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An Analysis of the Business Banking Team of NationsBank: Where it’s been, where it is, where it’s going.

by

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An Analysis of the Business Banking Team of NationsBank: Where it’s been, where it is, where it’s going.

Senior Project 1994

Submitted
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by Kathryn Hansen
Summary

SUBJECT: Inter and intra group dynamics of the business banking team of NationsBank.

OBJECTIVE: To assess and analyze the vision, mission, goals, decision making style, ethical atmosphere, level of motivation, and overall satisfaction of two co-dependent teams. To provide the teams and their managers with the results of this analysis. To make recommendations for improvement based on course work from the Jepson School curriculum.

RESEARCH METHOD AND RESULTS: I conducted informal interviews with the team members and those who work with them. Using this information, as well as my personal experiences and observations, I have created a document that may be used by NationsBank to improve its current situation or used as a prototype for similar future endeavors.
Organization Background and Historical Information

NationsBank is a pioneer in the new concept of financial institutions which combine private, commercial, and investment banking into one entity. Founded in 1991 through a merger of NCNB Corporation and C&S/Sovran Corporation, NationsBank has enjoyed a successful infancy doubling its earnings from 1991 to 1992 and becoming one of the largest and most respected financial institutions in the country.

The quick success of the organization has been attributed to the process of the initial merger, specifically, the delegation of responsibility. The issues of settling the merger, (and the resulting credit problems), as well as the bank’s expansion into other areas of business were overseen by the senior management. The entire development and operation of the existing business was handled by line managers and employees. This was such a successful mode of operation that the company ultimately offered stock options to 95% of its employees who were below senior management; a rare occurrence in corporate America. The success of this policy led to the adoption of the motto "Ownership Makes A Difference", a value held strongly by the organization.

Two other important values of the organization have been highlighted in NationsBank’s success story. They are a commitment to better credit risk management and tremendous developments in customer service. These ideas provide a foundation for the teams that are the focus of this project:
the business banking and credit analysis teams. These groups, which are relatively new in the organization are responsible for small business lending.

The History of Business Banking

The business banking team, which is relatively new to NationsBank is responsible for small business lending, (loans to businesses which have one to five million dollars in annual sales). This process used to be handled by one team in which single employee, called a lending officer, established customer contact, brought in the loan application, completed the loan analysis, and made and delivered the lending decision. Almost two years ago, NationsBank associates at the Executive Vice President level decided that the loan officer system had become obsolete. They were aware that the small business loan officers had become bogged down, and were constantly behind in processing loan requests. They were concerned about the demands that they were placing on the loan officers. While they understood that loaning money to small companies is risky business, they were asking the lenders to completely control loan loss, while demanding that they keep the administrative cost of loan analysis down. That is to say, they expected the lenders to bring in a lot of high quality loans, with low risk factors which could be accomplished only through extensive customer contact and great amounts of financial analysis. Yet, they wanted them to do it using a minimum of time and resources for the quality/risk analysis.
They realized that this burden was too large, and was forcing the lenders to lose efficiency. The bank was no longer meeting the needs of its customers, and the contribution of the lenders to the welfare of the bank was decreasing. This sparked the decision that the system would have to change.

Don Lecky, an Executive Vice President, assembled a group of bank officers who were at his level or higher in the corporate structure. He also included a team of consultants and internal experts who had been brought in to help the executives come up with a plan. After months of research, the group developed a strategy for improving their system and going after the small business market. The issues involved in developing this strategy were more complex than just achieving financial success. Also at stake were the careers of many of NationsBank’s associates. The changes that they were contemplating were not just changes in a system, they were changes in people’s lives; so it was important to find a balance between employee satisfaction, and financial success.

Seven or eight strategies, including one that would have basically maintained the status quo, were carefully considered by Lecky and his team. Taking into account the opinions of the executives, the consulting firm, and the internal experts, they decided to adopt what is now called business banking. According to the new system, the tasks of the original small business loan officers were to be divided between two teams. First, the
business bankers, who would have a very sales oriented role and would be responsible for all customer contact and for bringing in the loan applications. The credit analysis team (CAT) would then take the application from the business banker and handle the entire loan analysis and approval process. The fact that each team would be able to focus on its area of specialty would help ensure customer satisfaction and solid credit risk management. Because of the structure of this system, the business bankers would have no real loan authority, (a valued quality in the banking industry), and the credit analysis team would essentially lose customer contact.

In the world of banking, many people measure their self worth, and their value to the bank based on their level of loan approval authority. People who have experience in lending value their ability to make decisions and give immediate feedback to customers. Under the new plan, the bank asked the business bankers, (some of who had up to thirty years experience), to completely give up their loan authority. The bank also asked the credit specialists to give up almost all contact with customers.

This reorganization created some awkward hiring situations and required a lot of difficult decisions. There were many people within the bank who had been working in lending positions for a long time and were now in positions that the organization no longer really needed, (usually because of NationsBank’s large growth and reorganization efforts). Mr. Lecky and his team wanted to take advantage of the experience level of those people and
to make sure that they were "taken care of". However, he also realized that the success of the plan depended on making sure that the new roles were filled by the right people, not just the people who had the most experience. Lecky felt a responsibility to the human concerns of his employees as well as pressure to reach a goal.

This reorganization also placed a lot of stress on the employees. Simply because of job security issues, many employees who were not in favor of the new program felt forced to participate. A lot of people were very reluctant to give up their lending authority and wanted to find another alternative. For someone who has a lot of experience in banking however, it is very difficult to move to a different bank because most banks prefer to hire recent graduates who can be more easily trained to meet their expectations and who have not yet built up a high salary base.

Despite these difficulties, the team went ahead with the new system hoping that the theoretical benefits of the business banking system would come true in practice. One of these anticipated improvements was that the system would create a streamlined, efficient lending team. The business bankers would no longer be required to handle the enormous and tedious responsibility of loan analysis and would be able to focus solely on serving the customer. At the same time, the Credit Analysis Team would no longer have to concern itself with the time consuming process of customer contact and sales and would be able to focus on doing thorough, yet inexpensive,
loan analysis. The executive team anticipated that having less responsibility would allow members of both groups to become experts in their area. Having two people giving input would allow for more comprehensive lending decisions, and the feeling of team membership would give confidence to both groups.

The most important implication of the successful implementation of this strategy would be increased customer service. The bank has adopted as its fundamental value meeting and exceeding its customers’ needs whenever possible. This plan would allow for much more efficient and organized lending procedures and decisions which ultimately would help them give better service to the customer.

