

GENERAL SCIENCE

Suggest Labor Source

One of the most important tests with the mock-up was for lighting. Three basic ceilings with a dozen variations were installed in the model. As a result of the tests, the committee chose a new open baffle design developed by the architects. The bare fluorescent tubes and exposed steel beams, overhead subfloor, sprinkler pipes, air-conditioning ducts and electrical conduits were all tried out in the ceiling, rather than on paper.

Money Saved by Experiments

Illustrating how the mock-up can be a money-saver in building today, one modification of the basic ceiling system looked on paper to be the simplest and cheapest. When actually tried, however, the estimated saving of 50 cents a foot turned into a cost of ten cents a foot more. The total saving can be figured when one realizes that the completed building will have 350,000 square feet of ceiling.

The finished building is designed to accommodate 3,000 office workers, none of whom will be more than 35 feet from a window wall.

Experiments have been conducted with a newly designed, movable partitioning that can be placed almost anywhere. Aluminum, hollow-square posts will fit into the corner of floor squares and into recessed runners on the ceiling. Colored plastic laminates will separate clerical areas. Fabric-surfaced panels will be used in areas where tack boards are required or where there is a sound problem. Office enclosures will be of translucent glass.

Cost of the mock-up and the experiments might appear big until they are related to the cost of the project. The cost of constructing and demolishing the model building, and the cost of all the experimental work carried out in the prototype is estimated to be one percent of the total cost for the entire project.

To the insurance company, one percent seems like a very small premium to insure against the possibility of expensive errors in building construction.

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► THE "EX-EMPLOYEE" may be a new and hitherto overlooked source of workers for hard-pressed business and industrial employers.

This was suggested in a study at the University of California at Los Angeles by Dr. Wayne L. McNaughton of the Graduate School of Business Administration.

The investigation was conducted with the cooperation of a large western aircraft company whose rate of employee turnover was 5,600 separations a year from a work force of 10,000. It covered all former workers who had been gone from two to 11 months.

For statistical reasons, Dr. McNaughton's analysis was limited to employees who had resigned during the second, seventh and eleventh months previous to the study.

Each of the ex-employees received a questionnaire with a covering letter assuring them their answers would have no effect on their record.

The ex-employees were asked:

1. Why did you quit your job with the company?
2. Would you like to return to the company?
3. What did you like best about the company?
4. What did you dislike most about the company?

One of the first things Dr. McNaughton noted was that the reasons given in the confidential questionnaire for leaving the company were quite different from those given at the time of separation.

Most of the ex-employees had told interviewers on their departure that they were leaving for "other employment." Other common reasons included "leaving the state," "returning to the farm," "military service," "poor health" and "maternity."

The general impression was that the employees were being forced out of the company by forces beyond the employer's control.

However, the questionnaires filled out by

employees after they had left the job revealed a very different picture.

On these the ex-employees emphasized such reasons as "poor pay," "bad supervision," "slow advancement." About 40% of the workers gave a "polite" excuse at the time of leaving, then gave a more truthful answer later.

Most disliked by the ex-employees was the poor quality of supervision, 23% of the two-month group so stating. Wages as a disliked factor was reported by eight percent, five percent and ten percent of the three groups.

Another five percent, eight percent and three percent had been dissatisfied with the nature of the job.

The remarkable finding of the survey was the number of ex-employees who said they would consider rejoining the company. Three out of four ex-employees who had quit after two months on the job indicated they were still interested in rejoining the company, as were 57% of the group which had quit after 11 months.

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