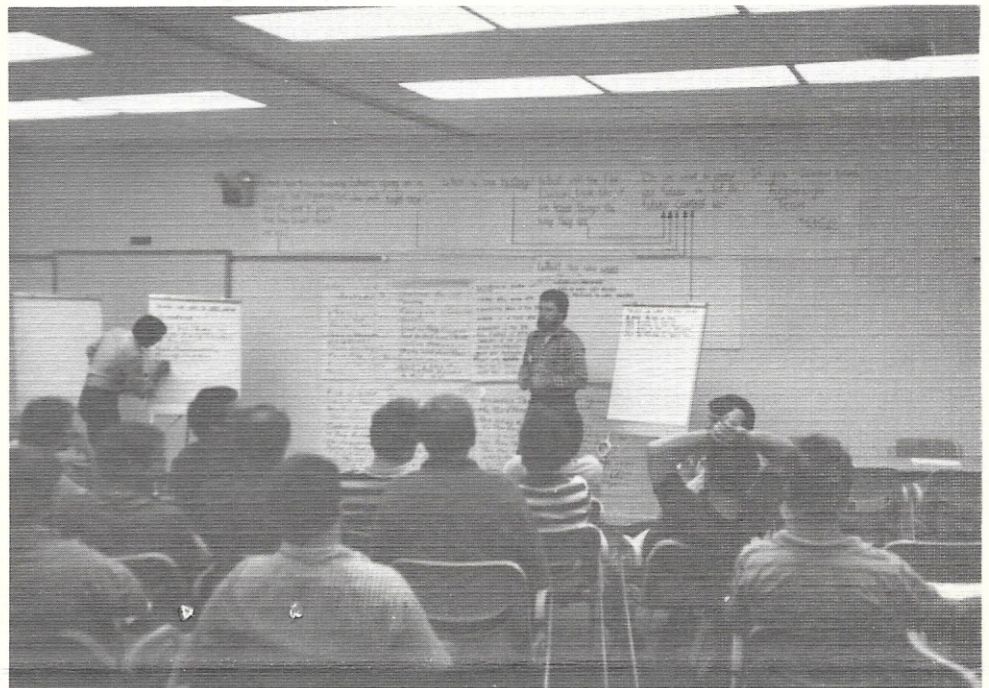
FLOC DIVISION COMMITTED TO CONTROLLING THE FUTURE

Search conference creates excitement and positive attitudes.

The Floc Division's entire staff closed a two-day Search Conference with a decision to control their future through a socio-technical systems redesign of their organization. (This endeavor is noteworthy not only because of the positive influence it will have on the Floc area but, also because it will be the first socio-technical redesign within the James River Corporation.)

This search was the result of a Managerial Meeting held July 16, 1987. The information shared at this meeting was reports of questions originating from the plant concerning the nature of S-T-S Redesign and its role in providing solutions to problems confronting the Floc area. The inquiries indicated to those present that this was **an opportunity for the Floc to move forward**. A brief description of S-T-S Redesign by Walt Cupples (external consultant) and a recommendation from the B/G Employee Involvement staff persuaded the Floc Management Team to take the initial step towards a Floc Plant Redesign-a Search Conference! Management's commitment to the process was demonstrated by the deferral of two production days to allow attendance by all Floc-related personnel. The B/G Employee Involvement staff was then charged with the task of creating and implementing a process for a Floc Search Conference to be held September 1 & 2, 1987 at the Training and Development Center.

Bob Bergeron - V.P. Local 75 and John Chubb - V.P./Gen. Mgr. Floc Division opened the Search by welcoming the other 43 participants. It was noted at this time that every function (Sales, R/D, Production, Management) was pre-



sent and that everyone's open and honest input was crucial in order for this event to succeed.