If it failed the team would be in a position to lose the confidence and support of experienced employees who have been of great service to the bank over the years. The loan requests would become further backlogged, and customer service would, at least temporarily, go out the window. In addition, after they cleaned up that mess, the group would be right back at square one trying to come up with another strategy. If the program succeeded however, Lecky knew that the bank would reap enormous benefits. This program could set the standard in small business loaning. Lending goals could go up dramatically resulting in not only better satisfied customers, but many more of them. Also, creating a successful system that met two of the banks major goals, efficient operation and high customer
service), would be a great boost for everyone involved.

NationsBank gives its associates a rule of thumb to follow in decision making: if you have 80% of the information, make the decision, and if you have 80% of a plan together, get it going. So, once Mr. Lecky felt 80% sure that the business banking plan was the best way to go, the team began working out the details of implementation. They spent the next months carefully planning the steps the group would take. Their first step was to choose team leaders so that those people would be involved early on and would feel that they had a part in the process and would develop a kind of ownership for the program by the time others became involved. They selected people who had a high level of credibility within the bank, (Joe Miller for business banking, and Bob Joynt for CAT). These team leaders were well respected as experienced, flexible, innovate employees of the bank.

As expected, the next step of choosing the team members created a lot of difficult decisions. Many people chosen to be business bankers were very reluctant to give up their lending authority. Everyone involved was concerned about being involved with a group whose success was completely unpredictable. Finally, the teams were selected, and Lecky and his team started intense team building efforts beginning with a week-end retreat. He knew that it was crucial that the two groups feel comfortable with each other, (which he accomplished with lots of ice breakers and
exercises that required physical contact and intense sharing), and that they understand that one group absolutely could not be successful without the other.

Since the implementation of the business banking system a little over a year ago, there has been a lot of fine tuning. Several of business bankers left the team, unable to adjust to their lack of lending authority. There were also members of the credit analysis team who left the group because they had a difficult time developing successful relationships with the business bankers and never reached the level of comfort necessary to work well together. On the other hand, there are employees on both teams who have really excelled in their area. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the business banking team at the time of this project.

As illustrated in figure 1, the business banking team is managed by Don Lecky, who also leads the Professional and Executive (P&E) Lending team, (which lends money to "wealthy individuals" for entrepreneurial, personal, or community based activities). The business banking and P&E teams are sales oriented in that their purpose is to interact with customers and bring in loan applications. The Credit Approval Team (CAT), supports both sales teams, (as well as banking center lenders on occasion), in a loan analysis and approval function. All of the credit specialists for this region are located in Richmond, however business bankers and P&E lenders work out of various offices throughout the region, as well as in Richmond.
(because of the need for direct customer contact). Because the focus of this project was on the business banking team, I did not interview anyone in the P&E department.
Figure 1: The business banking team structure

Don Lecky
Executive Vice President

Business Banking → Credit Approval Team

Bob Joynt*
Vice President of Credit Approval

Janet Woo*
Betty Cousins*
Ray Cilimberg*
Henry McGill*
Bruce Harrell*
Chris Hutton*
Matt Carr*

Tom Goode
Manager of P&E

Joe Miller*
Vice President of Business Bankers

Beth Ficco*
Beth Schuloff*
Johnny Jones*
Bob Flatford*

VA Beach Office

Chuck Burcher*
Frank Bridges*
Jim Barnes*

indicates that interviewed that person for this project
Project purpose and history

It is the purpose of this project to analyze the success of the business banking team after its first year of existence. Success in terms of production is easily identified through portfolio reviews, and is not necessarily the focus of this endeavor. More important was the groups’ development in terms of leadership issues such as decision making, communication, ethics, team member motivation, the establishment of a vision and goals, job satisfaction, and assessment of appreciation. Based on the analysis of this information, recommendations have been formulated which the bank may use to improve the situation in the business banking team. These recommendations may also prove useful in future re-organizational endeavors.

I had worked with Mr. Lecky in connection with my Jepson internship and my Decision Making class. I was very impressed with him as a leader and a person, and so I begin looking for some way to work with him on my senior project. All of the contact that I had with Mr. Lecky reminded me of a "how to be a great leader" case study. Although he is a very goal and success oriented person, (both for himself and for his organization), he is also concerned with quality of life. He is very involved in community organizations, is committed to spending time with his family, and insists on going on "spring break" every year. Every time I spoke with him about an issue of leadership, a large part of his analysis would focus on the "people
element". He has a textbook balance between professional and personal life and seems to realize that all work and no fun is ultimately non-productive.

It is important to Mr. Lecky figure out how every situation will affect the people involved. Although he is a kind man, compassion is not the only thing that drives this concern for the human element. Mr. Lecky is fundamentally aware that people run organization, not the other way around. On several occasions he reminded me that most people want to do and give their best. They will do this if they are provided a healthy and positive situation to do it in. The idea for the project come from discussions that I had with Don Lecky, during the fall of 1994. Mr. Lecky first spoke to be about the business banking team in the context of a Decision Making paper I was interviewing him for. Although the decision making process was a very important park of the story, I was also struck by a number of other leadership issues. Because this was a new group going down an old path, (small business lending), I was very interested in how, (and if), the group would consider setting a vision to be a big priority. In Leadership in Formal Organizations, I became committed to the idea that any organization, or team therein, must have a clear and specific vision in order to succeed. Furthermore, they must have tangible goals that will act as stepping stones toward that larger, more abstract vision. I wanted to test this theory in a real situation.

I was also interested in how motivated these discouraged employees
would be, especially when thrown into a new environment. Seeing an extreme pressure to succeed, I wanted to see if ethical standards would be sacrificed or valued by the new team. I was curious about communication, and group processes. Finally, I wanted to see if the people on the team were proud of and satisfied with their work. I also wanted to see if they felt those contributions were appreciated by the management and the bank.

During those discussions he expressed concern over the team’s ultimate success. He was aware at that time that although conditions within the team had been steadily improving throughout its existence, there was still a lot that needed to get better. He was very satisfied with the groups performance "on paper", but was concerned about the moral of the team members and saw some deficiencies in terms of communication, efficiency, and satisfaction.

In December of that year, we agreed that these concerns would be the focus of my senior project. This would be helpful for him to have more information about the team’s status, and it would allow me to explore leadership issues I was interested in. He was very open to the idea of my being involved with the team and asked only that he and the bank receive some product in the end. In January, I presented a formal proposal to Mr. Lecky and Bob Joynt, (the manager of the CAT), and agreed to begin working the beginning of February. At that meeting, Mr. Lecky and Mr. Joynt expressed concern about how well my interviews with the team
members would be accepted if I was considered an "outsider". To alleviate this potential problem, we decided that I, (someone who has absolutely no financial background), would work within the team until the team and I felt comfortable together, at which point I would begin the interview process.

