

*Benchmarking and Metrics for  
Ombuds Programs  
or  
Of what use are we, anyway?*

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# *Cost Effectiveness Equation*

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$$\frac{\text{Value Added} + \text{Cost Control} - \text{Mistakes}}{\text{Costs of the Ombuds Function}}$$

# *Compliance Functions*

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- HR
- EO/AA
- Ethics
- Quality Assurance
- Inspection/IG
- Safety
- Audit
- Security
- Fitness for duty
- Waste/ environmental hazard
- Human subjects
- Animal care
- Intellectual property/patents
- Mortality and morbidity

# *Stakeholders*

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- Shareholders
- Directors
- Senior management
- Managers
- Employees
- Former employees
- Compliance officers
- Customers
- Trainees
- Students
- Families
- Society
- Neighbors
- The Organizational Ombuds

# *Evidence for Stakeholders*

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- Federal Sentencing Guidelines
- Statistics: issues
- Any general analyses
- Fewer problems which escape the organization
- Evidence of referrals to compliance offices
- Managerial time saved
- General attitude surveys
- Visitor satisfaction evaluations
- Unsolicited feedback
- Use rates and demographics
- Committee review

# *Evidence cont.*

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- Changes in policies, procedures, structures, morale
- Gifts, recruits, customers
- Public recognition
- Service to managers as selves and supervisors
- Self evaluation
- Self scrutiny
- Professional recognition
- Writing articles for others
- Teaching/training

# *Value Added*

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- Providing a confidential channel
  - The value of listening
  - For every member of the organization
  - Zero barriers, so zero tolerance will work
  - It is simply important that the office exist

# *Value Added cont.*

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- Helping People Help Themselves
  - Some people prefer this option - control
  - May be only reasonable option - lack of evidence
  - May be most effective - direct, timing
  - May be most fair - prevents mistakes



# *Value Added cont.*

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- HPHS cont.
  - May be least likely to provoke reprisal
  - May save time and money - most efficient
  - Wide variety of next steps
  - Teaches skills and methods
  - Preserves privacy and saves face

# *Value Added cont.*

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- Providing supplemental MIS
  - Focus on small work groups
  - Broad sweep across organizations
  - Continuous, informal feedback
  - Available on flexible, instant basis
- Surfacing emerging issues
- Contributing to the image of the company (FSG, H/D laws require safe & credible place to go)

# *Value Added cont.*

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- Catching new opportunities
- Providing information to management about things going well
  - Helps spread innovation
  - Helps surface good ideas
  - Helps inform others about new best practices
  - Helps communicate internal information

# *Value Added cont.*

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- Helping especially good people get recognition and reward
- Supplementing mentoring programs
- Attracting gifts, customers, recruits
- Teaching negotiation and conflict management skills one on one
- Bringing together human services staff - leading a systems approach

# *Cost Control*

## *(\$, Time, Image and Morale)*

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- Reducing rights and power based costs
  - Formal grievances
  - Time of managers working on a case
  - In-house lawyers
  - External legal interactions
  - Agency complaints
  - Court suits and settlements
  - Insurance costs

# *Cost Control cont.*

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- Preventing the loss of valued people
- Getting to disputes early
- Listening to whistleblowers very early
- Providing early information to management about things going badly
- Dealing with fear and humiliation

# *Cost Control cont.*

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- Dealing with especially delicate complaints or chronic complainers (stepping stone)
- Filling in for parts of a system that are not functioning well
- Filling in where no system exists
  - Union employee to union employee
  - Intra-team
  - Manager to manager

# *Cost Control cont.*

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- Catching new problems
- Following up
- Preventing sabotage and theft of property and ideas
- Catching unsafe working conditions
- Dealing with false malicious allegations
- Dealing with harassment of all kinds



# *Cost Control cont.*

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- Preventing violence to self
- Preventing violence against others
- Triaging very serious cases

# *Statistics*

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- Statistics need to capture value added and cost control

# *New Problems*

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# *Compare to the Practice of Others*

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- Contacts and cases (see handout)
- Ratio of contacts to cases
  - range .05-14
  - mode 2.0
  - median 1.5
  - average 1.9

# *Compare Practice cont.*

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- 136 ombuds report how evaluated
  - 10% no official evaluation
  - 1% external assessment
  - 6% periodic review by committee
  - 14% annual performance review
  - 8% solicit feedback
  - 13% employee attitude survey
  - 35% questionnaires
  - 4% review of annual report
  - 9% other

# *Compare Practice cont.*

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- Cases ombuds report save the most money
  - Sexual Harassment and discrimination
  - Keeping valuable people
  - Race, culture and disability
  - Other discrimination
  - Misconduct, fraud, abuse and crimes
  - Managerial abuse and mistreatment
  - Violence against self or others

# *Compare Practice cont.*

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- 1996 survey - 166 ombuds reported 258 “highest potential cost” cases
  - 40% dealt with harassment, discrimination or interpersonal violence
  - 20% dealt with otherwise illegal or criminal behavior
  - 40% were not obviously illegal or criminal - implicated co image and mgmt practices (1/4 = retention of valuable people)

# *Compare Practice cont.*

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- 50% of the ombuds report spending time as follows:
  - 60% in counseling and complaint handling
  - 20% in advising management - informing management and working for systems change
  - 10 % in education and training
  - 10% in administrative duties
  - Largest other area is professional development



# *Functions Requested by Constituents*

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- I Intervene as a neutral party
- SC Raise employee issues to upper management
- HP Provide confidential individual counseling
- HP Generate ways to improve work relationships with supervision

# *Functions cont.*

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- HP Help clarify and resolve conflicts
- HP Provide a sounding board
- R Refer employees to appropriate internal resources
- I Provide for mediation between 2 or more people

# *Functions cont.*

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- I Informally investigate situations
- HP Generate options to improve work relationships with peers
- SC Consult with employee groups
- HP Clarify company policy
- SC Conduct exit interviews

# *Functions cont.*

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- SC Influence organizational policy or practice
- SC Work for systems change
- SC Provide for continuous employee input of ideas and concerns
- HP Help individuals to build their interpersonal skills

# *Functions Grouped*

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- Helping people help themselves 44%
- Systems change 27%
- Intervention 22%
- Referral 7%

# *Is the Ombudsman Useful?*

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- Marketing and visibility of function
- Availability to constituents
- Adherence to and understanding of applicable standards
- Attendance at professional activities
- Continuous training

# *Useful? cont.*

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- Use by constituents
- Demographics of constituents
- Response time to inquiries
- Effectiveness of statistics
- Connection to other parts of the system

## *Useful? cont.*

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- Referrals to and from compliance offices
- Skills that need improvement
- Timeliness and usefulness of feedback to management
- Hear and resolve some bad cases
- Pick up some new problems



## *Useful? cont.*

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- Examine whether outside complaints went through the Ombuds
- Look at systems change as a result of visits to the Ombuds
- Look at changes to policies and procedures as a result of visits to the Ombuds

# *Self Scrutiny*

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- Am I as effective as I could be?
- Did I handle this case as well as I could?
- What can I learn from new problems, worst cases, mistakes, successes?
- Did I follow through on problems?
- Did I follow up with visitors?
- Did I highlight systemic problems?