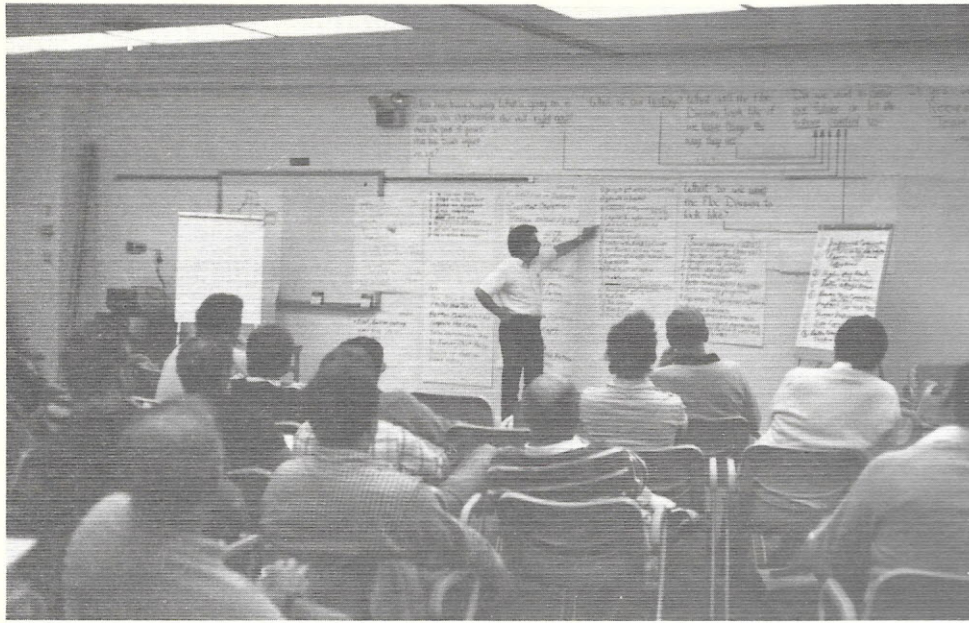
John and Bob explained the Employment Security Guidelines and Flexible Work Force Memorandum of Understanding. The contents of these agreements were used to clarify the intent and boundaries of any redesign effort at Berlin/Gorham. Bob emphasized the guarantee stating **no permanent department employee would lose employment in their department as a result of attempts at achieving a high performance work force**. John stressed the importance of openness and trust as they relate to the desired future state of employee relations and dealings with our unions.

Deb Hirsch (E.I.E. Coordinator) then took the stage to give an overview of the next two days. She went on to say that this **Search Conference was a vehicle to develop a common understanding of where the Floc has been, where it is now and where its employees want it to be in the future**. She also stated, "We'll be making some conscious decisions based on the data collected during these two days. John and Bob are the leaders of this organization. As such, they have responsibilities to raise some key issues and challenges. We have the responsibility to meet these challenges and raise additional issues." Deb then stated that the only norms for this meeting would be to "Speak out and listen!" She chal-

What has been happening **outside** our organization over the past 5 years that had direct impact on us?

What's going on in the mill **right now?**

What is our **History?**



lenged the group to make the most of this Search, because it is "A one-shot deal!"

Walt Cupples then led the group through the first question of the agenda: **"What's been happening outside the Floc organization over the past five years that has had a direct impact on us?"** He gave everyone time to consider the question on an individual basis, then had the assembly break into smaller predetermined groups. This format gave everyone an opportunity to be heard and simplified the gathering of data. The chartered outcomes of those small groups were then presented to the general assembly. This information gathering process was used throughout the remainder of the Search. A brief, random sampling of all the data accumulated included, "A growing trend in the general public's eating habits towards a high fiber-low calorie diet, greater customer demands in as much as they require more grades - special packaging - special unitizing, increased

competition, higher production cost (i.e. freight rates, pulp prices, energy cost, etc.) and more stringent F.D.A. regulations."

Joel Fortier (E.I.E. Facilitator-Trainer) assisted the group in determining **"What's going on in the Floc right now?"** Some common elements reported to the general assembly included, "Large production employee turnover due to low wages as compared to other parts of the mill, increased emphasis placed on Safety, outdated equipment, ongoing Floc R/D work, existing need for upgrading locker room and lunch room facilities, continuing holiday shutdowns, and Floc is seen as a family with good people who like their jobs."

Mark Bechtold (E.I.E. Facilitator-Trainer) helped the gathering through a revisit of the Floc's history with an aim on determining those **"things we want to keep doing"**, and those **"things we would like to stop doing."** The stories told suggested a

continuing of rewards for outstanding safety records, keeping a sense of humor in the workplace and a need to improve on the degree of trust which presently exists. Unsafe acts and customer complaints were issues that need to be looked at in more detail.

