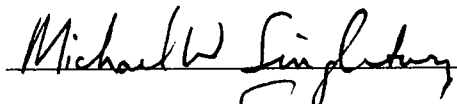
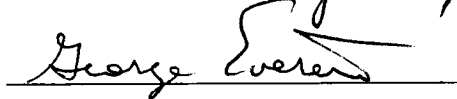


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A readership survey of the Commandant's Bulletin: The
company magazine for the United States Coast Guard

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Scott P. LaRochelle

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ABSTRACT

This research attempted to determine the effectiveness of the Commandant's Bulletin, the Coast Guard's company publication, in meeting the needs of its employees, namely the men and women of the Coast Guard. Areas of focus within the study included readership characteristics, uses and gratifications, content, treatment of issues with respect to controversy, style and appeal, and overall effectiveness.

The history of company publications was traced with particular focus on the changes in purpose and content through the years.

A readership survey questionnaire was administered by mail to a random sample of 1,000 Active-Duty members worldwide.

General findings showed that the publication is read by many, presents an attractive appearance, and is read primarily for information, not entertainment. Distribution appeared to be a major problem as two out of five readers reported having difficulty obtaining a copy to read. Readers desired that the personnel assignments section be returned to the magazine. Readers also expressed a strong desire to receive more than basic information. They do not believe controversial issues are currently addressed by the publication; however they want these issues addressed, and also the opportunity for feedback to the editor.

It was concluded that a company's publication must be responsive to the needs of its employees in order to foster goodwill throughout the organization.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Commandant's Bulletin is the house organ for the United States Coast Guard. This flagship magazine is produced by the public affairs staff at Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C. The Commandant's Bulletin strives to inform, educate, and (sometimes) entertain its readers. The magazine seeks to provide equal representation of all Coast Guard programs such as law enforcement, search and rescue, marine safety, and aviation. It also strives for geographic balance, reporting stories from all 10 Coast Guard districts. Topics suitable for publication include the following: important individual contributions, unit accomplishments, unit missions, community involvement, explanations of people-oriented programs, facilities and services available, personal and moral responsibilities, equal opportunity and human relations, pay and benefits, and leadership (Coast Guard, 1990).

The Commandant's Bulletin serves two distinct audiences. One is internal, and the other is external. The internal audience is the men and women of the Coast Guard from admirals to seamen, who are greatly diverse in both experience and education. Within this category of internal audience are Active, Reserve, and Auxiliary duty status personnel. The external public consists of the "friends of the Coast Guard." Politicians, corporations

within the marine industry, media outlets, and those with simply an interest in the Coast Guard or boating fall within this classification as external.

The Commandant's Bulletin is published monthly. Its circulation in 1994 totals 22,000. Of this total, 19,500 copies are distributed to Active Duty members. The magazine is distributed to all units throughout the Coast Guard with sufficient copies to provide one issue for every three service members. External publics receive their issues through the U.S. Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C. at a subscription rate of \$21 per year.

The content of most feature articles within the Commandant's Bulletin comes from writers in the field. Public affairs specialists, located in each district office, along with designated public affairs officers from individual units submit material for publication. Typical feature stories covered in past issues included Coast Guard response to a major oil spill in the Houston Ship Channel, intercepting Haitian emigrants, new technology in the aids to navigation field, drug interdiction operations in the jungles of South America, and the history of women in the Coast Guard. Some material that is included in regular departments comes from specific offices within Coast Guard headquarters.

The staff of the Commandant's Bulletin rarely generates articles for publication. The entire staff of this magazine is

comprised of four people: a lieutenant, a chief petty officer, and two petty officers.

This flagship magazine is professionally designed, using state-of-the-art graphics, four-color photographs, and quality paper. It is printed entirely on post-consumer recycled paper and is 100 percent recyclable. The magazine is funded internally by the Coast Guard.

The layout for current editions of the Commandant's Bulletin includes a top story, features (usually four to six articles), and the following departments: In the News, People, Enlisted Locker, Officers' Call, Civilian News, and Bulletin Board. The Enlisted Locker, Officers' Call, and Civilian News sections can be dubbed "sacred cows" in that the offices within Coast Guard headquarters that oversee these programs are quite protective in ensuring these sections are represented in every issue (Swift, 1993). The only feature that is included in one issue per year is the Commandant's State of the Coast Guard Address. The magazine length ranges from 32 to 38 pages per issue; however, on occasion the magazine will include up to 48 pages in a single issue. The Commandant's Bulletin accepts no advertising. It is funded entirely by the Coast Guard.

History

The United States Coast Guard, the nation's oldest seagoing service, began operating in 1790. It was 137 years later that the

Coast Guard's first house organ came to press. Billed as the national publication of the U.S. Coast Guard, The Coast Guard magazine was first published in November 1927. A non-Coast Guard publisher produced this monthly magazine; however, the Commandant endorsed the magazine 100 percent. The Capital-Gazette Press in Annapolis, Md. designed the magazine to provide information and entertainment to its readers on Coast Guard life.

This early magazine contained features on Coasties and their units, morale, and plenty of photos and illustrations. An issue from 1935 featured the Coast Guard Cutter Bear patrolling the arctic waters of the Bering Sea, Coast Guardsmen encountering reindeer while on arctic patrol, and the Coast Guard whipping Army in a sporting event. Features during World War II focused primarily on the war and sports. Following the war, a 1947 issue featured the history of the WWII transport carrier *Leonard Wood*, Coast Guard weather station duty, and sports.

Regular departments included "Sez Eddie," an opinion column by Ed Lloyd, USCG ret.; news and notes, sports, officers and enlisted orders, and Coast Guard administrative notes. This early magazine was 48 pages long.

Advertising generated the bulk of revenue with industries such as uniform shops, banks, shipyards, hotels, and cigarette manufacturers comprising the majority of advertisers. Annual subscriptions could be purchased for \$2.50 and subscribers included Coasties, the shipping industry, yacht clubs, and Senate

and House committees. By 1937, eight of every ten Coasties subscribed or purchased regularly the magazine.

Through the 1930s to the period leading up to World War II, The Coast Guard underwent only minor revisions to the original format. A letters to the editor section entitled the "Mail Buoy" was added. A humor section similar to one in the Reader's Digest was adopted. On November 23, 1942, women were allowed to join the Coast Guard. Shortly thereafter, a women's issues section was added. Also, a question and answer section, short story contest, and more editorials became regulars in the magazine. The Coast Guard also changed its name to the U.S. Coast Guard Magazine. The magazine also expanded its length from 48 to 72 pages.

After the war, the magazine underwent a few more format changes. The length was reduced back to 48 pages. A new section, "Guest of the Month," which would provide a career summary of a Coast Guard person, began. Many of the original regular departments such as the story contest and women's sections were eliminated.

By 1951, the magazine decreased its size to 32 pages, reflecting a decline in advertising over the past several years. "Girlie" ads (advertisements featuring sexy women promoting a particular product), which were abundant in the 1930s and 40s, disappeared. However, by the mid-1950s, the magazine began to rebound from its slump just a few years earlier. The length was increased to 48 pages in 1954 and to 64 pages in 1957. A new

section, titled "the Glamour Girl of the Month," featured a full page photo of some Hollywood starlet. Other new departments included the Merchant Marine section, Coast Guard Auxiliary section, and the Business Page.

However, 1957 was to be the last year of the U.S. Coast Guard Magazine. In a statement published in the final edition of the magazine, it read, "In order to give broader and more timely coverage of Coast Guard news, the U.S. Coast Guard Magazine will be combined with the Navy Times effective August 1957." (Coast Guard, 1957).

It wasn't until 10 years later in 1967 that the Coast Guard started its own company publication. The first issue was in a newsletter format with neither the frills nor attractiveness of the magazines from the previous decade. Published weekly, the Commandant's Bulletin varied in length from seven to 10 pages on plain white paper. This new format contained no advertisements, which is still the case today. The newsletter was funded solely by the Coast Guard.

Its editorial policy was "to publish news of general interest, suggestions and technical items aimed at keeping personnel abreast of information relating to the work of the Coast Guard as well as other events of significance." Furthermore, it stated, "Items published in the Commandant's Bulletin are intended only to keep readers informed, and are not to be considered as authorization for official action." (Commandant's Bulletin, 1967).

The content of these early issues was strictly business and guided by a rigid format. The following sections presented in a straightforward manner (Section A, B, C, D, etc.) contained information directly related to individual departments such as Personnel, Operations, Engineering, Reserve, Comptroller, Merchant Marine Safety, Public and International Affairs, Boating Safety, and General. Each of these sections was not included in every issue. Personnel and Operations were the most frequently listed specialty areas.

The Commandant's Bulletin soon included supplements to its issues with various directives and statistics attached at the end of the newsletter. The newsletter's first photograph appeared in the supplemental section on January 20, 1967.

The Commandant's Bulletin gradually evolved from the late 1960s and the 1970s from a no-frills newsletter to a better quality newsletter and finally to a news magazine by the end of the decade. Some of the significant changes were as follows:

In January 1968, a new feature, "Message from the Commandant," was inserted into the publication. This provided a vehicle for the service's top officer to occasionally send messages directly to the field. Although not featured as the main story, it was placed inside the front cover of the issue.

In June 1972, the newsletter was given a new facelift with the cover being spiced up with script-type and the symbol for the Commandant -- four stars -- being added to the cover.

In 1974, the number of pages was increased from approximately six to 15 pages.

In April 1974, photographs were shown in the regular sections of the Commandant's Bulletin. They were no longer simply an addendum to the issue. In May 1974, the cover showed a picture for the first time.

By late 1974, human interest along with sports and leisure stories became commonplace.

In 1978, a list of chief petty officer assignments were included in each issue. Officer assignments had always been a part of the Commandant's Bulletin, being listed in the Personnel section. In fact, in one issue in 1976, the first seven pages of an issue were filled with nothing but officer assignments.

By July 1978, the Commandant's Bulletin began taking on the look of a magazine, shedding its newsletter image.

In 1980, this transition from newsletter to magazine was completed with the use of better paper, a new slick paper cover, more in-depth stories and features, and better photographs. The separate sections listed alphabetically and containing short briefs were eliminated. The content was more informative and certainly more entertaining.

Throughout this time the Commandant's Bulletin was strictly for internal use.

In 1982, the Commandant's Bulletin changed from a weekly magazine to a bi-weekly magazine. By doing so, the editors were

able to improve its quality and provide more copies to the field. On March 14 of that year, the first color photo graced the magazine's cover.

The magazine continued to improve its content and layout through the 1980s. Feature articles were driven by recent events. Major oil spills, drug busts, and search and rescue cases filled the pages with text and action photos. The addition of pullout quotes, line breaks between stories, and bold and big headlines made the Commandant's Bulletin more user friendly. The magazine also produced more in-depth features in addition to more features in general. In 1987, UPI and AP news briefs were designated as regular sections to the magazine. In 1988, the Commandant's Bulletin switched to a monthly publication.

The 1990s saw only a few minor revisions to the magazine. In 1990, the officer assignment list, which had been a regular section in the magazine since its inception, was dropped. In September 1990, the magazine also made its first mention of the availability of subscriptions in its masthead, indicating the possible shift from an internal house organ to a combination internal and external house organ.

In 1991, the format that is currently in place was implemented. This included: the feature section with the top story and other features, and the following departments: In the News, People, Personnel Notes, Service Info, Bulletin Board, and Greetings from...

Other Military Service Flagship Publications

The other four branches of the U.S. Armed Services also produce monthly publications. Each is discussed below.

Marines is the official publication of the U.S. Marine Corps. Its purpose is to keep Marines and civilian employees of the Marine Corps informed about current Marine Corps plans, policies, programs, and activities (Marines, 1993). The magazine contains an average of eight feature articles focused primarily on operations and training. Typical features from previous issues included Marine security guard details, recruiting in downtown Brooklyn, joint operations with the Royal Air Force, and enforcing the no-fly zones over Bosnia-Herzegovena. Occasional features cover internal sports and recreation. Regular departments include HQMC Notes (hodge-podge of administrative policy, education assistance, and quality of life), Health & Fitness, Around the Corps (articles on local units), Marine History, and Transition Assistance (articles to assist personnel leaving the service).

The magazine is both slick and attractive. Most stories are submitted by field personnel, not by magazine staff members.

Marines carries a serious, no-nonsense tone and contains few, if any, people-type stories. The average number of pages is 30, and it is published monthly. The magazine accepts no advertising.