At the same time that this work was scheduled to begin, the business banking team was starting to prepare for a major internal audit of its loan portfolio. The credit policy division of the bank had done a brief audit of the portfolio in terms of loan quality and risk rating. Their rating of that audit was unsatisfactory which meant that a major audit would ensue. In order to prepare for this audit, the team was forced to reevaluate a large percentage of its loan files, changing the quality and risk ratings when appropriate. The goal was to review 600 files in the month of February. The method was to have each of the business bankers, (including those outside of the Richmond area), spend one day of their week on this "due diligence process", with each person completing five files per day. There was no official lowering of sales goals during this time, so losing 20% of their time was a major stress for the business bankers. Credit approval members were instructed to assist in analysis and make recommendations when asked.

My first two days of work, (which was supposed to be making me more familiar and comfortable with the business bankers and vice versa), consisted of sitting alone in a room, in a section of offices away from the business banking team, creating a file tracking system to be used during the
process. Although this was very interesting and helpful in terms understanding the work that the team does, it was not helpful in establishing credibility with the team members. The few times that I did come into contact with team members during those days, they were in such a state of panic that most often they were not even aware that I was present. I did not foresee a change in this situation as long as the due diligence project was in progress. I decided to discuss this situation with Mr. Joynt and Mr. Lecky and said that I thought I would be better off to return in March when the due diligence process was complete. They agreed. Because March was close to my deadline date for this project, we also decided that our effort to get me established as a team member was probably not realistic and that going right into the interview process was the best way to approach the project.

This entire situation was very difficult for me. I knew that it was my responsibility to tell the team managers that I was not having the kind of experience that I needed to be having. Even so, it was hard for me to approach them and to explain that their plan for me was not going to work and that I needed to change it. I think that I handled the situation well, and believe that I was still able to establish trust from the team members and obtain valuable information.

I began interviewing in the middle of March, (the due diligence deadline had had to be pushed back), and I interviewed 20 people over the
course of the next four weeks. Each of the participants was assured that their participation was voluntary and anonymous. I created questions that touched on each area that I was interested in, and asked each of the participants each of these questions, (these questions are all contained in appendix 1). I asked additional questions when necessary for clarification, or if a statement in the answer seemed an interesting point to follow up on. The information that I gained from those formal interviews, as well as my observations during my time with the team, are the foundation of this project.

This entire experience was very beneficial to me in terms of my personal growth and development as a leader. My ability to function strongly in a formal organization while dealing with highly experienced people gave me a lot of self confidence. The fact that I was able to approach important leaders with an idea for a project, and ultimately make suggestions for change to them, made me aware of how much my self esteem has been developed over the past two years. It was very satisfying to find that I had no trouble communicating with these professionals and that I was not intimidated by even their most aggressive challenges of my idea. It was exciting to see that issues I was interested in were very relevant in the "real world", and it was satisfying to find that I was able to synthesize what I had learned in the past two years, and apply it to a concrete setting.
Results

In this section, the results of each interview question are listed. Because of the need to maintain anonymity by avoiding direct quotes, answers have been grouped in to categories that broadly include individual answers. Qualitative, (that is open ended) questions were used in this project. Because of this, and the need to avoid identifying subjects, scientific calculations are not a part of these results. Information is given in terms of groupings, and actual numbers are avoided for the most part. This does not take away from the validity because in this study, it is more important to explore what answers were given, rather than how many people gave them. Unless otherwise noted, the answers are listed in order from most often to least often cited. Answers of the credit specialists and business bankers are reported together unless it was relevant, (due to the nature of the question, or a significant difference in the way the two groups answered a question), to compare the information given by the two groups. The word "team" is used to describe business banking as a whole, while "group" is used in reference to the business bankers and the CAT individually.

In terms of demographics, the subject pool presents a wide range of age, and experience levels from new bankers who have recently graduated from the management training program to seasoned lenders who have over 35 years of banking experience. All of them have experience in some area
of lending, but about half are working in commercial lending for the first time. There is a fairly even mix of men and women, however ethnic diversity is not pervasive.

In this kind of research, there is always a question about the validity and reliability of the information gathered. Despite assurances of anonymity, one can never be sure about the honesty of subjects. For one reason or another, people sometimes feel compelled to tell a research what he or she thinks the researcher wants to hear. I tried to avoid this by asking that the team members answer questions based on their personal feelings rather than the group attitude, but I can not be sure that they chose to do so.

VISION SECTION

1) Do you think that the team has a clear and specific vision and if so, what is it?

Credit Specialists:

There was quite a bit of variance among the credit specialists in terms of their opinion of whether or not the group has a clear and specific vision. The answers may be categorized into five responses. The most often cited answer was: "Yes, we do have a vision" (five responses). The other responses had a fairly equal number of responses. They were: "Yes, we have a vision, but due to changes in the group, the vision is constantly changing", "Our vision is somewhat clear, but change prevents real clarity",
and "No. Because of the constant change, we do not have a vision". Most people who mentioned a changing vision attributed the changes to management. Some stated that they realized that because the group is new and developing the changes in the vision are necessary and not negative. Others felt that the constant change resulted in a breakdown of the team’s understanding of their vision.

Direct quotes are avoided in the remainder of the study, but for this question, it is interesting to see the diversity of vision statement that the group members claimed to be the vision of the group. These statements are listed below.

"We support the banking centers and the consumer bank and some of the community banks. We’re in a support role always, but the rules that govern that support change."
"To increase volume and profitability for the bank by doing a quality job".
"To provide a centralized credit approval function for business bankers, P&E lenders and to a certain extent, banking centers and community banks. We’re trying to get a product down that we can provide to a core group of customers."
"To approve credit for the banking centers and the business banking"
"To use the power of NationsBank to make a difference for small business in every market we serve and to be acknowledged as the best small business bank in America". (quoted from a notebook)
"We have a process for turnaround time, we try to keep a positive attitude. We make loan approvals to help the group, while maintaining all the standards of the bank’s senior management".
"Don tells us to go out and serve the customers"

Business Bankers:

Each of the business bankers stated that they were aware of a clear and specific vision for their group. Again, the team member’s perceived vision statements for the group are quoted.
"To be the leader of small business lenders in the country"
"To meet the needs of small business in the community"
"To be leaders of small business lending and do it profitably for the bank"
"To assist as many small business owners in the prospect base that’s out there in Richmond because there’s a lot more small business than large business. To achieve that goal, we need to go out and find those people, and serve them as best as we can."
"Providing loans and other services to small businesses. Also, we need to do that so that we have profitability for the bank and it’s also good for the customer."
"To be salesmen for the bank and to be customer oriented and to produce loans and deposits"
"To fully service the closely held businesses from start up to using the guidelines of about four to five million dollars in sales which is about 80% of the business in most marketplaces. Basically it is a department of commercial lending that segments strictly to small businesses".