Next, Mark acted as facilitator to the group for a look at the future. One part of the group was asked to **explore the possibilities** if "we leave things the way they are now", and the other half answered the question **"What do we want the Floc to look like?"** Leaving things as is painted a dim picture of limited growth, continued employee turnover, dwindling moral and inadequate capital improvements. A highly competitive organization made possible by working smarter was the vision of "What we want the Floc to look like." This would yield increased capital investments, improved work environment, full capacity operation, better pay scale and a heightened awareness of Floc's role within the James River Corporation.

All the energy expended on gathering information gave the group a mutual understanding of their work environment. Now came the decision point where all the data assembled would be scrutinized and used to answer some key issues:

- **Do we want to control the future?**
- **Do we designate a Redesign Team?**
- **What positions need representation on the Redesign Team?**
- **What process shall be employed to select members of the Redesign Team?**

Walt provided the group with background information on **Socio-Tech Redesign**, to assist them in reaching consensus on these vital questions. He

What will the Floc Division look like if **we leave things the way they are?**

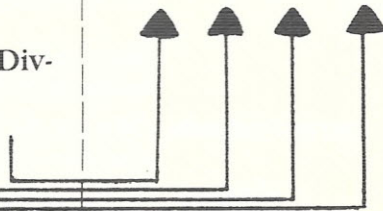
Do we want to control our future or let the future control us?

If yes -
Control Future

Redesign Team

- selection process

What do we want the Floc Division to look like?



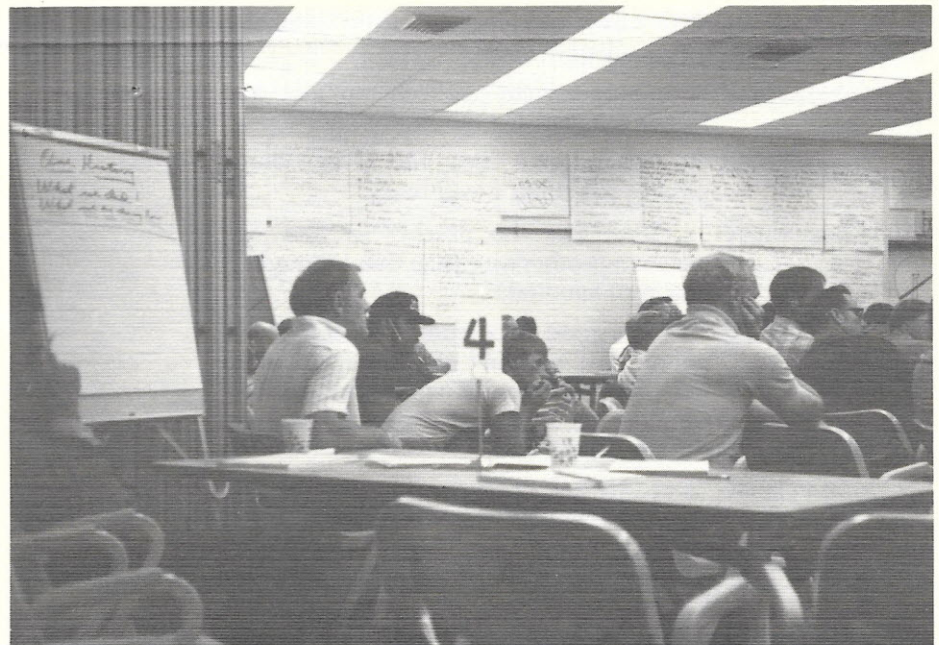
outlined the usual makeup of a redesign committee comprised of eight members representing a cross-section of the positions found in the division. The committee would employ a well-structured design addressing the needs of the division. This task would include identifying the philosophy and goals under which this division will operate, and a close study of the technical and social needs. The committee will establish communication links with all the stakeholders to ensure ownership for implementation.