Airman is the official magazine of the U.S. Air Force. Its purpose is to serve as a medium of information for Air Force personnel (Airman, 1993). It contains one main feature article

plus several other features. These articles focus mainly on operations and training issues. Typical features from previous issues included the Department of Defense's war on drugs, POW/MIA analyses, and F-15 squadron activities. Regular departments include Airman's World (news from around the Air Force), Airmail (letters to the editor concerning previous editions), and Here's Jake (cartoons depicting Air Force personnel). These departments are interspersed between the feature articles.

The magazine employs one of the largest staffs compared to the other services as several editors, writers, art directors, photojournalists, illustrators and graphics coordinators fill out the rank and file of the staff. Most articles in the magazine are written by the staff. The magazine contains high quality photos throughout. Very few articles expressed any quality-of-life concerns. The average number of pages is 48, and it is published monthly. The magazine accepts no advertising.

Soldiers is the official magazine of the U.S. Army. Its aim is to provide the Total Army with information on people, policies, operations, technical developments, trends and ideas of and about the Department of the Army (Soldiers, 1993). The magazine contains an average of 17 features per issue, covering topics such as operations and training, sports and recreation, and quality of life. These various topics are intertwined in no specific order. Typical features covered in previous issues included joint training with South Korean forces, reconnaissance training in the

woods of Germany, service-wide environmental conservation activities, flying economically with your family on military space-available flights, and rendering disaster relief in Florida after Hurricane Andrew. Regular departments include Feedback (letters to the editor), What's New (news stories from posts around the world), Focus on People (service members' activities outside the Army), The Lighter Side (cartoons depicting non-military humor), and Dateline: Excellence (salutes to top performers in the service).

This magazine also employs a large staff with separate editorial, art, photojournalism, and productions departments. Most stories are written by the staff. The magazine contains a wealth of good information, although the overall attractiveness lags behind some of the other flagship publications. The average number of pages is 55, and it is published monthly. The magazine accepts no advertising.

All Hands is the official magazine of the U.S. Navy. Although the magazine's purpose is not explicitly stated, the Secretary of the Navy has determined that this publication is necessary in the transaction of business required by law of the Department of Navy (All Hands, 1993). All Hands averages about 12 features per issue with the primary themes being entertainment, leisure activities, and community service. For example, one issue focused heavily on health and recreation, another on top movies of the year, and yet another had separate articles on Montel

Williams, Jay Leno, and Gerald McRaney of television's "Major Dad." Williams' story contained the most legitimacy, since he was a lieutenant commander in the Navy prior to launching his talk show program. Very little content covers actual Navy operations and training.

The magazine's regular departments include the Mail Buoy (letters to the editor), From the Charthouse (administrative notes), and Bearings (stories from local bases and ships throughout the fleet). These departments are only occasionally listed in the table of contents, although they are included in every issue. This magazine also employs a large staff. The average number of pages is 48, and it is published monthly. The magazine accepts no advertising.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to determine how effectively the Commandant's Bulletin is meeting the needs of its internal audience, namely the men and women of the United States Coast Guard.

Research questions to be answered include:

What are the readers reading habits within the Commandant's Bulletin?

How satisfied are the readers with the publication's content in terms of scope and variety?

How satisfied are the readers with the publication's style and layout?

Do the readers see the publication as a trustworthy medium for dealing with tough and controversial issues?

Several hypotheses to be tested include:

1. Career-oriented personnel are more likely to read the Commandant's Bulletin than personnel not planning a Coast Guard career.

2. Junior enlisted personnel have a greater difficulty obtaining a copy of the Commandant's Bulletin to read than do other service members.

3. Coast Guard personnel read the Commandant's Bulletin more for information and instruction than entertainment.

4. Junior personnel learn more about Coast Guard missions and programs from the Commandant's Bulletin than senior personnel.

5. Junior personnel alter or change their opinions about Coast Guard missions and programs more than senior personnel after reading the Commandant's Bulletin.

6. Coast Guard members do not see issues of controversy addressed in the Commandant's Bulletin despite having a strong desire for these issues to be addressed.

Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms can and shall be used interchangeably: company publication, magazine, and house organ. The men and women of the Coast Guard refers to only those personnel currently serving on active duty. Retired, Reserve, and Auxiliary members are excluded from this study.

Junior enlisted personnel are those Active Duty members in the paygrades E-1 through E-3.

Mid-level enlisted personnel are those Active Duty members in the paygrades E-4 through E-6.

Chief Petty Officers are enlisted personnel with the paygrades of E-7 and above.

Senior enlisted personnel are those Active Duty members in the paygrades E-7 and above.

Junior officers are those Active Duty members in the paygrades O-1 to O-3. Warrant officers are also included here.

Senior officers are those Active Duty members in the paygrades O-4 and above.

Junior personnel are those Active Duty members in the paygrades E-1 through E-6 and O-1 through O-3.

Senior personnel are those Active Duty members in the paygrades E-7 and above and O-4 and above.

Delimitations

The readership survey to be described in the methodology section will be administered only to Active Duty members of the Coast Guard. Of the 22,000 copies of this magazine, 19,500 are distributed to Active Duty personnel with the balance going to Reserve units, Auxiliary units, friends and associates of the Coast Guard, legislators, and regular subscribers. Due to time constraints in processing the survey instrument alone, the maximum number of surveys to be distributed in this study will be 1,000.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

House Journal History

House journals, both individually and en masse, are a powerful force in presenting facts and information to massive sections of a population. They have a most receptive readership because they discuss matters of immediate and personal concern (Mann, 1974).

Although many see World War II as the takeoff point of company publications in the United States, their birth occurred nearly 500 years earlier across the Atlantic Ocean. Abshier (1990) said the first recognizable industrial or business publication was published in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries by a German firm known as the House of Fugger. Some say the term house organ originated with this company. House takes its name from the former great mercantile houses or companies of Europe. Organ is an instrument of the company.

One of the first company publications in the United States was the Lowell Offering, published by the Lowell Cotton Mills, Lowell, Mass. It was first produced in 1840 as an outlet for the literary expression of the company's female workers. Many of the company's employees were ex-school teachers who went to work in the mills because of the comparatively high wages (Darrow, 1974).

Other early company publications were The Travelers Record, started March 1, 1865, by James G. Batterson, founder of the Travelers Insurance Company, and The Locomotive, founded in 1867 by Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company. Both were highly successful. The Record reached a circulation of 50,000 copies to rival in readership the leading popular magazines of the day (Darrow, 1974).

These pioneer publications in industrial journalism were basically external in nature. The first true employee publication, according to today's standards, probably was The Triphammer, started in 1885 by the Massey-Ferguson Company (Darrow, 1974).

However, the oldest company publication in the United States was founded by the National Cash Register Company in Dayton, Ohio in 1807 (Abshier, 1990). Known then as the Factory News, and now as the NCR Factory News, it is still going strong as one of the country's leading employee publications (Darrow, 1974).

The overriding theme of company publications from 1840 to 1940 emphasized entertainment and service-type content. Company publications were primarily devoted to choice items of gossip, social chit-chat about employees, notices of birthdays, anniversaries, jokes, and notices of local recreation and entertainment opportunities (Dover, 1959). These first company publications had little purpose other than to foster a happy

family atmosphere and, often, to bring the top bosses into the family circle and to humanize them (McCloskey, 1959).

The nation and company publications underwent an extensive shakeup after Dec. 7, 1941. The employee house organ during World War II developed fully under the pressure of wartime industrial expansion. It penetrated deeply into the need for solidifying labor and management relations (Bilken, 1945). Businesses and industries were called on to produce in greater quantities than ever before. Spurred by the belief of social scientists that informed employees were more productive employees, employee publications shifted from entertainment content to greater information of the company, its plans, policies, and operations (Dover, 1959).

The 1950s and 1960s was a time when company publications took on a new dimension in their ever-expanding role. Management used this specialized media for persuasion. Content was no longer designed purely for presenting facts, but to emphasize or explain the significance of the facts in terms of employer interest, to take specific action, or to accept management's honest ideas and opinions (Dover, 1959). Grunig (1984) labeled this type of communications practice two-way asymmetrical, claiming it is management's intention to persuade the employees to agree with the company's point-of-view.

Grunig (1992) then added that a new era of open (symmetrical) communication developed in employee communication in

the 1970s and 1980s. Richetto (1977) concurred: "... there appears to be a trend toward examining relational consequences such as trust, credibility, or satisfaction in terms of specific antecedent conditions, as with studies of the effects of homophily on perceived trust or credibility or the effects of perceived openness in communication on overall supervisor satisfaction."

Since World War II, the number of company periodicals has been climbing (McCloskey, 1959). According to Darrow (p.6, 1974), "This growth has been spurred by the shift from agrarian, simple industries to technical, more complex business structures with multiple layers within the organization. The craftsman who made the product from the start to the finish gave way to the assembly line product. No more mom and pop, hello multinational conglomerate. Internal communication which once relied on word of mouth just won't work anymore. Bigness and diversity are a way of life not only in America, but worldwide."

Need

Today, employers are becoming more aware that employee loyalty, commitment, and concern for quality depend on effective employee communication (Foehrenbach, 1990). In the past, employee communication was viewed as strictly a one-way process in which communications flowed down from management to employees (Pavlik, et al., 1992). For companies to compete successfully in business

and industry, positive internal communications are a prerequisite for success.

Minter (1990) said that perhaps the most unique and important aspect of company publications is that they provide a routine channel of communication to a narrowly targeted audience that is often unavailable through any other means. The company publication goes to all members of the organization, many of whom show it to their spouses. It is sent to retired employees and some members of the media. And as a professional courtesy, it goes to editors of internal publications at other concerns, as well as to some legislators (Cole, 1981). Keeping employees in the loop makes them feel better about themselves and the company, and high morale and high production go hand in hand (Brubaker, 1990).

Lesly (1983) said that managements now tend to recognize that if employees understand and accept the policies and plans of the company, it is more likely that these plans and policies can be carried out.

Also, Bilken (p.2, 1945) said, "It is only by humanizing the business to the employee that both management and employee will operate with maximum efficiency. Company publications provide this bond by integrating employees and management, integrating individual departments, recognizing superior achievement, and providing enlightenment of both the industry and the product." These publications are not published for the purpose of making a

profit. They are published periodically to inform a particular public about the organization's affairs (Mann, 1974). Bentley (1953) said this informing is done in the hopes of guiding the thinking of the publication's readers into channels favorable to the organization, its services, or its products.

Furthermore, employees are a vital communications channel themselves, as they discuss their company with outsiders. Employee attitudes about an organization have a considerable impact on the perceptions of people outside the organization. One objective of the company publication should be providing employees with the information needed to build positive attitudes in communicating with friends, relatives, and associates within the community (Lesly, 1983).

Types

Bentley (1953) said company publications are divided into two major classifications based on the type of readers served: the internal publication circulates inside the company to employees, and the external publication circulates outside the company to customers, consumers, and friends of the organization. Somewhere between the two is the inevitable dual-purpose journal which tries to combine the attributes of both types (Mann, 1974).

An internal publication may serve as the company's mouthpiece. It explains and interprets company policies simply, fully, reasonably, thus making them understood and creating a

desire to cooperate with them. It explains why certain steps are taken, enabling workers to know exactly what is expected of them, and why (Bentley, 1953).

The internal employee publication also attempts to build morale, preventing friction among departments and individuals. It creates loyalty to the company. It welds diverse company groups into one large family by focusing attention to common aims and purposes (Bentley, 1953). Finally, the internal publication works as a spark plug for the employee relations program. Within this program, corporate communicators now say that the top four employee relations responsibilities are improving morale, informing employees about internal changes and new strategies, explaining benefit plans, and helping to make employees more productive and quality conscious ("Restructuring: Good and bad news for employee communications," 1989).

An external publication, on the other hand, has a quite different purpose from the internal publication. This medium can serve as an effective public relations weapon since the audience is narrowly targeted, the message is carefully crafted and free from competition, and can provide a continuous link, which creates a bond of loyalty from the readers to the organization (Mann, 1974).

The hybrid of these two type periodicals is the internal-external publication, which endeavors to serve the functions of providing information both for employees and for an outside

audience in one publication. This economical approach to killing two birds with one stone does not come without potential dangers. In trying to please two distinct audiences, it is possible that neither will be served. However, for the editor who can balance the content while resisting the demands of public relations pressures from one side and personal interest on the other, dual-purpose publications can prove quite successful (Mann, 1974).