Almost all of the credit specialists and business bankers stated that while they did understand the vision, they either were not sure that they were on course toward the vision or felt that the current situation in some way inhibited their progress toward it. Several people mentioned that the realistic nature of the vision needed to be improved because its expectations exceed the team members abilities due to time restrictions.

2) Who created this vision?

The answers to this question may be placed into four categories. The majority of the team answered that "Management (various levels were quoted) created the vision but how we implement it is up to the team" (eight responses). Fairly equal numbers of team members answered that "the vision was just handed down to us and we have no input into it", "the customers/market/banking industry created the vision", or "the vision was created in a two way conversation between the team and upper
management”.

When asked if they felt ownership of the vision, a little more than half said that they did feel that they shared in the vision, while less than half the team said that they felt no ownership of it. Several people said that the vision is very broad and general and describes the basic job description of the team members. Because of this, they felt that doing one’s job inherently created ownership of the vision. Two people said that even though the vision is handed down, it is very thoroughly explained and discussed. That process is what makes it possible for those individuals to feel ownership.

3) Do you think that your specific goals, (quotas, turnaround times, etc.) are compatible with the vision? That is, do you think that the goals act as stepping stones to bring you closer to the vision?

A large majority of the credit specialists answered that they did feel that their goals were taking them toward their vision. They mentioned that a fast turnaround is positive in terms of customer service which is an important element of the bank and the team’s vision. There was a comment about a danger of neglecting quality in the name of quantity because faster analysis leaves doors open for riskier credit.

Each of the business bankers stated that their goals were somewhat compatible with their vision. Like the credit specialists, some business bankers discussed tension between meeting a sales goal (quantity), and
people focused on that, the immediate goal, while others stayed focused on the long term goal. Both types of people may have been trying to achieve their perceived vision of the team.

The constant change of goals was mentioned again as something that made it difficult to reach the vision. One person added that the big picture is often changed by management without being explained to the team members. It is difficult for the team members to work toward the vision when they are not always aware of what it is.

Many people noted that the team’s success in this area was a new one and stated that they could not have reported this feeling of progress a year ago.

MOTIVATION

1) What motivates you to accomplish your goals and work toward the vision?

Most people listed more than one motivating factor in their lives. In both teams, almost every team member listed personal drive/satisfaction, (the ability to finish something, knowing that you are good at your job, being able to do your best and have something work, achieving something difficult, going above the call of duty, etc.), and/or customer service, (fighting to get something for the customer, knowing that their business could not be successful unless you had helped them, watching them grow, having them refer you, developing friendships/relationships with customers,
etc), as their biggest motivator. Other motivator included peer pressure, fear of letting the team down, keeping the job/ financial pressure and incentive, increasing the bank’s market share/ competing against other banks, and negative reinforcement. Several mentioned a willingness to go beyond their job description for customer service, even to the detriment of their careers.

Communication/ Intragroup Dynamics

1) Describe and assess the relationship between the business bankers and credit specialists.

This is another area in which many people commented on a great improvement over the past year. (Several admitted that they thought the relationship would fail at first!). The major improvements that the team members reported were increased trust and respect, and a developed level of comfort with each other.

Several people commented on the diversity of personalities within the team. Some people described it in terms of the business bankers being extroverted sales types, while the credit specialists are introverted analytical people. Others felt that while it was true that the majority of business bankers fit into a personality mold, the credit specialists are all very different. Everyone agreed though that the personality differences were something that they had to learn, and continue to learn, to deal with. Many of the business bankers stated that they really valued having the credit
specialists on their floor so that they could engage in personal contact.

Another issue that almost everyone discussed was the fact that the two groups have almost adversarial goals. The business bankers have sales (volume) quotas, and are rewarded only when deals go to completion, (money is lent to a customer). That is, their focus is to "get a lot of loans on the books". The credit specialists, however, have goals that are related to fast turnaround time on loan applications, and ensuring quality credits. The implication here is that credit specialists, who need to get through a lot of loan packages every day, tend to want to make quick, risk free decisions. What this means to the business bankers, (who depend on "yes" answers to meet their goals), is that credit specialists are more likely to try not to make a bad deal than to try to make a good deal. As a result, business bankers feel the need to bring in a lot of loan applications, hoping that some of them will hit, (sort of the shot gun approach). This becomes a vicious cycle because these "filler" applications take up more of the credit specialists time and they end up sending more "no" answers to the business bankers who become more and more frustrated. The entire team ultimately wants to establish a solid portfolio with lots of good loans. This is a common large scale goal, but the team members are often more focused on, and in fact lost in, their immediate goals which are adversarial. The positive side of this system is that it provides a system of checks and balances, the negative side is that it creates a certain tension between the groups.
DECISION MAKING

1) Do you feel that your group has the ability to make decisions that affect it?

None of the team members stated that they had actual decision making power on issues that are relevant to the team. Among the credit specialists, most said that they felt management was very open to their input on decisions, and felt that that input had some affect on the decision. Other categories of answers from the credit specialists were: "we have no decision making power. All decisions are driven from outside of the group", and "we can make decisions only within the authority of our job descriptions". A small number of credit specialist felt that their input was not always considered by management because the team’s suggestions reflect that it values quality, while the decision makers seem to place more value on quantity. Some said that because of the hierarchical decision making process, decisions were made at a frustratingly slow pace. Often times, they were not even aware of who made the decision. While some people felt that their input was not used, no one felt uncomfortable giving input or thought that it would be detrimental to them. Several cited "Paradigm Pioneering" as an example of management’s desire to include the team members in decision making. Paradigm pioneering is a system of unique management used by many of the leaders of NationsBank. The idea is that people are encouraged to critically examine even their most
fundamentally held ideas about the way things are done. If those ways seem outdated, ineffective, or inefficient, they are to suggest new ways of doing them. Once the change is underway, management tries to get people excited about the new ways of doing things rather than mourning the loss of the old way of doing things. There was an overall positive feeling toward management in terms of its openness.

