

Note: This article is part six of a ten part series written by Art Smalley in conjunction with the 2014 TWI Summit hosted by Lean Frontiers. Art helped facilitate a meeting of TWI thought leaders that is held each year during the Summit. Following this meeting, Smalley composed his thoughts and opinions in a series of papers aimed to support the TWI community's body of knowledge. Smalley's website can be found at www.artoflean.com. The annual TWI Summit website can be found www.twisummit.com.

In Part 6 of this series I will continue to look at ways of improving TWI concepts for the 21st century. In [Part 5](#) I switched gears and moved over to improving TWI Job Relations. I will continue on this theme and offer one very specific suggestion about improving the content of TWI Job Relations for today. I have run across people with the same complaint I have about TWI Job Relations however I have not seen the complaint turn into positive action on the topic. Below I will try and explain the improvement need and opportunity for an interested party.

The fundamental process outlined in Job Relations works however it is not without a pretty major defect in my opinion. By way of comparison I like TWI Job Instruction because 1) it has a training matrix which makes you plan, 2) a simple four step method, and 3) a tool called the Job Breakdown Sheet. Overall when applied correctly TWI Job Instruction is a fairly *proactive* method for eliminating problems before they occur. In other words by managing the situation properly you can ensure that you always have enough people trained to do the job to a given standard.

In contrast I have two specific problems with TWI Job Relations in comparison. For starters there is no equivalent matrix for Job Relations which I think is a shame and something that can easily be remedied. I will touch upon that in Part 7 of this series. Here in the remainder of this post I will simply point out the "problem" I have with JR is that it is employed in virtually every situation I run across as a *reactive* tool to use once a human relations problem has already occurred. And in complete fairness this was the design of the original material and it has its uses in that situation as well. Sometimes problems suddenly appear with no warning but others are often in plain site or emerge very slowly over time. I will illustrate what I

mean by using the TWI Job Relations Card below for explanation.

JR overly focuses on handling **problems** after the **fact**...

Why is there no "tool" for how to do the **proactive part** (i.e. foundations for good relations)?

Also there is a lot more to leading and handling people well than JR...

HOW TO HANDLE A PROBLEM
DETERMINE OBJECTIVES
Step 1—Get the Facts
Review the record.
What policies, rules, regulations apply?
Talk with individuals concerned and get opinions and feelings.
Be sure you have the whole story.
Step 2—Weigh and Decide
Fit the facts together and consider their bearing on each other.
What possible actions are there?
Check each action against objectives weighing effect on individual, group, and production.
Select the best actions.
Don't jump to conclusions.
Step 3—Take Action
Should I handle this myself?
Who can help in handling?
Should I refer this to my supervisor?
Consider proper time and place.
Explain and get acceptance.
Don't pass the buck.
Step 4—Check Results
How soon and how often will I check?
Watch for changes in output, attitudes, and relationships.
Did my action help production?
WERE OBJECTIVES ACCOMPLISHED?

A Supervisor Gets Results Through People
FOUNDATIONS FOR GOOD RELATIONS
1. Let Each Employee Know How He Is Getting Along
Figure out and tell him what you expect.
Point out ways to improve.
2. Give Credit When Due
Recognize extra or unusual performance.
Tell him while it's fresh.
3. Tell An Employee in Advance About Changes That Will Affect Him
Tell him WHY if possible.
Never stand in an employee's way.
4. Make Best Use of Each Person's Ability
Look for ability not now being used.
Never stand in an employee's way.
People Must Be Treated As Individuals
JOB RELATIONS TRAINING
U. S. Civil Service Commission
JRT-3
April 1945 19-44302-1 gpo

The main focus of TWI Job Relations is on the left hand side of the graphic and how to handle a problem after it has occurred. There are four basic steps and a worksheet to fill out which has value. What I think would be a great addition is for a similar four step pattern and tool to exist for the right hand part of the graphic and the **Foundations For Good Relationships**. In other words how do you manage people so that fewer problems ever occur in the workplace and better relations exist. After all as TWI JR stipulates Better Relations = Better Results! So why not be more proactive on the topic and help supervisors and managers notice and deal with problems before they occur or at least as early as possible?

There are plenty of HR training courses available regarding dealing with conflict, resolving conflict, and handling difficult conversations. Those are all fine with me as well. However I think the specific niche that exists for an interested party is to develop TWI JR 2.0 (i.e. the proactive piece of the equation). The beauty of all the TWI courses is that they are simple to understand, the four step method basically follows PDCA, and all are very practical. I would simply like to see a more proactive version of JR developed to help manage work teams and avoid relationship type problems ideally before they ever become a problem. I am not saying that all such problems can be eliminated. However I am not satisfied with a TWI JR course that basically begins instruction on how to handle the problem once it has occurred. That is too reactive for my tastes.

One of the best supervisors I ever knew at Toyota was a veteran of the shop floor for about 40 years. Mr. Ohtsuki cared passionately about the people who either worked for him or worked with him. Technically I did not report to him however I learned as much from him as I did from anyone else inside of Toyota. Mr. Ohtsuki made it a practice to have index cards made up on everyone he interacted with the following insights:

- What is your family situation?
- What is your education and background?
- What are your hobbies and interests outside of work?
- When is your birthday?
- What is your professional goal at work?
- What types of work do you like?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you want to improve upon?
- What is bothering you at work?
- Who do you like to work with and why?
- Who do you tend to avoid and why?
- Etc.

Mr. Ohtsuki was a master at learning this basic information in a legal and non-threatening way. He also kept it all confidential. People only divulged what they felt comfortable sharing. Essentially he developed what I call "A Plan For Every Person" that he interacted with. His goal was to help you become better at whatever you were working upon to the best of his ability. He also had a strong knack for making teams work together better and reduce conflict. He knew that better relations equaled better results even inside of Toyota Motor Corporation in Japan.

I don't have much opportunity to work with TWI Job Relations. However I do think it is a fascinating topic and one in need of substantial upgrade. The reactive component of TWI Job Relations has been created and it basically works. However is anyone out there willing to create the proactive Job Relations program with a matrix (see Part 7), a four step method, and a worksheet for this topic? I think that would be a major advance and great way to improve TWI Job Relations in the 21st century. I would be excited to see this developed and made available to people interested in TWI training.