Company publications also come in several different formats. Kemper (Sept 1991) noted that a study of internal publications conducted by the Los Angeles office of William M. Mercer, Inc. revealed that the most preferred design for employee journals was the newspaper; more than a third (36 percent) were produced in this form. Magazines and magapapers were also popular (23 percent and 21 percent, respectively). Newsletters were the least used format (19 percent).

Concerning frequency, the study showed 40 percent of the publications were issued monthly, 26 percent were bimonthly, 17 percent were quarterly, 4 percent were semi-monthly, 4 percent were weekly, and the remaining 9 percent were published on some other schedule.

Purpose

According to Bilken (1945), "The employee publication is potentially a much bigger, much more important, more dynamic, more effective builder of good industrial relations than most of those

connected with it realize." A publication by its very nature can provide detailed information on a range of subjects. The editor can take employees far beyond their own job areas, shedding light upon occupations and functions about which employees know little or nothing. The publication can say what needs to be said to employees with completeness and accuracy. A good publication can ensure that every member of the organization gets the same story, the same facts, the same interpretation (Halley, 1959).

Managements today recognize that the success of an organization is dependent upon people and a purpose -- plus communication to bring the people and purpose together (Lesly, 1983). Publications featuring management exhortations and company chitchat are a dying breed. Publications must be directed toward achieving the goals of the organization and the satisfaction of the needs of the employees (Corrado, 1984). One public cannot be sacrificed for the benefit of the other.

In Mercer's study, the investigation concluded that the company publication must integrate two endeavors that often are not compatible: the accomplishment of organizational goals and the satisfaction of employee needs (Kemper, Sept 1991).

Halley (1959) said the successful company publication will incorporate a combination of purposes into the development of a complete package. Entertainment, information, education, interpretation, and persuasion each have a role in the publication to varying degrees.

Geddie (1990) said there are many bottom-line reasons to communicate internally through the company publication. A few include: the ability to control situations rather than be controlled, to help improve productivity and safety, to educate employees about vital issues, to help employees deal with change, to improve decision-making at all levels, to motivate employees by building a sense of ownership, and to explain policies and simply to share news. Troy (1989) added that publications are not only expected to inform employees and bolster morale, but also to present crafted messages that will influence employee behavior.

The responsibility of a successful publication lies with management, not the readership. Through the printing of well-planned, carefully chosen articles, the publication helps employees to understand the organization, top-level management, and to know and comprehend what management is thinking and planning for their welfare (Bilken, 1945). This is not to say that company publications will be driven in a dictatorship 'thou shalt' philosophy. On the contrary, management is not free to simply publish what it so chooses because by ignoring the wants and needs of the employee, the publications will most certainly fail their most vital test -- is the publication read?

Objectives

The first step in developing a successful company publication is to identify its overall objective. A master plan

is the backbone of an effective company publication (Halley, 1959). Therefore, the company's top management should set some very specific objectives. These objectives should be written down and used as a blueprint to make sure the publication stays on course (Darrow, 1974). One sound way to state the publication's objectives is through a mission statement. Minter (1990) said a mission statement, composed of 25 words or less, should cover both the publication's general content and audience. The content in the publication should appeal to employees of all ranks and talents in the organization.

In formulating these objectives, it is a good idea to insure that the content of every issue conforms to three arbitrary rules: every article and feature should be planned to achieve the objectives the publication has set for itself, the publication's appeal should be to the broadest audience, and a publication's content should be distinguished for complete and full coverage of company matters important to readers (Halley, 1959).

Failure to define specific objectives at the outset spells trouble down the road for the company publication. "The cardinal error is to publish a magazine with no more tangible policy or objective than the vague hope that, in itself, a publication will somehow help establish an atmosphere of good cheer and solidarity, which will be reflected in greater loyalty and better work."

(McCloskey, p.3, 1959) Furthermore, according to Mann (1974), unless a house journal has a defined policy and is controlled by

an editor who will maintain its standards, it is likely to become a rag-bag of amateur contributions, pep-talks from management, attempts at irrelevant humor, pompous pronouncements from self-appointed authorities, and endless pictures of the chairman officiating at presentations.

A good company publication crosses the barriers to communication that exist in almost every organization. The editor is responsible to ensure equal distribution of coverage from all programs and departments within the organization.

In addition to conforming to general and specific communication goals, publication contents should also match information needs of employees. Serious business messages are what is now being called for in employee publications. Brides, babies, and bowling scores are being replaced with talk on products, business strategies and competitive threat ("Restructuring: Good and bad news for employee communications," 1989).

In an Employee Communication Effectiveness survey co-sponsored by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and the consulting firm of Towers, Perrin, Forster, and Crosby, the results showed that employees are most interested in information about the company itself, and their own future in it (Lesly, 1983).

Employees want to understand and contribute to the organization they work for. In a 1991 study conducted by Industry

Week magazine, it found that employees want information about the company's future, the competition, reasons for important organizational actions, the organization's goals and direction, opportunities for career advancement, product development, employee benefits, the organization's strength and stability, and product quality and quality improvement efforts (Kemper, April 1991).

Topics of moderate interest include news of other divisions, current issues, and community involvement (Lesly, 1983). Other items employees like to read about include employee club activities (other than bowling), salary policies, staff promotions, safety and health, and features on other employees (Cole, 1981).

Layout and Design

After having defined the company publication's overall objective, care should be exercised in developing the most effective layout and design. The advertising axioms, "The cover sells the book" and "The wrapping sells the package," are just as applicable to selling a house organ as to selling other commodities (Bilken, 1945). Added Moore and Blue (1979), the vast majority of a publication is composed of body type. Body type, in turn, contains the company's most important ingredient -- its message. If the message is to be read, it must be presented in an attractive package.

The publication design begins with the cover. This dramatic, showpiece page should distinctively identify the magazine, attract the readers' attention, intrigue the readers as to what's inside, and create that all-important good first impression (Moore and Blue, 1979). Cover pictures can, and should, change with each issue, but the publication should still be recognizable (Mann, 1974). To make the publication readily recognizable, the logo should be clean, simple, uncluttered, and constant.

A company magazine's second most important page is its Table of Contents and, therefore, should receive the same care in design the cover does. The Table of Contents page should be placed either on the second page (inside cover) or third page. Common items on the table of contents page include: a miniature logo, volume and issue numbers, publication date, publisher's data, cover photo data, the editorial staff's names, and the listing of articles and departments within the magazine (Moore and Blue, 1979).

Since most readers go through a company publication as they would go through a book, the front-to-back ordering of importance is important. With that in mind, the most interesting and enticing articles should immediately follow the Table of Contents. Thereafter, other articles can be run in order of decreasing importance followed by the regular department sections (Moore and Blue, 1979).

A sample of about 100 employee periodicals submitted by participants in a study conducted by the Conference Board verified that corporate publications stress business-related messages by placing them in the front and leaving human interest material for the back of the publication (Troy, 1989).

Readers can often become bored with pages that contain nothing more than column after column of body type, and subsequently skip what may have been an informative article. Breaking up large blocks of gray areas with some type of graphic relief can usually cure this problem. Graphic relief comes in many forms -- bullets, all-cap paragraph lead-ins, pullout quotes, subheads, stars and bold-faced paragraph lead-ins (Moore and Blue, 1979).

Photographs and illustrations are another element that can serve to break up text, heighten interest, or explain textual content. A picture has the ability to convey at a glance the meaning which would take columns of text to explain. Furthermore, photographs and illustrations are designed to stop the eye and provide visual relief in the design (Parker, 1989).

Finally, in designing a company publication, Mann (1974) said there is much to be said for continuity in style of presentation. This does not mean that the same layout must appear all through one issue or that each issue must look like the previous one. Monotony should be avoided, yet a general relationship of pages maintained. Readers will then get to know

their publication, and enjoy the feel of being able to turn to a regular page to find a sought feature.

Content

A company publication may have the slickest look, four-color art, and the highest quality paper, but all of that is moot if the words inside lack credibility. Sermonized messages will not attract readers, but simply turn them away. Communication cannot be successful unless it is candid (Ragan, 1991). To produce a relevant, interesting employee publication, editors must convince management that it is in their best interest to permit open, candid communication. Kemper (Sept 1991) said they must use the credibility of their program to help integrate two endeavors that often are not compatible: the accomplishment of organizational goals and the satisfaction of employee needs. Employees want straight answers to their questions, straight information about their organization, and candid talk from their leaders.

From survey data collected by Towers, Perrin, Forster, and Crosby, Inc., seventy-one percent of the survey respondents think that corporate communication is credible. However, only 57 percent feel the organization "tells the full story." Organizations need to communicate earlier and more frequently, demonstrate trust in employees by sharing bad news as well as the good, and involve employees in the process by asking for their

ideas and opinions if this trend is to improve (Foehrenbach, 1990).

There is a clear desire for employees to be told the truth, even if it happens to be bad news. In a study by the Wyatt Consultancy of almost 3,300 employees, it found that 40 percent of the new employees found information given by management to be trustworthy, but for those with more than 10 years of service, this figure dropped to 27 percent (Wragg, 1992).

Just as the pilothouse is the focal point and sign of strength aboard a ship, so too are the feature articles of a company publication. Mann (1974) said features, because of their emphasis, tend to set the general tone for the periodical. Every feature article must have a purpose. That purpose may be to inform, to entertain, to persuade, to clarify, to explain, or to stir up a particular emotion (Graham, 1993). Whatever the purpose may be, it should parallel the publication's goals and objectives. For example, if one goal is employee recognition, the editor has to ferret out stories that pay tribute to employees' contributions to the company's success (Darrow, 1974).

Many special features also have a place in the company publication as they can serve a dual purpose of entertainment and instruction. This, combined with the brightening effect they have on the publication, often makes them desirable (Bilken, 1945).

A letters to the editor special feature is based on letters received from the readers. This may be handled as an open forum

with readers commenting on past articles, or the editor can name a subject of general interest each issue and print various opinions on the subject in the following issue, or readers can send in questions to be answered by management in the publication.

Even though a letters to the editor section often outdraws other columns in readership, not all editors like the idea since it invites controversy. English (1988) noted that one professional communicator is adamantly against it. "When you introduce a letters to the editor idea, you're introducing the idea of controversy. In a corporate environment, you have to ask yourself what good will it do for your company?"

However, many editors believe it builds credibility with the readers despite having to take their lumps once in a while. "We run the good with the bad and the ugly," says Jan Judy, manager of Southwestern Bell's Enterprise magazine. "It's one area within the company where employees have a platform to speak their mind." (English, 1988)

Controversial articles or opinion pieces can play a vital role in stimulating readership (Erlich, 1991). Unfortunately many publications rarely step into the realm of controversy. Dover (1959) cited a phenomenon known as the "Zone of Silence" pervades through most managements when the issue of publishing controversial articles arises. Rather than confronting hot issues, management usually gets a particular foot-in-mouth disease that has only one symptom -- silence.

However, employees have a right to know management's convictions on important issues and the company publication is the forum to air them (McCloskey, 1959). Both good news and bad news should be reported, says James Lamb, a communications consultant in New Canaan, Conn. Printing puffery and sounding like a corporate mouthpiece do more harm than good (Melia, 1992). No quicker way exists to lose the respect of employees than being too indifferent or too timid or too uncertain to speak out frankly and fearlessly on critical matters (McCloskey, 1959).

Although it does not fall directly under the category of controversy, rumors too need to be addressed in company publications. Brubaker (1990) said wise managers know this forum is an excellent place to dispel or clarify rumors, thereby eliminating potential strife and dissension within the organization.

Other special features that should be considered for inclusion in the company publication are humor, competitions and human-interest stories. Nearly all journals use humor. The occasional box with a witty piece of verse, the cartoon which gives relief to a sea of gray text, or the photograph with a jocular caption each may have a place in the publication (Mann, 1974). Humor, however, is serious business, and editors must beware of offending readers and even of potential libel actions.

Competitions are yet another means of stimulating reader interest. One of the more popular types is quizzes. This feature

appeals to the 'quiz kid' instincts of readers and has both an entertaining and instructive value (Bilken, 1945). Quizzes can be general in nature or specific to the organization's particular industry. Other proven types of competitions include crosswords, mathematical puzzles, and some literary and wordfinding problems.