Most of the business bankers felt that they had little or no influence in the decision making process. Others felt that while they had some influence in decision making, they had no power. One person mentioned feeling like decisions made by management were actually contrary to input given by the group members. Several expressed frustration because they felt that in decisions that are most relevant to business bankers, the credit specialists usually end up having more input. A specific example of this is that when changes are made to the loan package, business bankers, (who fill out the package), are not involved in the changes even at a management level. One member felt that the bank's effort to achieve nationwide uniform operating procedures minimized the team's ability to have input. Another team member mentioned that the lack of decision making ability takes away some of the confidence in dealing with customers. The inability to approve even small changes in the loan application process or be understanding to special circumstances takes away from the customer service commitment.
2) Do you feel that you as an individual have the ability to make these kinds of decisions?

Basically, people who felt the group as a whole had influence in decisions felt that they as individuals also participated in the decision making process. Those who felt left out of the process as a group felt powerless as individuals. Some people stressed that they only felt comfortable making decisions if it was specifically within their authority and felt uncomfortable making a decision about something outside of that.

ETHICS

1) Do you feel that you are encouraged to make ethically sound decisions? (In other words, if a customer asked you to do something that was legal, but you did not feel was "right", (but would make money for the bank), would you feel comfortable saying "no").

Every member of the team stated that they would be uncomfortable making anything but ethically sound decisions. One member said that there was no hesitation to call the legal department if there was even a question about the situation. Several members discussed situations where they ended up being involved in deals that they were not personally in favor of, but felt it those situations were illegal, or involved issues that were rejected by society as a whole, they would not have been forced to sign. One person noted the Hugh McColl’s call to "do the right thing" further emphasized the
ethical expectations. Most were very aware of the bank’s emphasis on ethics and felt that anything else was just bad business.

OVERALL SATISFACTION AND ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTION

1) Are you satisfied with your work? Is it challenging, stimulating, fun?

For the most part, the team members reported that they are satisfied with their work. Almost all of the members agreed that the work is very challenging. Some thought this was inherently true of the business, while others believed that the challenge is artificially created through inefficient policies and procedures. Other positive comments about the work included: being able to make what you want of the job, (opportunities to go beyond the job description), having a lot of freedom and being able to be creative, the ability to make a difference in customers' lives, having fun at work, finding a way of doing things that makes something work out when it wouldn’t have otherwise, having open management that cares but is hands off enough to allow for individuality, experiencing team work, and not having to sit a desk doing the same thing all day.

There were some areas that the team members felt could be better. There was almost complete agreement among the business bankers that the burden of administrative activities detracted from their satisfaction with their work. The feeling is that their goal, (and desire), to spend 80% of their time
with customers is made impossible by these activities. Members of both
groups mentioned that they almost constantly feel a pressure of urgency
that makes it difficult to prioritize and keep the big picture in mind. The
team also stated that change often made complete satisfaction impossible.
There was a feeling of "just when I finally figure something out, and find a
way to meet my goals within the system, the system changes." That was
frustrating for many people. Some people felt that there were not enough
opportunities to use creativity and that a "cookie cutter" approach was
taking some of the satisfaction out of their jobs.

2) Does your work help you to achieve personal goals?

The majority of the team said that their work was at least somewhat
helpful to them in terms of achieving personal goals. The second most
common answer was that personal goals were not being met, and a small
majority answered either that their personal goals were not work related or
that they were unsure if their work was meeting their goals. There was a
lot of similarity in the personal goals that the team members identified.
Some of those were: a desire to be happy in their work, having a job that
would be helpful in bettering a career, working with and helping people,
seeing customers, having a job that allows for self satisfaction, and being
able to provide for a family.

One goal that was often mentioned that was not being met was the
opportunity to be promoted to jobs that included more responsibility and leadership opportunities.

Several people also mentioned that the level of conformity that is expected from the team decreased their ability to work towards personal goals such as being creative in their work, being able to make decisions, taking unappointed leadership position, or finding ways to improve the team.

3) Are the team managers aware of your personal goals, and do they show an interest in helping you obtain them?

With a few exceptions, (including people who were new to the team and therefore had not had the opportunity to discuss personal goals with their managers), almost all of the team members felt that their leaders were aware of and helpful about goal achievement. Many people stated that they appreciated the opportunity to discuss this issue with their manager during their annual review and felt that those discussions were taken into consideration. There were some people who felt that the team managers were too busy now with the success of the team as a whole to focus on the goals of individuals but were optimistic that this would change once things became more settled.

4) Do you feel that you are making a valuable contribution to the team?
Every team member felt that they were making a valuable contribution to the team. One team member appreciated the fact that traditional performance was not the only way to make a contribution and mentioned that people were also valued for things such as their willingness to go above and beyond their job description, or to act as an informational resource to the rest of the team.

5) Do you feel the team is making valuable contributions to the bank?

The overwhelming response to this question was also positive. While most people recognized even more room for improvement, they were very proud of the progress the team has made over the last year. Some of the contributions included: ever increasing speed in processing loan requests, keeping the bank’s customers satisfied, participating in the growth of the bank, and meeting goals under less than perfect conditions.

4) Do you feel that your contributions are valued by the team and by the bank?

Almost all of the team members felt that their contributions were valued by the people in their group. Most felt that they were valued by the entire team with the exception of a few credit specialists who felt that the business bankers were not aware of and did not value their contributions, and a few credit specialists who felt the same way about the business
bankers. There were very mixed feelings about whether or not the bank as a whole was aware of the team's contribution, performance or profitability.

There was a strong feeling of appreciation for the managers of the team who, by almost all accounts, are very contentious about informally showing their appreciation for good work. Having managers stop into the office or otherwise personally recognize a team member was very rewarding. Other signs of appreciation that were mentioned included: a contest to go to Acapulco, other promotional rewards, (dinners to people who met due diligence goals etc), the fact that pay raises are based on annual reviews, and not just time of service, the ability to give input, buying dinner for people working late on a special project, being flexible about work hour schedule changes for personal reasons, (repairs on house etc), and getting a paycheck.

Several people said that while they were certain that they were appreciated by their team members and immediate management, signs of that appreciation were sometimes lost in the shuffle of constant change and chaos. Some people mentioned that having managers who are conscientious about saying thank you is not always enough of a motivator, especially when working under difficult stresses.

One important point that several of the business bankers made was a feeling of inferior treatment compared to the Professional and Executive lenders. The P&E group was formed by the CAT team's manager, and he
leads both areas. The business bankers feel that he is more in touch with
the P&E lenders' needs and activities. They were able to cite several
occasions in which they felt "slighted", (such as when the P&E lenders were
given tickets to take customers to the NationsBank sponsored skating event,
and the business bankers were not). Several of them reported feeling like
the "bad step child".

