

## **Child Focus, Inc.<sup>i</sup>**

Child Focus, Inc. (CFI), whose mission is to join with communities in strengthening families and improving the quality of life for children, offers a wide variety of programs in Clermont, Hamilton, and Brown counties in Ohio. With an agency budget in excess of \$11 million dollars, the spectrum of services includes Head Start programs for children ages 0–5, parenting education, family literacy, GED test preparation, substance abuse prevention, partial hospitalization, mental health prevention and counseling services in schools, foster care, independent living, case management, outpatient individual, family, and group therapy, diagnostic testing, psychiatric services, and professional training. CFI's 240 employees have a broad range of professional education including high school, associate's, bachelor's, master's, Ph.D., R.N., and M.D. degrees. All staff share the authority, dedication, and commitment to promote the mission of serving children and families. Facilities include intranet, Internet, a Web site (<http://www.child-focus.org>), specifically designed management information systems with necessary office equipment, 22 vehicles to provide client transportation, and two commercial kitchens that serve more than 800 meals a day. Facilities and programs are supervised by a volunteer Board of Trustees and by the accreditation standards of the National Association for the Education of the Young Child, Day Care Licensing Regulations, Head Start Performance Standards, and Ohio Departments of Education, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, and Job and Family Services.

As CFI continues to expand its programs through new and larger contracts, the biggest challenge is to provide quality services. Personnel and human resources issues are another challenge. They continually strive to find qualified staff who are willing to work with some of the most challenging children and dysfunctional families. Although their turnover rate is approximately 15 percent, most of it is in less-skilled positions. Consequently, this loss of staff increases training costs. Training existing staff to meet higher educational standards and continuing to find office and service space to meet growing needs is also a challenge.

CFI's diversity of programming, reporting, and funding to multiple agencies and organizations requires continuous management at all levels within the agency. The governing Board of Trustees for Child Focus is a diverse group of volunteers that have

## **Case - Mercantile Stores**

During the 1980s, Mercantile Stores was a major retail organization located throughout the Southeast, Midwest, and Gulf Coast regions and included seven divisions: Gayfers, Maison, Blanche, Castner Knott, McAlpin's, Jones, Joslins, and J. B. White. Mercantile's mission statement was "Mercantile Stores is dedicated to creating excitement in merchandising by providing the highest level of service to our customers and a broad assortment of fashionable products that offer superior quality and value." In 1983 Mercantile initiated a program for processing incoming merchandise at regional distribution centers. This was seen as more efficient than receiving merchandise in the individual stores. In 1986 the company remodeled and expanded existing stores to accommodate a greater selection of fashion merchandise. Designer apparel offerings were increased in 1987.

In 1989 a major technological initiative called Quick Response was instituted. It integrated all facets of operations, from inventory planning to purchasing and inventory control, to provide customers with better service. Some of the technologies introduced were price look-up and point-of-sale laser scanning systems, electronic purchase ordering and replenishment, and electronic invoicing and funds transfer. Stronger partnerships were developed with suppliers to help ensure that suppliers have sufficient merchandise for stocking the stores. The company was in constant contact with its suppliers for mutual benefit. For example, Hanes hosiery used selling information furnished electronically and shipped 97 percent of Quick Response orders. Sales increased 17 percent, and the inventory level decreased by 15 percent.

The Quick Response program eliminated bottlenecks within the merchandise processing functions. Previously, shipments had required a high amount of labor-intensive efforts: opening cartons, physical counts, sorting, and manual ticketing. Advance shipping notice capability provided the means of knowing exactly what was coming and when. Shipments arrived preticketed by suppliers with external shipping container marking. Entire containers were scanned for contents and matched to purchase orders.

Mercantile Stores also established a University Business School for training its management associates to implement quality practices within the company. The school's motto, Investing in Excellence Through Education, reflected the company's commitment to the development of its people. Sales associates, department managers, and store managers were empowered and challenged to embrace ownership and responsibility in their jobs. For example, they planned and monitored their own forecasts from start to finish. Complete customer

## **Case – Shiny Hill Farms**

Shiny Hill Farms is a major pork processor, specializing in smoked meats, hams, sausages, and luncheon meats. The firm's largest facility slaughters more than 5,000 hogs each day.

Throughout the food industry, quality is a high priority, and Shiny Hill Farms is no exception. The quality assurance department (QA) seeks to prevent any defective products from reaching the consumer. QA's primary concern is for controlling product weight, appearance, and shelf life throughout the manufacturing operations. Production operators are held accountable for their cuts on specific meat products. The cuts must be performed according to quality assurance specifications in order to obtain high yields. (Yield is the percentage of the live weight of the hog that can be sold.)