Human interest stories of company personnel provide steady material for the company publication. People are interested in people. Names are news. But what this really means is that people are interested in interesting people and names are news when their owners do something of consequence (McCloskey, 1959).

Company publication editors often draw battle lines when arguing over the role of puffery in the publication. Many feel the publication should stick solely to straightforward corporate news while others believe birthdays and bowling scores deserve a place. A good editorial mix should contain about half corporate news and half people news. If the corporate news has a people orientation, so much the better (Brubaker, 1990).

An informal survey of the readers of the Ragan Report, a Chicago-based newsletter on corporate communications, seemed to bear that point. In that survey, 65 percent of the respondents felt that personal news about the workers belonged in the employee publications (Ragan, 1991).

Surveys

Editors sometimes live in an ivory tower when it comes to knowing what their readers think of their publication. Hearing kind comments from colleagues can sometimes only deceive editors even further. The only real way to find out what readers think of the company publication is to conduct a readership survey (Moore and Blue, 1979).

The most practical method of conducting a survey is to mail the questionnaire to employees at their homes, enclosing a friendly transmittal letter explaining the purpose of the survey and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. An announcement of the survey should also be made in the publication itself (Dover, 1959).

Survey research brings with it many well-defined advantages. It can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings, the cost is usually reasonable, and large amounts of data can be collected with relative ease. However, some disadvantages also exist. Independent variables cannot be manipulated as in laboratory experiments, causality is difficult to establish, and the inappropriate wording and placement of questions within a questionnaire can bias results (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991).

In designing the questionnaire, there are several distinct parts and considerations which must be carefully evaluated when striving to obtain a high response rate. These parts and concerns

include the introduction, instructions, question order, layout, and length.

The introduction serves as the welcome mat to the questionnaire. Six principles for writing a successful introduction include keeping it short, realistically worded, nonthreatening, serious, neutral, and pleasant, but firm (Backstrom and Hursh-Cesar, 1981). All instructions for completing the questionnaire should be clearly stated and specific. The question order should follow this basic progression from easy to difficult, and general to specific. The layout should be adequately spaced and presented in a non-confusing manner. Length depends on type of survey, and self-administered mail surveys should take a maximum of 20 minutes to complete (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991).

In developing survey questions, great care must be exercised in order to eliminate confusion by the respondent. To meet that objective, several points should be considered by the survey designer: questions should be clear, questions should not be too long, questions should express a single idea only, questions should be sensitive with regard to income and education, and closed-ended questions should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Also the first few questions of the survey should be the easiest and demographics and more sensitive questions should be saved until the end.

Previous Readership Survey

In 1989, the Coast Guard contracted with the Survey Research Corporation to conduct a readership survey of the Commandant's Bulletin (SRC, 1990). In this survey, approximately 1,700 questionnaires were sent out to Coast Guard members in paygrades E-6 and above. Some of the more notable findings from that study are listed below.

Overall, readers of the Commandant's Bulletin rated it Fairly to Very Interesting.

Readers of the Commandant's Bulletin felt that it was quite effective in communicating the Coast Guard's missions and policies.

The average reading time for an issue was 42 minutes.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The Commandant's Bulletin is mailed to Coast Guard units across the globe. Individual copies of the publication are not sent to individuals, but rather bulk copies are shipped to the unit with the intent of providing one copy for approximately every three members attached to the unit. Once the bulk copies are received at a unit, the command is responsible to ensure the proper distribution of the publication so that all the assigned personnel at the unit have the opportunity to read it.

The population for this study was all Active-Duty members of the United States Coast Guard, nearly 40,000 members. A systematic sampling of 1,000 members was selected from the payroll list maintained at the Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center in Topeka, Kansas. A computer generated software program provided the random names. The names were presented on mailing labels with the members' home addresses included. (Note that the survey was sent to the individuals' homes rather than their workplaces.)

Prior to conducting the actual survey, the University of Tennessee, Office of Research Administration, authorized the research involving human subjects.

A convenience sample was used to pretest the questionnaire. The subjects consisted of three officers (two lieutenant

commanders and one lieutenant) and four enlisted men (one master chief petty officer, one petty officer first class, and two petty officers second class). Members of the pretest study were interviewed after the questionnaire was completed. Much of the input received during the pretest was incorporated into the final survey.

The Coast Guard Public Affairs Office, Washington, D.C., authorized the survey to be conducted and was also included in the pretest.

Materials

A seven-page questionnaire with 23 questions was sent to each sample member on March 1. On the front of the questionnaire was a cover letter outlining the purpose and sponsorship of the study, along with assurances for confidentiality and general instructions. The cover letter was printed on University of Tennessee, School of Journalism letterhead stationery. The cover letter can be found in Appendix A.

A General Services Administration (GSA) white standard-size (4.125 in. x 9.5 in.) pre-addressed and postage paid envelope was included for respondents to mail in their questionnaires. The return address on these envelopes was the University of Tennessee Communications Research Center and was placed on by using a self-inking rubber stamp.

The cover letters, questionnaires, and return envelopes were packaged in GSA brown (8.5 in x 11.5 in.) envelopes. Peel-off labels of the members' home addresses were placed on the envelopes.

Major costs were the postage and reproduction costs of the 1,000 questionnaires. The Coast Guard Public Affairs Office, Washington, D.C., provided the postage-paid outgoing and return envelopes. Reproduction costs were \$242.48. Additional costs included the purchase of the self-inking Communications Research Center rubber stamp (\$11.95). The mailing labels for the service members were provided by the Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center, Topeka, Kansas.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed to gather data about readership, distribution, uses, respondents' satisfaction with the magazine regarding content, treatment of issues, appearance, overall effectiveness, quality trends, and the respondents' demographics.

Readership

Two questions were designed to examine readership habits. One question sought to determine how often respondents read the Commandant's Bulletin while the other sought to determine how much time was spent reading each issue.

Distribution

Sufficient copies of the Commandant's Bulletin are printed to provide one copy for every three members at a Coast Guard unit. Since no established Coast Guard policy exists to ensure that all Active-Duty personnel have an opportunity to see the publication, typical distribution within a unit is akin to the "trickle-down" effect, where copies are distributed to senior personnel within the command structure and copies make their way down through the ranks in a haphazard, non-standard manner. Therefore, one question was designed to determine the difficulty service members have in obtaining a copy to read.

Uses and Gratification

Three questions were designed to determine what respondents gain from reading the publication. One question asked for what purpose respondents read the Commandant's Bulletin. Two other questions measured the usefulness of the information provided in the publication.

Content

Another block of questions attempted to assess reader satisfaction with the magazine. Four questions were designed to evaluate separate aspects of the Commandant's Bulletin content. One Likert scale question asked for the respondent's interest level of the current sections of the publication. Another

question measured the amount of coverage allocated to each mission or program area within the service, while one other checked to see if the coverage was regionally balanced. A final question, which also used the Likert scale format, measured the respondents' desire to see special features, which were either once included in the magazine or are included in other service magazines, added to the Commandant's Bulletin.

Treatment of Issues

Four questions sought to evaluate the treatment of issues within the Commandant's Bulletin. Two questions asked respondents to evaluate the publication's dealings with controversial issues. Another question dealt with the handling of rumors. A final question wanted respondents to determine the perspective from which the magazine delivered its messages.

Overall Style and Appeal

One question asked respondents to evaluate several characteristics of the publication using a Likert scale, including appearance, writing quality, and ease of reading. Two other questions focused on the magazine's photography. Specifically, respondents were asked to evaluate a series of bipolar adjectives using a semantic differential scale, and then answer a question regarding the quantity of photographs.

Effectiveness and Quality Trend

Respondents were asked to evaluate how effective the Commandant's Bulletin was in communicating their individual needs. Another question along the lines of a quasi-longitudinal study, asked the respondents to evaluate the quality of the Commandant's Bulletin to previous years' editions.

Demographics

The final section block in the survey addressed demographics. The particular characteristics that were of importance in this study were years in service, paygrade, and career intentions. The complete questionnaire, as used in the survey, appears in Appendix B.

Analysis

All data collected from the survey was analyzed using the statistical software package -- SPSS/PC. In the data entry process, each of the respondents was assigned an identification code, which was then followed by 61 pieces of coded information. Variable names were assigned for each of the coded bits of information. In the parlance of SPSS/PC, this data consisted of 377 cases with 62 variables per case. The three different statistical analyses used were frequencies, means, and crosstabulations.

Validity

External validity refers to how well the results of a study can be generalized across a population. Most procedures to guard against external invalidity relate to sample selection (Cook and Campbell, 1979). By using a random sample, everyone within the population had an equal chance of being selected for the research study.

On the other hand, internal validity ensures the study actually investigated the proposed research question. One potential threat to internal validity was instrument error. Wimmer and Dominick (1991) said that the goal in questionnaire design is to avoid bias in answers. To meet that end, this study conducted a pretest to detect any errors, confusion, and potential bias in the survey. The survey also required approval by Coast Guard Headquarters prior to its release.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A total of 377 Coast Guard members responded to the questionnaire, which equated to a 37.7% response rate. Tables 1 and 2 contain demographic information related to paygrade and years in service. No generalization can be made concerning respondents and nonrespondents. The open-ended responses from the survey indicated roughly a 50/50 split between positive and negative comments. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that only readers who liked or disliked the Commandant's Bulletin responded.

In comparing the paygrades of survey respondents to the total number of Active Duty service members, the sample compares very well to the population. The percentage of members from each paygrade falls within 10% of the actual population composition.

TABLE 1

A COMPARISON OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORY MILITARY PAYGRADE BETWEEN READERS OF THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF COAST GUARD ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS

Paygrade	Common Name	Number of Readers	Percent of Readers	Number of Coasties	Percent of Coasties
E-1 to E-3	Junior enlisted	35	9.5%	6,564	17.9%
E-4 to E-6	Mid-level enlisted	163	44.2%	18,943	51.7%
E-7 and up	Senior enlisted	71	19.2%	3,685	10.1%
O-1 to O-3	Junior officers	59	16.0%	5,176	14.1%
O-4 and up	Senior officers	41	11.1%	2,248	6.1%
Unknown		8			

Note in Table 2 that the largest grouping of respondents have served more than 10 years, followed next by members who served between 5-10 years, then between 1-4 years, and finally those who served less than 1 year.

TABLE 2

COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN READER DEMOGRAPHICS: YEARS IN SERVICE

Years of Service	Number of Readers	Percent of Readers
Under 1 year	7	1.9%
1 to 4 years	71	19.3%
5 to 10 years	97	26.4%
More than 10 years	193	52.4%
Unknown	9	

Similarly, in response to career intentions, more than 75% of the respondents (280 members) indicated they intended on making the Coast Guard a career. Only 4% (15 members) stated they did not plan on making the Coast Guard a career. Approximately 20% of the respondents (71 members) were undecided as to their career intentions.

The Commandant's Bulletin rated high in terms of reading frequency. More than 77% of Coast Guard members read the publication "Always" or "Frequently." Table 3 shows the results of the reading frequency. Also note that only approximately 1% of the readers "Never" read the Commandant's Bulletin.

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY OF COAST GUARD MEMBERS READING THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN

Frequency	Number	Percentage
Always	150	40.0%
Frequently	141	37.6%
Occasionally	69	18.4%
Seldom	11	2.9%
Never	4	1.1%

However, the hypothesis, which states that career-oriented personnel are more likely to read the Commandant's Bulletin than personnel not planning a career, was not supported by the evidence. Table 4 shows the crosstabulation of reading frequency by career intentions. Note that while a higher percentage of career-oriented personnel (41.9%) read the magazine "Always" compared to other members (34.9%), a higher percentage of non-career or undecided career members (82.6%) read the Commandant's Bulletin "Always" or "Frequently" compared to career-oriented personnel (76.3%).

Concerning time devoted to reading the magazine, nearly 50% of the readers spend from 16 to 30 minutes on each issue. The precise figures are 26.1% spend 00 to 15 minutes, 48.1% spend 16 to 30 minutes, 20.2% spend 31 to 45 minutes, 5.1% spend 46 to 60 minutes, and 0.5% spend more than 60 minutes reading the magazine.

