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## TRANSPORTATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

by  
Samuel Thurston  
Giant Food Stores, Inc.

By way of introduction, I would first like to tell you a bit about Giant Food. We operate 117 retail food stores and a number of other types of retail outlets which are regionally concentrated from just north of Baltimore, Maryland to Richmond, Virginia. Our retail sales should exceed 1 billion dollars this fiscal year.

To familiarize you with Giant's distribution system, I will tell you that our dry groceries are handled in a mechanized 700,000 square foot depot constructed in 1973 in Jessup, Maryland, just south of Baltimore. All perishable and nonfood items are handled at our original 600,000 square foot distribution center in Landover, Maryland, just east of Washington, D.C. We make about 2400 deliveries weekly from these two facilities.

With this brief background, let's get to the subject at hand, which is the human resource, the most vital link in our organization, the people who get the job done.

Giant feels that there are several important components which together encourage and motivate our employees. First, the division must exercise effective and well organized management. These people must oversee intelligent recruitment practices, and are responsible for enlightened labor relations. In addition, the job expectations for each individual must be clearly defined and the worker must be afforded regular feedback

on job performance. Finally, but by no means least significant, special programs help to both introduce and integrate new methods and promote self-respect in the transportation division.

Consistent with our high priority on service, our transportation group is headed by a director which, in our company, is the level just below V.P. This position has full operational responsibility for inbound traffic control and fleet maintenance, as well as the function of overseeing the transportation of store deliveries.

The management level immediately below our transportation director was reorganized not long ago. There are three driver supervisors who are directly responsible for the set of drivers assigned them. Additionally, they each have a general assignment: one supervisor for fleet safety, while the other two are concerned with store delivery problems. A yard co-ordinator supervises the jockeys who move the trailers within the Distribution Center compounds.

An administrative supervisor takes charge of payroll, reports, and the other paperwork generated by the division. At the same level, an operations supervisor oversees dispatching and warehouse and store scheduling difficulties.

Since our supervisory restructuring, the driver now clearly has delineated that there is a supervisor to whom he or she

may go. With such a division of labor in management, the time and attention required for taking charge of and assisting the workers is more adequately available.

We have very strict requirements which we rarely deviate from when hiring new drivers. By recruiting the best people and continuing to train and develop them, we have been able to assure that only first class drivers are behind the wheels of Giant tractor-trailers.

Before we hire them, drivers must have at least five years of tractor-trailer experience. We administer a road test, and conform to all Department of Transportation regulations regarding driver selection. A defensive driving course is offered by the Company, including audio-visual presentations and as much written material as possible. Realizing the need for drivers to continually be informed, we periodically hold fifteen to twenty minute discussions on various topics, for instance, on jackknifing, or a recent accident which might have been prevented. Throughout their tenure with us, we try and emphasize to our drivers the preventability of accidents.

Our Director's open door policy is such that stewards can walk in at any time with any problem. Before any transportation policies are enacted, we give the union the courtesy of showing them our plans. We keep the stewards informed and aware of any changes. The more informed they are, the more they are in a good position to keep down the "chatter" among the drivers, who would otherwise hear rumors and usually blow them out of proportion. The stewards also participate in many nonpolicy decisions, such as who gets a new tractor and that sort of determination.

The doors are open, as well, to drivers with concerns. All drivers know

that they can, and do, go to our Transportation Director to discuss whatever they want. More generally, these matters have been personal rather than related to a particular job grievance.

We put a premium on clearly defining to our drivers what we expect of them. We always have high expectations for Giant drivers, but realize that oftentimes circumstances beyond their control lead to what would seem to be decreased productivity on the drivers' parts. To that end, we instituted, earlier this year, a system whereby a driver can know what time is reasonably expected for completion of the day's deliveries. The system is weighted to allow supervisory personnel to know when delays beyond the driver's control occur, since we recognize that the main cause of loss of efficiency is such delays.

Briefly, our "reasonable expectancy" system is based on the time in which an average driver should be able to perform a task under normal conditions. Thorough research was done to develop times for each of the driver's work components, meaning the time in the yard, the drive time to the stores, and so on.

The drivers' times are monitored on a daily basis. Realizing that drivers can have good and bad days, we compute their efficiency on an average weekly basis. For each week, the driver's reasonable expectancy time is divided by the actual paid time. The result is an objective percentage of performance. Each driver supervisor gets a report at the end of the week and keeps a graph for each driver.

Because of our drivers' generally excellent attitudes and performance, it has not been necessary to use the system as a disciplinary tool. Its main benefits are in making the efforts of our supervisors more effective, and allowing us to

pinpoint store problems. Each driver wants to be an achiever since installing this system--some drivers have picked up from the 60 to 70 percent range into the 75 and 80 percent range. A supervisor may accompany a driver on the day's run and offer suggestions to improve efficiency. Again, our emphasis is always positive, not reprimanding. About once a month, each driver meets with the supervisor to review the data about his or her performance.

This system is regular, nonretaliatory feedback. Given the limited availability of supervision, this new measure can now target that resource where it can accomplish the most. Additionally, high performing drivers are given the recognition they deserve.

To help promote pride in their jobs, we have many special programs for our drivers. For every accident-free month, a driver gets a Safe Driving Award and gift certificates. Each year Giant hosts a Drivers Safety Banquet, attended by drivers and their guests. Gift certificates are given for each safe driving year, and trophies and watches are awarded to drivers who have had 5, 10, 15, or 20 consecutive years of safe driving. The American Trucking Association also gives out awards and pins at the banquet.

Another annual event is the Company-sponsored truck roadeo. Giant drivers who have had an accident-free year of driving are invited to participate in a series of local competitions testing their job knowledge and their dexterity in tractor-trailer maneuvers. We have always been fortunate that two or three of our drivers have done well enough in the local meets to be able to compete in the Nationals, which is another source of pride.

It has always been important to us to keep constantly alert to the image of the real world in both proposing any areas of reform and analysis, as well as in relating them back to an operational level. We know that we cannot simply chart productivity and study figures, but we must be concerned foremost with the very real aspects of implementation and acceptance of programs by the people who work for us. Thus, in our Transportation Division, we appreciate the importance of keeping in touch with our drivers, re-examining our attitudes, and being fluid enough to take a fresh look whenever necessary. As our operations change, we always welcome the comments of the people who work with us. Our human resources are clearly an indispensable asset, and our attention is directed to the dynamic function they can and do perform for Giant Food.