A resounding **YES** vote "**We want to control our future!**" led to the historical sanctioning of the first Socio-Tech Redesign committee within the James River Corporation. The group then decided that the following positions would yield the best cross-section possible for a Redesign Team:

- Shop Steward
- Shipper
- Ball Mill Operator
- Bagger/Cutter
- Manufacturing Supervision Tech.
- Manufacturing Supervision Prod.
- Maintenance
- Member at Large

The process used to fill these positions was to ask for **volunteers**, and in those areas where more than one person stepped forward, elections would be carried out. The Shop Steward position will be filled by an election, organized by Local 75 at a future date.

Bob Bergeron summed up the overall feeling of the Search Conference by saying "A real concentrated group effort. I felt a lot of concerns were brought forward . . . especially wages! The Floc employees are a great group of dedicated people whom James River can be very proud to employ. I hope they can accomplish all the goals that they set forth through this concept. Good luck!"



Off the Cuff

What are your thoughts about the 2-day Search Conference?

- Robert Hayward "I am very excited because I strongly believe that the total E.I. theory of redesign will make everyone's job more enjoyable and meaningful and the division more successful. No one dominated our two days of meetings and everyone participated in a positive manner. If we continue to use the collective thought process of everyone within our divisions, Solka Floc® will always be No. 1 in the powdered cellulose market."
- Robert Bergeron "A real concentrated group effort. I felt a lot of concerns were brought forward . . . especially wages! The Floc employees are a great group of dedicated people, whom James River can be very proud to employ. I hope they can accomplish all the goals that they set forth through this concept. Good luck!"
- Frank Boucher "Everything was fine. You have to take a chance to see if it will work. You can't condemn it before you try it."
- Lionel Pinette "Search conference was all right but I wouldn't want to do it every day."
- Robert Dupuis "It gives us all an opportunity to control our future, in a more positive way."
- Roland Villeneuve "A meeting where we got to know each other a little more. I learned about other people's jobs."
- Robert Lambert "Ability to control our own future is our own responsibility. It lies in our ability to do the best for ourselves and the company."
- Mike Morin "Food was good."
- Robert Allaire "Not much direction from the company; not many guidelines."
- Ronald Legere "I thought it went real well and hope that better things come out in the end."
- Tom Addario "It was a good idea and if everybody pitches in I think it will work."
- Alain Beausejour "I didn't like the psychology that was played but otherwise than that I thought it was well handled."
- George Leclerc "It was a good opportunity to get to know people that we don't get to see very often like the employees in Hackensack and Customer Service. I'd like to thank the cook for the fine food."
- Tom Pellerin "If people start doing the things they talked about, it will be a better place to work."
- Marcel Perreault "I think it was good. They should have more meetings like this throughout the mill. I think that they learned we were the lowest paid department in the mill."
- Steve Coulombe "We are the lowest paid people in Berlin-Gorham, a 10% increase would be nice."
- Bill Miller "I was impressed with the level of participation of the group and the quality of the comments. I thought that there was good constructive criticism which will make it easier for us to improve our department. I was impressed with how quickly the group pulled together."
- Norman Dumesnil "Search has brought about a new concept among the work force in that we seem to feel a togetherness and pride as a group."
- Andrew McKenzie "The meeting was for a good cause, but it didn't get us anywhere."
- Jit Ang "On the whole, I found this conference very useful and enlightening. Given enough time I feel that the redesign committee will come up with useful ideas that may help the Floc plant in the long run."
- Paul Savard "I thought the meeting was good. I just hope they carry out what was discussed at the meeting."
- Ken Neil "I thought it was all right, informational, educational and the food was good."
- Roland Aube "With the current business conditions and social needs of everyone, I feel the Search Conference was good in the sense that it gave us an opportunity to air our needs and concerns. As a result we have started to lay a foundation that I believe will improve our social and technical needs, which will help us to be #1 in the market place."
- John Chubb "I was nervous going in but ended up by enjoying the whole process. The aspect I enjoyed most was the participation by everyone during the two days. The quality of input impressed me and made me more optimistic about the potential future of our business. Hopefully we will all benefit from this process by becoming involved in more satisfying and rewarding jobs."
- Alida Philip "I enjoyed the Search Conference and enjoyed meeting everyone I didn't already know at the Floc Plant. There are many people there with good ideas. When people's ideas are heard with open minds, we can have better communication within the division and a business that continues to run smoothly and efficiently. The conference was a positive first step in the right direction. We should continue in that way."