TABLE 4

READING HABITS OF THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN FOR COAST GUARD
PERSONNEL COMPARED TO THEIR CAREER INTENTIONS

MEAN RATING		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
1.86	Career personnel	41.9%	34.4%	19.7%	3.2%	0.7%
1.88	Non-career personnel or Undecided	34.9%	47.7%	14.0%	1.2%	2.3%

Note(s): 1. The N for each category is as follows:
 279 for career-oriented personnel
 86 for non-career-oriented personnel and
 personnel with undecided career plans combined
 (actual figures are 15 and 71 respectively)

2. Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Always	1.00 to 1.49
Frequently	1.50 to 2.49
Occasionally	2.50 to 3.49
Seldom	3.50 to 4.49
Never	4.50 to 5.00

Values were assigned to these responses on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 meant "00 to 15 minutes" while 5 meant "More than 60 minutes"). The mean (2.06), mode (2.00), and even the median (2.00) indicate that the average Commandant's Bulletin reader spends between 16 and 30 minutes reading each issue. This figure is lower than 37 minutes, which is the average time a reader spends on an employee publication of a large company (SRC, 1990).

Concerning distribution of the Commandant's Bulletin and placing the magazine in the hands of its internal audience, nearly 40% of all Coast Guard members reported they have had difficulty obtaining a copy of the magazine in the past.

My hypothesis, which states that junior enlisted personnel (paygrade E-1 to E-3) have a greater difficulty obtaining a copy of the Commandant's Bulletin to read than do other service members, was not supported. Table 5 shows the crosstabulation results from each paygrade category compared to difficulty obtaining a copy of the Commandant's Bulletin.

Note in Table 5 that the exact opposite holds true. A mean rating scale from 1 to 2 (1 = have experienced distribution problem, 2 = have not experienced distribution problem) was used to determine the mean. The mean rating for junior enlisted personnel was the highest (1.72), followed by junior officers (1.63), mid-level enlisted personnel (1.58), senior enlisted personnel (1.54), and then senior officers (1.53).

TABLE 5

SATISFACTION WITH CIRCULATION OF THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN FOR
READERS IN FIVE DIFFERENT PAYGRADES

Paygrade	N	Mean	Difficulty Obtaining Copy		
			(1) Yes	(2) No	Don't know
E-1 to E-3	35	1.72	25.7%	65.7%	8.6%
E-4 to E-6	163	1.58	41.1%	57.1%	1.8%
E-7 and up	71	1.54	46.5%	53.5%	0%
O-1 to O-3	59	1.63	35.6%	61.0%	3.4%
O-4 and up	41	1.53	46.3%	53.7%	0%

Note(s): 1. Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Yes	1.00 to 1.49
No	1.50 to 2.00

In surveying why Coast Guard members read the Commandant's Bulletin, 66% of the respondents read the magazine for both Enjoyment and Information, followed by 30% for Information and 3% for Enjoyment. My hypothesis, which states that Coast Guard personnel read the Commandant's Bulletin for information more than entertainment is supported by the evidence. Table 6 contains the breakdown of why personnel read the magazine in each paygrade grouping.

The data used to determine to which degree service members learn more about a Coast Guard program or mission reveals that members "Sometimes" learn more from reading the publication. Response to this survey question was measured by mean ratings on a scale from 1 to 5. The scale is divided into five levels of frequency from "Frequently" (which encompasses mean ratings from 1.00 to 1.49) to "Never" (mean ratings from 4.50 to 5.00). Ranges for the intermediate levels are determined the same way.

The mean rating for all respondents is 2.54, which just falls into the "Sometimes" (2.50 - 3.49) category. However, it does border very close to the "Occasionally" category. The breakdown of percentages is as follows: "Frequently," 15.4%, "Sometimes," 32.1%, "Occasionally," 36.7%, "Rarely," 14.8%, and "Never," 1.1%.

By crosstabulating the paygrades of junior personnel (E-1 to E-6 and O-1 to O-3) and senior personnel (E-7 and above and O-4

TABLE 6

REASONS FOR READING THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN BY READERS IN FIVE
DIFFERENT PAYGRADES

Paygrade	Enjoyment	Enjoyment & Information	Information	Don't know No opinion
E-1 to E-3	5.7%	77.1%	17.1%	0%
E-4 to E-6	2.5%	72.2%	23.5%	1.9%
E-7 and up	1.4%	67.6%	31.0%	0%
O-1 to O-3	1.7%	57.6%	39.0%	1.7%
O-4 and up	4.9%	41.5%	53.7%	0%

Note(s): (1) The N for each category is as follows:

35 E-1 to E-3
 163 E-4 to E-6
 71 E-7 and above
 59 O-1 to O-3
 41 O-4 and above

and above) by the Likert scale learning question, my hypothesis that junior personnel learn more about Coast Guard missions and programs from the Commandant's Bulletin than senior personnel is inconclusive. Table 7 reveals the results of this crosstabulation.

A rating scale from 1 to 5 is also applied to this crosstabulation. The scale is divided into five levels of frequency from "Frequently" (which encompasses ratings from 1.00 to 1.49) to "Never" (mean ratings from 4.50 to 5.00). Ranges for the intermediate levels are determined the same way. The mean rating for junior personnel is 2.52 while the rating is 2.57 for senior personnel. Both means fall within the "Sometimes" category.

The data used to determine to what degree service members have altered or changed their opinion about a Coast Guard program or mission as a result of reading the Commandant's Bulletin reveals that members "Sometimes" alter or change their opinions from reading the publication. Response to this survey question is measured by mean ratings on a continuous scale from 1 to 5. The scale is divided into five levels of frequency from "Frequently" (which encompasses mean ratings from 1.00 to 1.49) to "Never" (mean ratings from 4.50 to 5.00). Ranges for the intermediate levels are determined the same way.

TABLE 7

A COMPARISON OF FREQUENCIES BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR COAST GUARD PERSONNEL IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT COAST GUARD MISSIONS AND PROGRAMS AS A RESULT OF READING THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN

Frequency	Value	Junior Personnel	Senior Personnel
Frequently	1	14.3%	18.8%
Occasionally	2	34.1%	26.8%
Sometimes	3	38.1%	34.8%
Rarely	4	12.7%	17.9%
Never	5	0.8%	1.8%
Mean Rating		2.52	2.57

Note(s): (1) Junior Personnel are Coast Guard members in the paygrades E-1 to E-6 and O-1 to O-3. Senior Personnel are Coast Guard members in the paygrades E-7 and above and O-4 and above.

(2) Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Frequently	1.00 to 1.49
Occasionally	1.50 to 2.49
Sometimes	2.50 to 3.49
Rarely	3.50 to 4.49
Never	4.50 to 5.00

The mean rating for all respondents is 3.43, which just falls into the "Sometimes" category. However, it does border very close to the "Rarely" category. The breakdown of percentages is as follows: "Frequently," 0.8%, "Sometimes," 14.0%, "Occasionally," 35.3%, "Rarely," 40.7%, and "Never," 9.2%.

By crosstabulating the paygrades of junior personnel (E-1 to E-6 and O-1 to O-3) and senior personnel (E-7 and above and O-4 and above) by the Likert scale opinion question, my hypothesis that junior personnel alter or change their opinion about Coast Guard missions and programs more than senior personnel after reading the Commandant's Bulletin is inconclusive. Table 8 reveals the results of this crosstabulation.

A mean rating scale from 1 to 5 is also applied to this crosstabulation. The scale is divided into five levels of frequency from "Frequently" (which encompasses mean ratings from 1.00 to 1.49) to "Never" (mean ratings from 4.50 to 5.00). Ranges for the intermediate levels are determined the same way. The mean rating for junior personnel is 3.38, which falls into the "Sometimes" category. The rating for senior personnel is 3.58, which falls into the "Rarely" category. This data does show that junior personnel do alter or change their opinions about missions and programs only slightly more often than senior personnel.

In determining the readers' interest level of the variety of regular magazine features, a Likert scale type question is used.

TABLE 8

A COMPARISON OF FREQUENCIES BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR COAST GUARD PERSONNEL IN CHANGING OR ALTERING THEIR OPINIONS ON COAST GUARD MISSIONS AND PROGRAMS AS A RESULT OF READING THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN

Frequency	Value	Junior Personnel	Senior Personnel
Frequently	1	0.8%	0%
Occasionally	2	14.3%	12.5%
Sometimes	3	39.7%	26.8%
Rarely	4	36.5%	50.9%
Never	5	8.7%	9.8%
Mean Rating		3.38	3.58

Note(s): (1) Junior Personnel are Coast Guard members in the paygrades E-1 to E-6 and O-1 to O-3. Senior Personnel are Coast Guard members in the paygrades E-7 and above and O-4 and above.

(2) Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Frequently	1.00 to 1.49
Occasionally	1.50 to 2.49
Sometimes	2.50 to 3.49
Rarely	3.50 to 4.49
Never	4.50 to 5.00

Response to this question is measured again by mean ratings on a continuous scale from 1 to 5. The scale is divided into five levels of interest from "Extremely Interested" (which encompasses mean ratings from 1.00 to 1.49) to "Not at All Interested" (mean ratings from 4.50 to 5.00). Ranges for the intermediate levels are determined the same way. Table 9 lists the features in order of the highest mean rating.

Coast Guard members give top rating to Features, which they found "Very Interesting" (2.10). Of very high interest similarly are Personnel Notes (2.24), Service Info (2.42), and Top Story (2.46).

The top four features share the commonality of two objectives, namely timeliness and usefulness. Features provides useful information regarding a wide array of Coast Guard activities that many members never experience firsthand. Personnel Notes and Service Info provide members with both timely and useful material on the latest policy changes and revisions to issues directly affecting the members. Top Story also provides timely and useful information to members on noteworthy events and issues.

Special Insert (3.03) and Calendar (3.06) are the regular features of least interest to the readers of the Commandant's Bulletin. However, being near the midpoint (3.00) of the five-point scale, even these least appreciated articles receive fair, or barely passing ratings on the average.

TABLE 9

EVALUATION OF THE INTEREST LEVEL OF STANDARD FEATURES OF THE
COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN BY COAST GUARD ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS

MEAN RATING	Rank by Rating	(1) Extremely Interested	(2) Very	(3) Fairly	(4) Not Very	(5) Not at All
2.10	Features	24.7%	45.0%	26.6%	3.0%	0.8%
2.24	Personnel Notes	24.5%	36.4%	31.0%	7.0%	1.1%
2.42	Service Info	19.7%	34.3%	32.4%	10.8%	2.7%
2.46	Top Story	11.9%	37.8%	43.5%	5.9%	0.8%
2.50	In the News...	15.8%	31.5%	41.3%	9.5%	1.9%
2.53	Bulletin Board	14.8%	31.5%	41.0%	11.3%	1.3%
2.62	Greetings from...	14.6%	31.5%	35.6%	14.3%	4.0%
2.75	People: spotlight	9.3%	27.5%	44.8%	15.9%	2.5%
3.03	Special inserts	11.1%	21.8%	33.4%	20.5%	13.2%
3.06	Calendar	6.5%	20.5%	39.2%	28.1%	5.7%
2.57	AVERAGE					

Note(s): 1. Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Extremely Interested	1.00 to 1.49
Very Interested	1.50 to 2.49
Fairly Interested	2.50 to 3.49
Not Very Interested	3.50 to 4.49
Not at All Interested	4.50 to 5.00

The overall interest rating for the Commandant's Bulletin, at 2.57, is on the favorable end of "Fairly Interesting." If the two lowest-rated features are eliminated, the average rises to 2.45, in the range of "Very Interesting." The comparable figure for private sector employee publications of major companies is 2.40 (SRC, 1990).

Similarly, one other survey question dealt with the amount of coverage given to individual Coast Guard missions and programs. Response to this question is measured by mean ratings on a scale from 1 to 3. This scale is divided into three levels of quantity, from "Too Much" (including mean ratings from 1.00 to 1.49), then "About Right" (mean ratings from 1.50 to 2.49), and finally to "Too Little" (mean ratings from 2.50 to 3.00). Table 10 ranks the missions and programs according to mean ratings.

Readers of the Commandant's Bulletin rate all areas in the "About Right" category of coverage with one exception, Pay & Benefits, whose 2.53 mean rating places it in the "Too Little" coverage category.

The only areas that rate above the midpoint (2.00) are Aviation (1.93), Law Enforcement (1.94), and Marine Safety (1.99). However, these areas fall well within the "About Right" category. Morale and Recreation (2.45) nearly made it into the "Too Little" category.