SUGGESTIONS

1) What could the team leaders do to further recognize and reward your
contributions?

There were many suggestions from the team members about what the
leaders could do to keep the team motivated and feeling appreciated. Some
of the suggestions included: giving input of the group and of individuals
more weight, having more individual recognition, (opposed to group), having
monetary incentives in the form of bonuses and salary increases, for both
the credit specialists and business bankers, (other people disagreed with this
suggestion stating that money would only be a temporary motivator), giving
promotions, (not only to help the promoted individuals, but also the
reputation of the team), and having administrative duties of business
bankers reduced for exceeding goals. One person mentioned that it is
valuable to have a break from the chaotic activities of their floor by having
meetings for lunch out of the building or at least on a different floor where
people would not have to take phone calls or be involved in critical things going on.

2) **How could the relationship between the business bankers and credit specialists be improved?**

Several business bankers discussed the idea that they are comfortable with certain credit specialists in certain situations. They have more confidence handing in a loan package if they think that it will be analyzed and decisioned by someone who has an understanding of the client or the situation. While an effort is made in the credit approval team to work within that comfort zone, there are circumstances having to do with the credit specialist’s load and backlog that may prevent it. Several business bankers stated that they, having a firm understanding of all of the details of the loan request, would appreciate knowing who would be working on their loan package before that credit specialist knew so that occasionally the business bankers could ask to have that assignment changed if it seemed important.

Several people offered a solution to the difficult situation of adversarial goals that focused on gaining an understanding of each other. The business bankers’ point of view is, "When I have to tell a customer that we have declined their loan, it upsets them, and that upsets me. Conversely, when a deal goes through we’re both thrilled. The credit specialists don’t seem to get excited or care either way!" The credit
specialists point of view is, "The business bankers don't seem to realize that I can not approve a loan if I don't have all of the information. They are insensitive to the steps that it takes to get from one point to another, and that makes my job more difficult". (All quotations are taken from a compilation of several team members' statements.) Some of this tension could be alleviated, they believe, if the groups become more aware of the issues and needs of each other.

The overall consensus is that the groups' interaction with each other has improved immensely over the course of the last year, and improved effort and communication will further improve the situation.

3) What areas do you think your team needs to improve in? What would be your suggestions for how to improve those areas?

Almost everyone commented on the amount of improvement that has already occurred over the last year. Accounting for that, there were still several areas that they felt could use some work. They are:

Helping the groups have a better understanding of each other:

Members of both groups stated that they felt the other group was not in a position to be as helpful as possible because they did not understand what they other was going through. Business bankers said that they would like for credit specialists to occasionally be with them during their interactions with customers so that they could have an understanding of the customers
needs and the personal reaction that occurs to both a loan acceptance and denial. Credit specialists felt that the business bankers were not fully aware of their efforts during the loan analysis process and hoped that the business bankers would at some point be able to go through a deal with them so they would be aware of the difficulty of an incomplete or poorly filled out package.

**Communication:** There were several areas of communication that team members felt could be improved. The biggest problem that the business bankers identified in terms of communication had to do with what many of them called "the tail wagging the dog". By this, they mean the credit specialists, who are theoretically in a support position, seem to hand down changes in policy and procedure without discussing it with business bankers. The most often cited example of this practice was changes in the loan package, (of which there have been about six in the last year). Those changes are often handed to the business bankers with no opportunity for input or explanation of why they have been made. This frustrates the business bankers because they feel that while the changes may benefit the credit specialists, they do not help out the business bankers and in fact may make their work more difficult. They feel that these changes may also be inconvenient for the customer, and no consideration is given to this.

Another area of communication that needs to be improved upon has to do with policy. In addition to the difficulty discussed above, many team
members felt that policy additions or changes need to be formally communicated to the entire team at the same time. The team members feel that often times these changes, either accidentally or deliberately, are handed down by word of mouth or an unofficial memo. This is frustrating to team members who hear the news late, or are informed of it only because they violated it, (often meaning they are forced to redo work). Two people stressed the importance to have all policy updated in writing so that everyone is equally responsible for following it. Also, when rules, definitions and procedures are in constant change, it becomes difficult to keep them straight so it would be helpful to have them in writing.

The final area of communication has to do with accessibility to upper management. Although the team members felt that the management was supportive and looked to them for input, some said they would feel uncomfortable approaching upper managers with unsolicited ideas.

Efficiency: All of the business bankers, and several of the credit specialists that I talked to said that they feel overwhelmed a significant, (if not 100) percent of the time. They mentioned feeling like they are constantly reactive rather than proactive, (putting out fires). Most of them attributed this to inefficiency in the loan approval process and/or being short staffed. The business bankers feel a painful lack of administrative assistance which keeps them from being with customers, (an important goal), which hurts the whole process. Also, because the loan portfolio in
Richmond is larger than that of other areas, the business bankers feel it would be helpful to have more business bankers on the team so that they could increase the quality of service they provide to customers.

**Teamwork:** Although the work of the group is not inherently team oriented, (loan applications are officially taken care of by one business banker and one credit specialist each), many people saw a need for more sharing of ideas among team members. They also felt it was important to be helpful to each other during stressful times and to devise ways to ensure that one person would not end up more overloaded than the others.

**Evaluation:** Several people commented on the fact that most of goal achievement or failure is focused on the group and not on individuals. While some people were satisfied with this focus, others felt that individual statistics, (on sales quotas, turnaround times, etc), should be made available to the whole group. One person suggested that this would not only motivate individuals to do more, (because they would be aware of where they were in terms of their peers and hopefully want to do as well or better), but it would also make the group more efficient and effective because work could be distributed according to individual ability.

**Cross selling:** many team members said that they needed to capitalize more on the credit opportunities of current customers. Both business bankers and credit specialists could be more aware of these opportunities.
Analysis of results, and suggestions for the future

Vision:

Although the majority of the team members reported that the team does have a clear and specific vision, the diversity of their responses when asked to quote the vision indicates that clarity and specificity are not strongly present. Some people felt profitability was the main goal, others saw customer service at the biggest need. Some thought the focus of their work was to be strong within the community, other thought they needed to work on being the best in the country. The purpose of these comparisons is not to make a mockery of these highly skilled and experienced professionals. Each of their vision statements is noble and something important to work toward. The point here is that despite their reports that all of the team members are working in the same directions, there is an obvious lack of commonality in the "big picture" goal of the team.

This may not be a problem. It could be that everyone is choosing their strong or favorite idea as the focus of their vision and eventually all the bases get covered. The research of visioning in formal organizations tells us however that this is most likely not the case.