Quality assurance monitors all operations, from the killing of hogs through packaging. QA personnel inspect incoming animals, work with USDA inspectors, and monitor cooking temperatures. They check scales daily to ensure they are providing correct weights. If products fall outside specifications, it is the responsibility of QA personnel to notify operators that changes need to be made to bring quality up to standard. Many QA personnel monitor weights of packaged boxes continuously to ensure that they conform to weight specifications. They open boxes and weigh the packages as well as checking them for defects such as rips, leaks, and pinholes. Weights of packages near the bottom, mid and top of each skid (pallet) are inspected. If these packages conform to weight specifications, then the entire skid is accepted and sent to the warehouse. If not, the skid is tagged for 100 percent in on, and the process is studied to determine why the variations occurred. QA personnel analyze graphs of yields and packaging waste weekly.

Other functions throughout the company focus on quality. The sanitation department, for example, sanitizes all manufacturing machines and work surfaces before initial production runs each day. The research and development department plays an important role in improving quality. For example, it is continually seeking out and testing new methods of curing meat and of killing bacteria more effectively and efficiently. R&D also helps to develop new packaging that may improve consumers' perception of quality. In addition, it develops new products, such as "lite" luncheon meats that contain less fat and cholesterol, enlisting the aid of focus groups and taste panels.

A food processing plant is an intense, high-speed manufacturing setting. Shiny Hill Farms operators may have to make as many as 10 cuts each minute on a conveyor line. Engineering personnel replaced all old manufacturing lines with ergonomically correct lines. The

## The Nightmare on Telecom Street<sup>i</sup>

H. James Harrington, a noted quality consultant, related the following story in *Quality Digest* magazine:

*I called to make a flight reservation just an hour ago. The telephone rang five times before a recorded voice answered. "Thank you for calling ABC Travel Services," it said. "To ensure the highest level of customer service, this call may be recorded for future analysis." Next, I was asked to select from one of the following three choices: "If the trip is related to company business, press 1. Personal business, press 2. Group travel, press 3." I pressed 1.*

*I was then asked to select from the following four choices: "If this is a trip within the United States, press 1. International, press 2. Scheduled training, press 3. Related to a conference, press 4." Because I was going to Canada, I pressed 2.*

*Now two minutes into my telephone call, I was instructed to be sure that I had my customer identification card available. A few seconds passed and a very sweet voice came on, saying, "All international operators are busy, but please hold because you are a very important customer." The voice was then replaced by music. About two minutes later, another recorded message said, "Our operators are still busy, but please hold and the first available operator will take care of you." More music. Then yet another message: "Our operators are still busy, but please hold. Your business is important to us." More bad music. Finally the sweet voice returned, stating, "To speed up your service, enter your 19-digit customer service number." I frantically searched for their card, hoping that I could find it before I was cut off. I was lucky; I found it and entered the number in time. The same sweet voice came back to me, saying, "To confirm your customer service number, enter the last four digits of your social security number." I pushed the four numbers on the keypad. The voice said: "Thank you. An operator will be with you shortly. If your call is an emergency, you can call 1-800-CAL-HELP, or push all of the buttons on the telephone at the same time. Otherwise, please hold, as you are a very important customer." This time, in place of music, I heard a commercial about the service that the company provides.*

*At last, a real person answered the telephone and asked, "Can I help you?" I replied, "Yes, oh yes." He answered, "Please give me your 19-digit customer service number, followed by the last four digits of your social security number so I can verify who you are." (I thought I*

## U.S. Water Resource Agency - Flagstaff District<sup>1</sup>

The Flagstaff District (FD) is one of 41 districts within the U.S. Water Resource Agency (USWRA—an Agency in the Department of Renewable Resources—DoRR) charged with the responsibility to develop, protect and administer water resources within the United States. The Flagstaff District provides six major product lines of goods and services: (1) the development of new infrastructure and projects; (2) management of the operation and maintenance of existing infrastructure; (3) the performance of reimbursable work for others; (4) administration of regulatory requirements; (5) provision of emergency response and recovery; and (6) the delivery of defense, environmental, and restoration programs.

The Flagstaff District's purpose, vision, mission, and values are:

*Purpose*—To be effective stewards of the public trust

*Vision*—The Flagstaff District embraces the Agency's vision as its own. This vision can be summed up in terms of four commitment to protect and promote our nation's water resources to be second to none.

*Mission*—To ensure and protect water resources for economic and recreation benefit to the nation, partner states, and local governments. FD's principal mission areas include

- development and management of projects and programs to provide for inland navigation, flood-damage reduction, environmental protection, recreation, water supply, and other public benefits
- protection of the region's waterways and wetlands
- support for emergency preparedness, natural-disaster relief, and recovery work worldwide
- provision of a broad range of engineering and technical support for other organizations

*Values*—The District achieves its mission by means of five core values that serve as the foundation of the organization's overall operations and the behavior of every employee.

- Honor and Respect
- Selfless Service and Courage
- Integrity
- Sharing Knowledge
- Working Safely