The three mission or program areas ranked above 2.00 indicate that perhaps readers want a little less preaching on such

TABLE 10

EVALUATION OF THE AMOUNT OF COVERAGE DEDICATED TO INDIVIDUAL COAST
GUARD MISSIONS AND PROGRAMS IN THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN BY COAST
GUARD ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS

MEAN RATING	Mission/Program Rank by Rating	(1) Too Much	(2) About Right	(3) Too Little
1.93	Aviation	23.0%	61.5%	15.6%
1.94	Law Enforcement	16.8%	72.8%	10.3%
1.99	Marine Safety	15.1%	71.0%	14.0%
2.00	Defense Operations	15.9%	68.2%	15.9%
2.02	Aids to Navigation	10.1%	77.9%	12.0%
2.13	Boating Safety	7.1%	72.6%	20.4%
2.17	Engineering	8.5%	66.1%	25.3%
2.22	Ice Operations	3.5%	71.4%	25.1%
2.23	Family Programs	9.8%	56.9%	33.2%
2.24	Search & Rescue	3.3%	69.5%	27.2%
2.45	Morale & Recreation	3.3%	48.9%	47.8%
2.53	Pay & Benefits	1.1%	44.4%	54.5%

Note(s): 1. Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Too Much Coverage	1.00 to 1.49
About Right Coverage	1.50 to 2.49
Too Little Coverage	2.50 to 3.00

programs as aviation, law enforcement, and marine safety. Whereas three of the bottom four mission or program areas relate to issues having personal meaning to Coast Guard members, indicating readers want more coverage of these type issues

In looking at how regionally balanced the coverage is that the Commandant's Bulletin provides, 64.2% of the readers responded that the publication's coverage is regionally balanced. Nineteen percent reported that coverage was not balanced, and 16.8% reported they were unsure.

Of those readers citing unbalanced regional coverage, the Seventh District (Miami, Fla.) received the bulk of criticism for grabbing up too much coverage. Thirteen of the 29 comments cited this area for receiving an unfair share of coverage. Other regions which received at least two comments citing too much coverage were East Coast (4), Atlantic Area (New York, N.Y.) (2), Eleventh District (Long Beach, Calif.) (2), and Headquarters (Washington, D.C.) (2).

Meanwhile, the region said to receive the least amount of coverage was the Ninth District (Cleveland, Ohio). Other regions which received at least two comments citing too little coverage were the Seventeenth District (Juneau, Alaska) (3) and Second District (St. Louis, Mo.) (2). See Appendix C for the verbatim comments to this survey question.

The final aspect to analyze under the umbrella of the magazine's content is the reader's desire to have features that

are not presently included in the publication, added to the current mix. Table 11 lists the various features that either were previously part of the Commandant's Bulletin or are used in other military flagship publications and measures the reader's desire to have these features inserted in the magazine.

This table is measured by mean ratings on a scale from 1 to 5. The scale is divided into five levels of desirability, from "Strongly Desire" (1.00 to 1.49) to "Strongly Do Not Desire" (4.50 to 5.00). Ranges for the intermediate variables are determined the same way.

Table 11 shows that the most desired type feature to be added to the Commandant's Bulletin is Enlisted Assignments (2.22), which falls under the "Desire" range from 1.50 to 2.49. Other features that also fall under this scale are Letters to the Editor (2.28) and Humor (2.30). Enlisted Assignments had been previously featured in the Commandant's Bulletin, but was dropped in 1990. Likewise, letters to the editor and humor had been part of The Coast Guard magazine back in the 1940s and 1950s.

Crosswords (3.50) is the only listed feature to fall under the "Do Not Desire" category. The remaining five features fall under "Undecided."

Although the means for both Officer and CPO assignments fell into the "Undecided" category, each of those sections rated under the "Desire" category when only those personnel within their respective ranks were surveyed. Table 12 shows means for officer,

TABLE 11

COAST GUARD MEMBERS' LEVEL OF DESIRE TO SEE FEATURES THAT WERE
ONCE IN THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN OR ARE PRESENTLY IN OTHER
MILITARY FLAGSHIP MAGAZINES INCLUDED IN THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN

MEAN RATING	Rank by Rating	(1) Strongly Desire	(2) Desire	(3) Undecided	(4) Do Not Desire	(5) Strongly Do Not Desire
2.22	Enlisted transfers	29.9%	40.2%	14.0%	10.2%	5.7%
2.28	Letters to the editor	22.2%	44.6%	20.0%	9.7%	3.5%
2.30	Humor	22.4%	46.2%	14.1%	13.2%	4.1%
2.53	CPO transfers	21.4%	37.1%	17.1% ¹	6.0%	8.4%
2.75	Cartoons	14.8%	33.2%	21.6%	23.5%	7.0%
2.77	Officer transfers	20.0%	29.5%	17.0%	20.8%	12.7%
2.84	Competitions	8.2%	31.0%	33.0%	24.5%	3.3%
2.99	Quizzes	7.3%	32.6%	24.2%	29.6%	6.3%
3.50	Crosswords	5.4%	16.1%	18.3%	44.1%	15.8%

Note(s): 1. Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Strongly Desire	1.00 to 1.49
Desire	1.50 to 2.49
Undecided	2.50 to 3.49
Do Not Desire	3.50 to 4.50
Strongly Do Not Desire	4.50 to 5.00

TABLE 12

MEAN RATINGS FOR COAST GUARD MEMBERS' LEVEL OF DESIRE TO SEE
OFFICER, CHIEF PETTY OFFICER AND ENLISTED PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT
ORDERS (TRANSFERS) LISTED IN THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN

Assignments	Personnel Classification		
	Enlisted Personnel	Chief Petty Officers	Officers
Enlisted transfers	2.08	2.23	2.43
Chief Petty Officer transfers	2.87	1.96	2.23
Officer transfers	3.30	2.52	1.87

Note(s): (1) Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Strongly Desire	1.00 to 1.49
Desire	1.50 to 2.49
Undecided	2.50 to 3.49
Do Not Desire	3.50 to 4.50
Strongly Do Not Desire	4.50 to 5.00

(2) Enlisted personnel are members in the paygrades E-1 to E-6.

CPO, and enlisted assignments when rated by the members from the individual groups (officers, CPOs and above, and E-1 to E-6 personnel).

When readers of the Commandant's Bulletin were asked whether they feel controversial issues are addressed in the magazine, 72.8% replied that controversy is not addressed within the magazine. Only 12.7% believe controversy is addressed, while 14.6% did not know or have no opinion.

All paygrades, both enlisted and officer personnel, believe that controversy is not addressed in the magazine.

Furthermore, 74.7% of the readers feel that controversy should be addressed in the Commandant's Bulletin. This sentiment is again similarly expressed by all paygrades across the board. This supports the hypothesis that readers do not expect to see controversial issues addressed in the Commandant's Bulletin despite having a strong desire to see these issues addressed.

Likewise, 85.1% of the readers feel that the Commandant's Bulletin should be used to dispel service-wide rumors. Table 13 shows the reaction of all paygrades to whether controversy is addressed, should be addressed, and also whether the dispelling of rumors should be addressed in the publication.

Finally, 45.8% of the readers feel the Commandant's Bulletin only speaks for management. Only 7.4% feel the publication presents both management's side and the employees' views, while

TABLE 13

COAST GUARD MEMBERS IN FIVE PAYGRADE GROUPINGS EVALUATE WHETHER THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN ADDRESSES CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES, WHETHER IT SHOULD, AND WHETHER THE MAGAZINE SHOULD DISPEL SERVICE-WIDE RUMORS

Paygrade	Controversy Currently Addressed?		Should Controversy Be Addressed?		Should Rumors Be Dispelled?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
E-1 to E-3	11.4%	65.7%	74.3%	14.3%	82.4%	14.7%
E-4 to E-6	16.9%	65.0%	78.1%	14.4%	81.9%	13.8%
E-7 and up	12.9%	78.6%	67.1%	22.9%	87.1%	12.9%
O-1 to O-3	5.2%	77.6%	75.9%	17.2%	87.9%	8.6%
O-4 and up	4.9%	92.7%	68.3%	31.7%	90.2%	7.3%

Note(s): (1) Subtract the total of yes-no percentages from 100 to get the percentage who responded "Don't Know/No Opinion."

28.8% feel it tries to look at issues from the employees' perspective. (Eighteen percent did not know or had no opinion.)

Several general characteristics are measured by one question from the survey questionnaire. Like other questions, response to this question is measured by mean ratings on a scale from 1 to 5. The scale is divided here into five levels of quality, from "Excellent" (including mean ratings from 1.00 to 1.49) to "Very Poor" (mean ratings from 4.50 to 5.00). Ranges for the intermediate levels are determined in the same way.

Readers of the Commandant's Bulletin give the publication highest marks for its Appearance and design (1.58 -- "Good," close to "Excellent"). They are, in general, pleased with its quality and give the Commandant's Bulletin ratings in the "Good" range for every listed characteristic (see Table 14).

The photography of the Commandant's Bulletin is rated using a Semantic differential scale from 1 to 7. Table 15 shows the mean ratings for each of the bipolar adjectives used in the survey. Response to this question gives a positive, neutral or negative evaluation, with the strength of the positive or negative values shown by its distance from the midpoint, "4," which is exactly neutral.

The ratings given here by the readers of the Commandant's Bulletin are all on the positive side of the midpoint. The best rating is for High Quality (2.64), while the next highest ratings

TABLE 14

COAST GUARD MEMBERS RATE THE QUALITY OF SEVERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF
THE COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN

MEAN RATING	Rank by Rating	(1) Excellent	(2) Good	(3) Fair	(4) Poor	(5) Very Poor
1.58	Appearance	51.3%	40.1%	7.5%	1.1%	0%
1.88	Ease of Reading	25.5%	62.6%	11.0%	0.8%	0%
1.95	Writing Quality	16.0%	68.2%	15.2%	0.5%	0%
2.17	Source of CG Info	22.0%	48.4%	22.3%	5.4%	1.9%
2.26	General Interest	9.7%	59.6%	25.9%	4.9%	0%

Note(s): 1. Mean ratings are based on the following scale:

Excellent	1.00 to 1.49
Good	1.50 to 2.49
Fair	2.50 to 3.49
Poor	3.50 to 4.50
Very Poor	4.50 to 5.00

TABLE 15

COAST GUARD MEMBERS RATE THE QUALITY OF PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE
COMMANDANT'S BULLETIN ON A POSITIVE - NEGATIVE EVALUATION SCALE

Adjective	Positive 1	Neutral 4	Negative 7	Adjective
High Quality	2.64			Poor Quality
Eye-catching	2.99			Dull
Worthwhile	3.03			Worthless
Interesting	3.18			Boring
Action	3.50			Still
Natural	3.51			Posed
Personal	3.60			Impersonal
Average	3.30			

are for Eye-catching (2.99), Worthwhile (3.03), and Interesting (3.18).

The overall average rating of the photographic quality is 3.20, which is slightly on the positive side of neutral. This indicates neither an enthusiastic positive response to the photography, nor a critical one either.

Pertaining to the number of photographs used in the Commandant's Bulletin, the majority of readers (72.5%) believe that the publication uses about the right number of photos. Only 3.2% feel it uses too many photos, while 21.3% feel the magazine uses too few photos.

The effectiveness of the Commandant's Bulletin in meeting the individual needs of its readers, measured on a scale from 1 to 11 ("Inefficient" to "Efficient"), is indicated by a positive, neutral, or negative evaluation, with the strength of the positive or negative value shown by its distance from the midpoint, "6," which is exactly neutral.

The average effectiveness for the Commandant's Bulletin is 6.48.

This rating is positive; however, it is only slightly above the midpoint.

In breaking down the overall effectiveness rating by paygrade, four of the five paygrades give the publication positive evaluations. Enlisted personnel in the E-4 to E-6 paygrade rate the Commandant's Bulletin highest in effectiveness (6.69),

followed by junior officers in the O-1 to O-3 paygrade (6.57), junior enlisted personnel in the E-1 to E-3 paygrade (6.51), and senior enlisted personnel in the E-7 to E-10 paygrade (6.34).

Senior officers in the paygrade O-4 and above rate the publication's effectiveness negatively, albeit slightly, at 5.76.

Nevertheless, more readers see the overall quality of the Commandant's Bulletin increasing over the past several years than decreasing. Forty-six percent say it has increased in quality, while 28% see the publication as decreasing.