A factor that strongly contributes to the fact that the team is not aware of a common vision is that they did not have an opportunity to participate in the initial vision building effort. If there was a clear vision at the beginning, it has since been lost either because the managers were too
involved with keeping the team afloat and didn’t communicate the vision strongly enough, or because the team members were so busy with keeping the team afloat that they forgot about the big picture.

The team members for the most part do not feel that they had a say in creating the vision and they do not feel ownership of it, yet they all seem to understand the importance of having a big goal to work towards. Although creating a vision at the team’s inception would have been a good idea, it is not too late to do so now.

A vision statement is a wonderful tool for helping teams prioritize their values, (something that was mentioned often as a need in the interviews). For example, team members think quality is important but feel that management values quantity more. A co-authored vision statement could help them to come to a compromise between those two issues. Knowing the team’s priorities would allow the team members to feel confident that they are working in the ways and in the directions that is most valuable to the team and to the bank. Also, because they will have had a say in the vision statement, they will be working toward what is most valuable to them. The team members will be empowered to help create the future of their team.

To mediate the problem of business bankers and credit specialist feeling that the other group interferes with their attainment of vision, it is important that the group work together to form a common vision for the
entire team. The most practical way to accomplish this is to bring the
groups and their managers together in a meeting. Each member who so
desires should discuss his or her interpretation of the vision now, and each
definition should be written on a board. At that point, the team can begin to
prioritized and synthesize that information into an all encompassing vision
statement. It is critical that each member be aware of that vision even if it
means everyone hangs a framed copy in their office.

The next step in this process is determining how to achieve that
vision. Because the vision will most likely be immeasurable, it is important
that the team have attainable, tangible goals that move in the direction of
the vision. Sales quotas and turnaround times may still be suitable, but it
may also be that the new vision statement mandates an entirely different
evaluation system.

An important thing to remember is that neither the goals or the vision
of the organization need to be set in stone. As the desires and demands of
the team, organization, industry, and environment change, the vision
statement, (and consequently the goals), may need t change as well. If the
goals do not seem to be helping the team get to the vision, they need to be
changed. As long as broad participation is inherent in the changes, and all
team members are immediately and formally made aware of the changes and
allowed to give their input, there is not a problem. In the tradition of
paradigm pioneering, it is essential that the team members and their leaders
be open to this possibility.

"As long as a group of people has no where to go, they will surely go no where".

Motivation:

The results of these interviews show that this team, for the most part, is made up of intrinsically motivated people who feel passionately about serving customers well. This is a dream come true for any leader in a customer oriented business. It is important that the leaders are aware of what the team values because if they end up in a situation that does not provide them with the ability to do work that they are proud of and that satisfies customers, they will become demotivated.

The high level of intrinsic motivation that is present in the team alleviates the need for management to "jump start" the team members. These people are often their own toughest critics, so it is not necessary for management to find ways to make the team members do their jobs. Rather, the leaders should be working to clear the path of anything that will keep the team from doing its best or from serving its customers. Minimizing administrative work, (which the team clearly does not find rewarding), and making sure the two groups are communicating well and are cooperating, are two great steps in clearing the path.
One very serious element of motivation has to do with burnout. Many of the group members discussed feelings of being overwhelmed, feeling like they were under water, feeling like they were never caught up, wishing they could just throw away all of their backlogged work and have a fresh slate so that they could do the job the way they knew they could, or wishing they could, as a team, occasionally get away from it all. All people, but especially those who have strong internal motivation, are capable of reaching a breaking point at which they feel they will never be able to accomplish what is expected, and so they, either consciously or unconsciously, stop trying.

It is essential that this team start celebrating victories, taking definite steps to reduce the stress in their lives, and focusing on their mental and physical well being as well as professional success and the welfare of the team. Dinners during special projects and available flex time are examples of positive steps, but much more needs to be done. All of these team members are working a lot of hours, and it is important that they know that it is not only ok, but important, that they maintain a balance between work and fun.

Communication/Intragroup Relations:

The business banking and credit specialist groups seem to be most concerned about two major issues in terms of their relationship with each
other. The first of these is the fact that the groups have adversarial goals. Although they are working with the same customers on the same loan applications, the fact that they seem to be working toward different things, (lots of loans for the business bankers, and low risk rating for the credit specialists), creates a tension and competitive attitude between the groups that is difficult to work with, and ultimately damaging to the customer.

The creation of a common vision and corresponding common goals should pretty will help to alleviate this phenomenon because the team will be focused on working in a direction that is important to all of them. When this plan was suggested to them, many team members expressed doubt about the possibility of maintaining the effectiveness of the check and balance of the system if the groups are not forced to check and balance each other. As discussed before, these are highly motivated people who have a need to feel personally satisfied by their work. In addition, they are people who have experience in banking. As one long term lender pointed out, anyone who is not a top notch lender would not still be around at the bank. These factors take some of the "check over their shoulder" pressures away from the leaders. These people want to do a good job, and the leaders should be entirely focused on making sure that they have every opportunity to do so.

There are several possibilities for goals that will reduce the adversarial nature of the groups. For the credit specialists, goals and incentives could be created that value creative alternatives to a deal that would otherwise have
been a "no". Not only would this help bring in more loans, but it would show the business bankers that the credit specialists really are trying to accomplish the same thing that they are. These alternative solutions would in no way reduce the analytic quality of the credit specialists, and the check and balance system would not even be affected. Also, if credit specialists were included in sales goals celebrations, and were kept up to date of how the business bankers were doing, they would feel more a part of that effort. On the business banker side, instead of being punished for having an incomplete or incorrect loan package, it would be helpful if they could make this a positive goal.

There are several other changes that will be necessary if the groups are to work effectively with common goals. The first is a suggestion that most of the team members made. The groups need to have a much better understanding of what the other does, and the issues that are important to it. Mr. Lecky and his team had originally attempted to accomplish this when the team began a year ago. For one reason or another, he seems not to have been successful, and further action is required. A surface level solution to the problem is a "day in the life" type of program in which the business banker would spend time with a credit specialist working during his day to day activities, and a credit specialist would then work with a business banker as he or she dealt with customers or worked on administrative tasks. This program will only work if it is paired with education in communication.
Because the group members are not able to be with the other group during all of its daily activities, it is important that the groups be able to paint a picture of those activities, and the needs that arise from them, in a non-threatening or accusatory manner. Saying "this is what I need", should not be a negative statement for the person who makes it or the person who hears it. Again, maintaining consciously aware of the common vision through all of these changes is essential.

