

Developing Supervisors In a Technical Work Environment

Workforce Development Issues at the
Montana Department of
Transportation

Workforce Development

- Working Definition
 - Right number of people
 - Right skills, experiences, competencies
 - Right jobs
 - Right time

Department Commitment

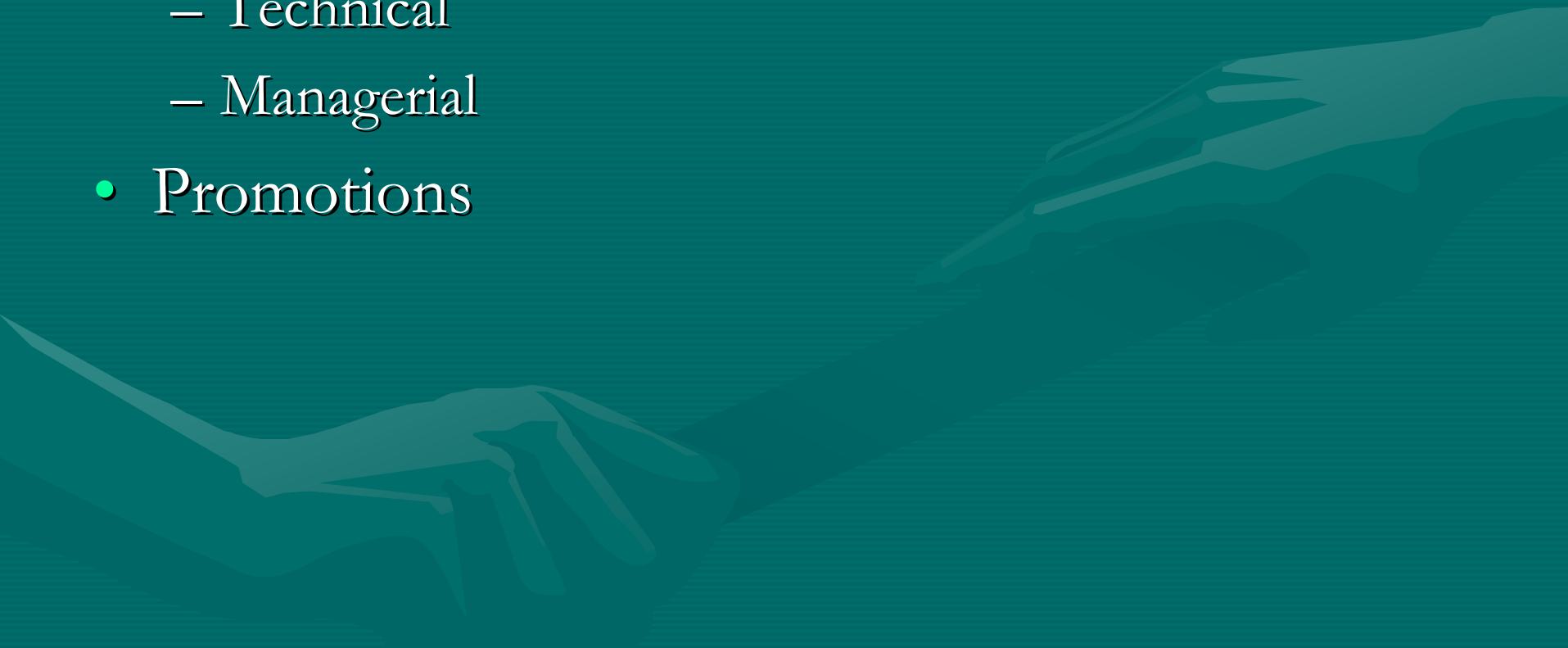
- HR Reorganization
- Workforce Development Bureau
- Increased Staff
- “Organic” Viewpoint
- Distributed HR Workforce

Workforce Development Issues

- Intense competition for skilled or trainable employees
- MDT's demographics
 - Potential Retirements
 - Comparative Salary/Benefit Issues
 - Generally Aging Population in MT

Issues, Continued

- Career Tracks
 - Technical
 - Managerial
- Promotions



Workforce Development Process

- Begin with a subset of an organization
- MDT has a “pilot” project in ISD
 - Relatively few skill sets
 - Relatively homogeneous group

Workforce Development Goals

- Minimum of a two-tiered career path
 - Technical
 - Management
- Competitive and Rigorous Management Training Program
- Compensation plans that reward technical expertise
 - Employees can make more than managers

Workforce Development Umbrella

- Job Profile Development
- Recruitment and Selection
- Effect on new Employees
 - First year program
 - Training
 - Retention

Umbrella, Continued

- Effect on Current Employees
 - Training
 - Retention
- Succession Planning
- Exit Interviews

Focus Issue – Developing Managers

- Deeply Technical Environment
 - Accounting
 - Engineering
 - Highway Maintenance
 - Information Services

History

- Single track career path
 - Programmer
 - Programmer/Analyst
 - Analyst
 - Manager
- Management as reward for highly developed technical skills

Historical Results

- Poor Supervisors/Managers
 - Management Skill sets are different
 - Management attitudes are different
 - Apply a simplistic, military management model
- Unhappy Employees
 - Needs not met
 - Often not recognized or listened to

Managers and Technical Skills

- Think Sports
 - Superstars who became successful managers
 - “Ordinary” players who became successful managers

First Level Remediation

- Management Training Program
- Intended to prepare employees to become managers
- One year intensive study
- Given credit for one year of experience
- Program has been successful

New Focus: Current Managers

- MDT is developing a program for current managers
- Assist them to refine skills
- Early work on hiring/interviewing techniques shows promise for this group

Issues for Management Development

- Study result: People leave supervisors more often than jobs or companies
- Awareness of existing “narrow” attitudes
 - Little awareness of differences in employee attitude, work style, learning style
 - Simplistic approach to supervision – either
 - Overly Attentive
 - OR
 - Barely attentive

Develop “People Focused” Managers

- Employees will
 - Understand what is expected
 - Have what it takes to accomplish tasks
 - Training, equipment, resources
 - Be recognized and listened to on a regular basis
 - Encouraged to grow and develop their talents

Initial Results

- ISD's Revised Hiring Processes
 - Behavioral Interviewing that focuses on desired management behaviors
 - Caliper Testing for Job Fit
- First Assessment: Improvement noted
- More to be done...

Developing Technical Managers

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