Finally, 226 (60.8%) of the readers have additional comment, which appears separately in the Appendix D. The bulk of the suggestions (96) are for additions or changes in the Commandant's Bulletin. The most prevalent suggestions center on controversy (25), personnel transfer listings (15), distribution (13), timeliness (9), puffery (9), and letters to the editor (8). A sampling of the comments from each of these areas is shown below.

Re: controversy. "The Bulletin is a tool for management. It never addresses controversial issues. The Coast Guard, like many other organizations, has its Achilles heels. All the readers ever see are our successes (some perceived), never our failures."

Re: transfer listings. "I deeply miss the section on personnel transfers that was removed several years ago. It was one of the only ways available to keep track of the many shipmates you bond with over the years."

Re: distribution. "I have only four years (service) in the Coast Guard and am an E-5. I have to beg, borrow or steal to get a copy of the Bulletin." And from another reader, "I know that it is distributed out, but many people never see it. Sometimes it just ends up in the CO or XO's office and most of the lower enlisted people hardly get to read it."

Re: timeliness. "It's not very timely on its articles. It usually highlights a new personnel policy "months" after it's promulgated." From another reader, "Being more timely would help. I just received the January 1994 issue on March 2."

Re: fluff. "I think it's a fluff rag, like People magazine. It is a slick, well-put together magazine, however, all form and no substance."

Re: letters to the editor. "I would like to see the magazine become a forum for free expression of opinions on current issues facing individuals and groups."

Many readers cited the Navy Times weekly newspaper, saying that the Commandant's Bulletin should adopt some of the traits from this publication.

Outright positive or negative comments were roughly split half and half. On the positive side, readers enjoy learning about other Coast Guard units and missions. They also are pleased with the glossy, improved appearance of the magazine. One reader said, "I feel the Commandant's Bulletin has helped instill in me a greater sense of pride and awareness with the Coast Guard." And

from another reader, "I think the Commandant's Bulletin is a great way for people to see how other Coast Guard units operate."

Most of the negative comments relate to content. Readers do not feel they are receiving objective information on issues of consequence on the occasions when these issues are addressed.

"I'm not really sure what's happening with the Commandant's Bulletin, but it seems to be getting less interesting and more political." And from another, "The Commandant's Bulletin reflects what headquarters wants us to think. Facts are carefully chosen to defend only their point of view."

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Significant Points

Organizational employees want truth, candidness, and an opportunity for two-way communications from their company publication, whether they work for a Fortune 500 firm or the U.S. Coast Guard. They want out with the fluff and in with the hard news. The dinosaurs of company publications that put forth managements' company-speak and light company news are a dying breed.

The Commandant's Bulletin, despite its high-gloss, four-color art, and slick paper, must adapt to this current wave of theory about company publications in order to best serve its primary audience -- the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard -- else it risks alienating its primary readers.

The data from this study show that both junior and senior Coast Guard personnel read the publication for information more than enjoyment. Serious business messages are what is now being called for in employee publications ("Restructuring: Good and bad news for employee communications," 1989). The employees of today not only want to know what's going on, but they want to know why (Lesly, 1983).

This is not to say the material presented in the Commandant's Bulletin is neither wanted nor interesting. On the contrary, the data show that nearly half of the regular features

in the publication rated as very interesting while the remainder rated as fairly interesting. The shortcomings lie not with what is in the magazine, but what is currently being left out.

Controversial issues deserve a place in the company publications of today. Leaving them out and sounding like a corporate mouthpiece does more harm than good (Melia, 1992). Coast Guard members do not feel the Commandant's Bulletin addresses controversy, but strongly wish it would. Recent issues of service-wide importance that have generated national exposure on network television, such as the dumping of used aids to navigation batteries in surrounding waters and the expose on sexual misconduct broadcast on "60 Minutes," provide ample fodder for the publication to address.

Likewise, readers want the publication to be used to dispel service-wide rumors. Brubaker (1990) said this forum is an excellent place to eliminate potential strife and dissension within the organization. When a Coast Guard admiral was brought before a court-martial several years ago, all sorts of rumors circulated throughout the service as to the exact nature of his alleged offenses. Although the individual was found guilty and forced to retire, Coast Guard members relied solely on rumors and hearsay as to what violations the admiral committed. To this day, some six years later, the rumors still circulate the service.

Furthermore, to promote two-way communications and build credibility, employees need a way to communicate their ideas,

opinions and comments back to management. The company publication provides an ideal medium where employees have a platform to speak their mind (English, 1988). The data show that Coast Guard members desire a Letters to the Editor section in the publication. Other military flagship publications, Airman, Soldiers, and All Hands, employ a reader feedback section as a regular feature in their editorial formula.

Also regarding content, Coast Guard members like and want to know about other Coast Guard members. People are interested in people (McCloskey, 1959). The Coast Guard's label as a small, close-knit service is true, and as a result of frequent job transfers, members get to know hundreds, if not thousands of other Coasties throughout their careers. The data show that officer and enlisted personnel alike desire that personnel transfers be listed in the Commandant's Bulletin as they once were. In addition to the statistical evidence, numerous written comments called for reinstatement of this section.

Nearly 40% of Coast Guard members have experienced difficulty in obtaining a copy of the Commandant's Bulletin to read. Surprisingly, senior personnel seem to have more difficulty, albeit slightly, than junior personnel in obtaining a copy. With 2 out of every 5 readers having trouble getting a copy, that is too much, plain and simple. This problem stretches across the board, from remote Alaskan stations to Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Publications must be directed toward achieving the goals of the organization and the satisfaction of the needs of the employees (Corrado, 1984). Coast Guard members rated the Commandant's Bulletin only slightly positive as an effective medium for communicating their needs. However, senior officers gave the publication a negative rating for communicating their needs.

The Commandant's Bulletin is currently serving two distinct audiences, one internal and one external. An inevitable danger lies here in that by trying to please both classes of readers, neither will be served effectively (Mann, 1974). This, perhaps above all else, may explain why the publication has eluded some of the aforementioned areas (controversy, rumors, letters to the editor). While these areas certainly are of great importance to the internal reader, as supported by the data and literature, company management may not want these same areas put forth to the external publics.

This study, however, also reveals a number of bright spots for the publication. First and foremost, the data show the Commandant's Bulletin is a highly read publication. Its interest level is on par with other corporate employee publications (SRC, 1990). In most cases, missions and programs are covered to the reader's desired level and coverage is regionally balanced. Furthermore, the layout and design of the publication is rated borderline excellent.

Recommendations

The overall negative evaluation of the Commandant's Bulletin held by senior officers should send warning flags throughout the Coast Guard Headquarters Public Affairs Division and especially the publication staff. The most important public of an organization is its employees, and within this public, the most influential group is the senior officers. Discontent among these ranks must be righted in order to secure the cohesion and stability of the service.

The publication must make an effort to meet the needs of this group as well all other ranks that rated the magazine as only slightly positive. The Commandant's Bulletin should measure the pulse of the organization, and that means tackling all issues, good and bad, light and hard, tough and easy, facts and rumors, and most of all, controversial issues that strike at the very hearts and souls of the Coast Guard members.

The Commandant's Bulletin provides the best medium to carry this information. However, if management insists that this type of information be left out of the magazine, then some other medium must take this information to the men and women in the fleet. The message is more important than the messenger in this case, but when an ideal messenger is already in place, it should be used.

The publication should adopt a Letters to the Editor section. A variety of alternative formats exist including questions and answers, pre-selected topics for comments, an open

forum for comments on previous magazine content, and an open forum for any service-related issues.

The personnel assignments section should be brought back for all ranks. The data show that it is not simply that the officers desire the officer transfers back, the chief petty officers desire the CPO section back, and the enlisted personnel desire the enlisted section back. The desire cuts across all ranks with personnel desiring all sections be reinstated. The sentiments expressed in the written comments leave no doubt that this section is sorely missed by many. Furthermore, if the publication were to bring this section back into the magazine, more readers may read the magazine and they may also read more articles within the magazine.

Readers also expressed a desire for humor. Both Airman and Soldiers presently include some sort of humor as a regular feature to their magazines. Humor was previously used in the U.S. Coast Guard Magazine in the 1940s and 1950s.

The distribution of the publication needs immediate revision. Forty percent of the employees should not have difficulty obtaining a copy to read. I recommend that the current distribution system, which provides one copy for every three members at a unit, be abandoned. In its place, I propose the number of copies of the Commandant's Bulletin be increased to provide one copy for every member. Furthermore, the publication should be sent to the members' home addresses. This would provide

the added benefit of being available to spouses, other family members, and friends.

If budget constraints prevent the production and mailing of more copies, then an official Coast Guard instruction should be developed and implemented to ensure that all members have access to reading this publication.

In attempting to serve two distinct publics with equal priority, the Commandant's Bulletin is making sacrifices by not serving its internal public to the fullest. The magazine's layout and design have maintained pace with the technological advances and significantly improved over the past several years, much to the delight of internal (and I expect external) publics. However, as the open-ended comments regarding content indicate, content has not kept pace. Simply telling employees middle-of-the-road, non-critical information may have worked fine in the 1970s and 1980s and satisfied internal publics, but today's employees need and demand more. As long as the Commandant's Bulletin continues to straddle the fence serving two distinct audiences, compromises will be made to the readers.

I recommend the Commandant's Bulletin be designed as an internal publication devoted to the members of the Coast Guard. Each issue should be packed with information vital to the needs of these men and women. The magazine should highlight personnel issues such as educational opportunities, pay and benefits, and medical; service issues such as budget cuts and reorganization;

and feature stories that give junior personnel information of lesser-known Coast Guard programs and activities.

To reach the external audience of the Coast Guard, a few options exist. First, the external audience could continue to receive the new-look Commandant's Bulletin; however, this would include receiving the so-called "dirty laundry" (letters to the editor, controversial articles, and rumors) in addition to the magazine's former content. Second, the Coast Guard could produce a second publication to meet the needs of its external audience. The other four branches of the Armed Service currently operate in this manner -- two magazines for two audiences. The Air Force produces Airman and Air Force Times; the Navy produces All Hands and Navy Times; the Marines produces Marines and Navy Times (the Navy Times serves both the USN and USMC); and the Army produces Soldiers and Army Times.

Future Study

In a study that follows similar guidelines, external publics should be targeted and their views should be compared to Active Duty members.

A second study would compare the Commandant's Bulletin with other Coast Guard information points as to what source is most relied on for information. Other existing sources include official instructions and notices, unit newsletter or magazines,

district newsletter or magazine, outside print media, outside broadcast media, supervisors, co-workers, and the grapevine.

One final possible approach would be a comparative study of the Commandant's Bulletin with the other military flagship publications. Each publication could be evaluated on how well it communicates with its internal audience, and then the study could explore what sets that publication apart from the rest.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE



COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATIONS

School of Journalism
330 Communications Building
Knoxville, TN 37996-0330
(615) 974-5155
FAX (615) 974-3896

February 28, 1994

Dear Coast Guard member:

In conjunction with the School of Journalism, University of Tennessee, I am conducting a readership survey in order to determine reader reaction to the Commandant's Bulletin, the Coast Guard's in-house magazine.

Through your honest answers, an objective assessment of the Commandant's Bulletin will be conducted, and any subsequent improvements to the magazine will be directly attributable to your input.

Please take about 10 or 15 minutes now to complete the form. You may use either pen or pencil to mark your answers.

When you have finished answering the questions, please return it before March 15. You may use the stamped, addressed envelope provided with the form.

Your name has been picked as part of a random sample. All information you provide will be regarded as strictly confidential. You do not need to sign the form; however, you may if you wish.

Your input matters. In order for the Commandant's Bulletin to respond and adapt to your needs, we must know what those needs are. As the random selectees for this survey, you, in effect, are speaking for the entire Coast Guard with your reply.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Scott P. LaRochelle".

Scott P. LaRochelle
Lieutenant Commander, USCG

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability. For most questions, you'll be asked just to circle a number. Some questions give you a chance to express your views in your own words. When you have completed the survey, please place it in the enclosed pre-addressed, stamped envelope and return it. Thank you for your help.

1. Some people always read the Commandant's Bulletin while others never read it. How often do you read the Commandant's Bulletin? (Circle one number)

- 1 Always
- 2 Frequently
- 3 Occasionally
- 4 Seldom
- 5 Never

2. On the average, how many minutes do you spend reading each issue? (Circle one number)

- 1 00 to 15 minutes
- 2 16 to 30 minutes
- 3 31 to 45 minutes
- 4 46 to 60 minutes
- 5 More than 60 minutes

3. Do you ever have trouble obtaining a copy of the Commandant's Bulletin to read? (Circle one number)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know/No opinion

4. Would you say you read the Commandant's Bulletin for: (Circle one number)

- 1 Enjoyment
- 2 Information
- 3 Both enjoyment and information
- 4 I don't read it. (If you do not read the Commandant's Bulletin, skip to question 20.)