Communication is also the key in dealing with the second issue that the groups are facing which has to deal with members feeling a lack of input in decisions of the other groups that will affect them. There is a general feeling that policy and procedures and "handed" from group to group with no intragroup consultation beforehand. Most likely this is an issue of power, with both teams wanting to feel that they have control of the situation. The creation of a common vision will reduce this dynamic, leaving room for improved relations.

The solution to this problem has to begin on a personal level with managers and team members within and between groups constantly communicating with each other about their feelings and needs. A more formal way of handling the problem is to create a kind of review board which will be responsible for the final decision on all policy and procedure changes, and for the communication of those changes to the team. The board should be made up of the managers of both groups and of the teams,
and at least one member of each group. The board really only need meet when a policy change has been recommended. At that time, the group will discuss it and work to ensure that as much as possible, the needs of both groups are met. Let’s return to the example of the credit specialists handing down changes in the loan package with no consultation from the business bankers. It is very possible that there is a way to make those changes that would not inconvenience the business bankers, and in fact, they may have some change needs of their own. Because right now, no one is aware of the other’s needs, this is not a consideration.

Decision Making:

This review board is a step in the right direction in terms of empowering the team to make decisions that will affect it. Again, the team is made up of motivated, talented individuals, many of whom stated that they would like to be in a position with more decision making and leadership opportunities. Right now, the management is working in the right direction my asking for/ allowing input from the team members on decisions. Unfortunately, they are missing the mark in terms of allowing the team members to participate in the actual decision making process. The team members are the people who know the issues. They are working with the customers and are in closer contact with environmental factors than management, so it makes sense to have them invoked in the process. It is
not realistic to think that the management will just throw up its hands and walk away allowing the team to do what ever it thinks best, but it is very realistic to think that the leaders will extend their hands and pull line members of the team into the decision making circle. This will increase the team members feeling of ownership of the common vision and keep everyone working toward it.

Ethics:

In the Ethics course at the Jepson school, we learned a lot about the need for organizations to have public and non-negotiable ethical practices. It is obvious that this team is aware of the bank’s ethical expectations and that they enter situations with a pre-determined decision in terms of ethics should the issue arise. Hugh McColl, NationsBank’s CEO, said to "do the right thing". I think in this team, that philosophy is alive and well.

Overall Satisfaction and Assessment of Appreciation:

For the most part, much of what goes on in business banking is satisfying the needs of the team members. The work will be made even more satisfying by some of the changes already discussed such as increased communication, empowerment, having a clear direction to work in, and improved relations between the groups. There are even more opportunities for improvement.

Just as organizations and groups are benefitted by having a clear idea of where they are going, and tangible steps to get there, it is also important
that individuals have this sense of direction. It may be helpful for the team if the managers coordinated a personal goals workshop to go along with the vision and goal setting effort of the group.

Human beings work best in organizations when they feel that they are making an important contribution to the organization, and that their contributions are valued by the organization. We need to feel like we are useful, and we need to be appreciated. There is no problem in the business banking team with the first half of the statement. Almost without exception, the team members feel that their work is important to the team and to the bank. Their level of appreciation from management is also quite positive, although there is room for improvement in this area. Obviously, the managers are conscious of what the team is going through, and is very conscientious about thanking them for their efforts. Once the common vision and specific goals are in place, the team will be better able to track its success, making them able to focus on celebrating even the smallest step toward accomplishing their vision. It may be useful to celebrate the victories of individuals as well as the group as a whole.

An important thing to remember is that employee satisfaction should not be dealt with in terms of gimmicks. Having a solid, efficient, rewarding, and productive work environment is the most important way to make employees, (especially ones like the business banking team members who want to do a good job and be as productive as possible). If that type of
environment is not present, no amount of cheerleading or happiness efforts will be effective in creating a satisfied work place.

The jealousy over the P&E lenders is a serious issue, and one that Mr. Lecky can not afford to ignore and must make a conscious effort to improve.

Suggestions for Improvement:

Most of team members' responses to these questions have been discussed in other sections. The fact is, this team is very willing to discuss ways to make the team a better, more productive, less stressful and happier one, and they have some great ideas about how to do it. The management would be very smart to take some time to let down their guard and listen to these ideas.

The fact is that a lot of the suggestions discussed in this study involved the managers giving their power to someone else. This is often times a frightening thing to do, as no one wants to make themselves replaceable or obsolete. The fact is, that if the managers did empower the team to take more care of itself, the leaders would not become obsolete, but would be free to move on to bigger and better things, and would not be tied to the details of the team.

This is a team with great potential, and the opportunity to achieve great things at the individual, team, organization, and industry levels.
They’re already accomplishing a lot, and once they are communicating
effectively, working together, exercising their empowerment, and, most
importantly, working toward their common vision, there will be no stopping
them.

**The Next Steps**

Once this project has been evaluated by the Jepson faculty, it will be
presented to NationsBank in a meeting with Don Lecky, Bob Joynt, and Joe
Miller. They will be given a document based on this one, (with the relevant,
non-background information, extracted). My ultimate goal is to maintain
communication with the team through the implementation of the new plans.
Appendix 1: The questionnaire

VISION SECTION

1) Do you think that the team has a clear and specific vision and if so, what is it?

2) Who created this vision?

3) Do you think that your specific goals, (quotas, turnaround times, etc.) are compatible with the vision? That is, do you think that the goals act as stepping stones to bring you closer to the vision?

4) Are all the team members aware of, and working toward the vision?

MOTIVATION

1) What motivates you to accomplish your goals and work toward the vision?

Communication/ Intragroup Dynamics

1) Describe and assess the relationship between the business bankers and credit specialists.

DECISION MAKING

1) Do you feel that your group has the ability to make decisions that affect it?

2) Do you feel that you as an individual have the ability to make these kinds of decisions?

ETHICS

1) Do you feel that you are encouraged to make ethically sound decisions? (In other words, if a customer asked you to do something that was legal, but you did not feel was "right", (but would make money for the bank), would you feel comfortable saying "no").

OVERALL SATISFACTION AND ASSESSMENT OF
CONTRIBUTION

1) Are you satisfied with your work? Is it challenging, stimulating, fun?
2) Does your work help you to achieve personal goals?

3) Are the team managers aware of your personal goals, and do they show an interest in helping you obtain them?

4) Do you feel that you are making a valuable contribution to the team? 5) Do you feel the team is making valuable contributions to the bank?

4) Do you feel that your contributions are valued by the team and by the bank?

SUGGESTIONS

1) What could the team leaders do to further recognize and reward your contributions?

2) How could the relationship between the business bankers and credit specialists be improved?

3) What areas do you think your team needs to improve in? What would be your suggestions for how to improve those areas?