5. How often would you say that you have learned more about a certain Coast Guard program or activity from reading the Commandant's Bulletin that you were previously unaware of? (Circle one number)

- 1 Frequently
- 2 Occasionally
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Rarely
- 5 Never

6. How often has an article in the Commandant's Bulletin altered your opinion on a certain Coast Guard program or activity? (Circle one number)

- 1 Frequently
- 2 Occasionally
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Rarely
- 5 Never

7. How interested are you in the following kinds of regular articles and features that routinely appear in the Commandant's Bulletin? Please show your reaction by checking one of the boxes to the right of each subject below.

	Extremely Interested	Very	Fairly	Not Very	Not at All
a. Top Story: lead article					
b. Features: articles from around the Guard					
c. In the News: A.P. wire stories					
d. People: spotlights on individuals					
e. Personnel Notes: Officer, enlisted, civilian personnel info					
f. Service Info: family and consumer news					
g. Bulletin Board: program deadlines & newsbits					
h. Calendar: important dates for coming month					
i. Greetings from....: spotlight on Coast Guard unit					
j. Special insert: features on SPARS, WWII, CG history					

8. For each of the Coast Guard missions and programs below, please indicate how you feel the amount of coverage is in the Commandant's Bulletin by checking the appropriate box to the right of each item.

	Too much	About Right	Too Little
a. Law Enforcement			
b. Search and Rescue			
c. Marine Safety			
d. Aids to Navigation			
e. Ice Operations			
f. Boating Safety			
g. Defense Operations			
h. Aviation			
i. Engineering			
j. People/Family Programs			
k. Pay & Benefits			
l. Morale & Recreation			

9. Does the Commandant's Bulletin provide balanced regional coverage of Coast Guard activities? (Circle one number)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know/No opinion

(If "No," please explain why below.)

10. The subjects below are used in other military service magazines or were used previously used in the Commandant's Bulletin. Please indicate your desire to see these items included in this magazine by checking the box to the right of the subject that most closely reflects your desires.

	Strongly Desire	Desire	Undecided	Do Not Desire	Strongly Do Not Desire
a. Letters to the editor					
b. Humor					
c. Cartoons					
d. Competitions					
e. Quizzes					
f. Crosswords					
g. Officer Assignments					
h. CPO Assignments					
i. Enlisted Assignments					

11. Do you feel the Commandant's Bulletin openly addresses controversial issues? (Circle the number)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know/No opinion

12. Do you think the Commandant's Bulletin should be used to address controversial issues? (Circle the number)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know/No opinion

13. Do you think the Commandant's Bulletin should be used to dispel service-wide rumors? (Circle the number)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know/No opinion

14. Do you feel the Commandant's Bulletin... (Circle one number)

- 1 Only speaks for management
- 2 Tries to look at issues from the employees perspective
- 3 Presents both management's side and the employees' viewpoint
- 4 Don't know/No opinion

15. Please rate the Commandant's Bulletin on the following characteristics: (Check the box to the right of the item).

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
a. Quality of writing					
b. Appearance: design of the publication					
c. General interest level					
d. Ease of reading					
e. As a source of information about the Coast Guard					

16. Please rate the photography of the Commandant's Bulletin in each of the following areas by circling the number that best represents your views.

High quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Poor quality
Eye-catching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dull
Action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Still
Natural	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Posed
Personal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Impersonal
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Interesting
Worthwhile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Worthless

17. Does the Commandant's Bulletin contain too many, too few, or about the right number of photos? (Circle one number)

- 1 Too many
- 2 About the right number
- 3 Too few
- 4 Don't know/no opinion

18. Overall, how effective do you feel the Commandant's Bulletin is in communicating your needs? (1 is very ineffective, 11 is very effective)

Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 Effective

19. How do you feel the overall quality of the Commandant's Bulletin has changed over the past several years?

- 1 Increasing
- 2 Decreasing
- 3 Consistent
- 4 Don't know/No opinion

20. Do you have any additional comments on the Commandant's Bulletin? (Circle the number)

- 1 No
- 2 Yes (please specify below)

The following questions will help in tabulating the results. Remember all information from this questionnaire is confidential.

21. I have served in the Coast Guard for... (Circle one number)

- 1 Under 1 year
- 2 1 to 4 years
- 3 5 to 10 years
- 4 More than 10 years

22. My paygrade is... (Circle one number)

- 1 E-1 to E-3
- 2 E-4 to E-6
- 3 E-7 and above
- 4 O-1 to O-3
- 5 O-4 and above

23. Which of the following best describes your future plans in the Coast Guard?
(Circle one number)

- 1 Make the Coast Guard a career
- 2 Not make the Coast Guard a career
- 3 Undecided

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX C

Q9. Does the Commandant's Bulletin provide regional balanced coverage of Coast Guard activities?

VERBATIM Comment:

It seems related to how active each district or unit PAO (Public Affairs Officer) is, and doesn't reflect what may really be going on.

Very little Second, Ninth, and Seventeenth District stories.

It seems that Miami and New York get the most coverage.

Majority of Coast Guard is on East Coast. The West Coast units need more exposure.

Too connected to D7 (drugs) and D1 (F/V).

There is more Coast Guard than D7 and D11!

It seems that issues are regionalized, but I'm aware that it's based upon the input received from the field. It'll just take more input from across the Coast Guard in order to balance out the pub.

Too much D7.

It seems that most of the stories are centered around a few "hot spots" and district offices. More things from stations, small MSOs (Marine Safety Offices), etc. would be more interesting that a LT (Lieutenant) in Cleveland who ran a 10K race, etc...

According to the C.B. (Commandant's Bulletin)., the 7th is the only district in the Coast Guard. Ever hear of the Lakes, the rivers? Been to the Chesapeake? Just because there's no district office nearby doesn't mean that there's no story.

The bigger units and the West Coast gets the most coverage.

It appears that the 7th and 11th Districts get all the glory. Have not seen any articles on the 2nd District concerning the flood. We played a big role in flood ops. Marine Safety is covered in both Comet Bulletin and Vital Signs which has gone from a rate specific magazine to a safety and occupational and health rag.

Need more on D9.

Not enough coverage on D9 and D17 ops. Typically too much coverage on HQ or D7 highlights.

It's definitely an East Coast magazine. The CG does extend west of the Mississippi River. We do have ships on ALPAT (Alaska Patrol), etc...

It seems about every issue covers another "record" D7 drug bust. These are getting routine and old. Let's hear what happened in Europe, the Great Lakes, and the Northeast.

Too much emphasis on D7 ops.

The 7th district seems to be the main topic every issue.

Units on the West Coast seem to get more coverage.

Most stories still appear to be inside the Baltimore/Washington beltway.

The 9th and 2nd districts could use more coverage. Also Activities Europe, Guam, and other overseas locations.

The Bulletin provides very little input on what's happening in Alaska.

Seems to be centered around Atlantic Area.

Seems to be East Coast or major commands dominate.

Haven't seen much coverage about the Pacific Northwest.

I rarely hear/read about what's happening out in Guam, Japan, and those areas.

Seems to be more coverage in the 5th, 7th, and 8th districts.

A lot from the 7th.

Too much 7th district.

APPENDIX D

Q20. Do you have any additional comments on the Commandant's Bulletin?

VERBATIM Comment:

Take on controversial issues: eg. promotions, downsizing, discrimination, assignment policies, etc...

I look forward to each issue of the Bulletin.

Feature an article on the RIF (Reduction in Forces) program.
Feature articles on billet assignments: out-of-rate assignments and career-enhancement "C" schools.

Feature articles on work life programs, policies, and personnel.

Feature articles on HQ offices regarding responsibilities, duties, staff symbols, and how the office administers its responsibilities and duties as this provides organizational knowledge.

You should start a locator section, so you can get in touch with people you went to boot camp and were previously assigned with that you have lost contact with. I believe Navy Times has a similar section.

I truly miss the assignments info. It was a way of keeping tabs on past shipmates.

I hope a lot more exciting things are happening in the day-to-day Coast Guard than are being reported in the Commandant's Bulletin. more in-depth stories like the guy that fell overboard a few years back.

The WWII accounts are great, but way overdone.

There should be some kind of article that addresses the questions we all have for our yeomen types, ie. pay, moving, TAD, etc... You could call it the "Yeomen's Corner" or something like that. I know this info would help me and most of my coworkers.

I really miss the officer assignments.

I would also like to see Letters to the Editor.

More information on pay, controversy -- use it to end bad scuttlebutt. Give us facts!

The Bulletin is a tool of management. They never address controversial issues. The CG, like many other organizations, has its Achilles heels. All the reader ever sees are our successes (some perceived), never our failures. The Bulletin needs an editorial page for the expression of opinion. The information exchange should go both ways.

Just expand on various other things. More knowledge please.

Better swap shop. Make it easier to locate. You have a whole page and a 4 inch by 4 inch space for swap shop. First time readers can easily miss it.

The officer, CPO (Chief Petty Officer), enlisted assignments shouldn't be in the Bulletin, they're published in message format and are readily available to anyone needing the info.

The Bulletin should show statistical data on a monthly basis for the amount of work the Coast Guard does, let's sell this service as more and more eyebrows will be raised when people really know how well we perform day in and day out compared to the DOD (Department of Defense).

Some stories are out of date a little as far as awards presented and such maybe due to your office not getting it on time.

This magazine is the ideal medium for addressing internal communications problems in our service.

A Letters to the Editor in an open, non-censored "Dear Abbey" format would improve the Bulletin.

Not enough copies are distributed to my present command which is Support Center Kodiak. I never seem to be able to find a current issue to read all the time.

More personnel info -- pay, retirement issues, length of tours, upcoming changes in manning levels.

I think it should cover more sport activities within the whole Coast Guard.

I would like to see more on what goes on at "A" schools: I've never seen any coverage that goes into any depth on the schools.

I would also like to see a section just on aviation rescues.

Need fewer TQM (Total Quality Management) articles and less photos of people shaking hands.

For those on independent duty, a subscription should automatically be provided.

Controversial issues need to be addressed.
Also, bring back the officer assignments.

I would like to see more pictures of people doing things with people similar to the "Chief" magazine.

I would encourage that the distribution of the C.B. be made available to every Coast Guard member. Maybe perhaps mailing it to their residences. Aren't we a Coast Guard family? My family would also be interested to learn more about the Coast Guard.

Would like to see more requests for nonfiction and fiction for the bulletin by its readers.

I would read a letters to the editor column, but would not want this section to be used as a forum for negative opinions on the Coast Guard.

Would like to see recipes printed in a special section by our cooks in the field. Since most cooks would probably submit material and choosing what to print would be a burden, the recipes should be solicited randomly by the bulletin by mail to individual units.

To make more efficient use of space, don't print material that already reaches all units via mail, message, etc...

I'm not really sure what's happening with the Commandant's Bulletin, but it seems to be getting less interesting and more political.

For what I feel it should be doing (basically a glossy, non-controversial look at the CG), it is pretty effective. I think that converting it to a serious professional magazine with controversial discussions would not be possible given the very diverse audience that the publication is intended to reach. I get my serious discussions from more specialized publications (Academy Alumni Bulletin, internal legal publications, etc.).

I do sorely miss the officer assignments section. It's the only effective way to track peers, friends, classmates, etc...

I feel there are too many pages dedicated to officer assignments.

I really enjoyed the history of the Coast Guard segments in the center of the bulletin.

The Coast Guard has many newsletters, some regional, some local, and only one Coast Guard-wide publication (the Bulletin). This should be the marquis publication of the Coast Guard. It should be modeled after national magazines and address issues

without regard command or CG politics -- like the Navy Times.
Where was the "60 Minutes" piece in the Bulletin?

Produce the Bulletin out of recycled materials and recycle the issues.

I would like to see the magazine become a forum for free expression of opinions on current issues facing individuals and groups. I see the Bulletin as a great brochure for the stockholders of the company. It reads like a great OER (Officer Evaluation Report). I would like less focus on the results of our service and address the issues of how becoming a quality organization is difficult and that we make mistakes like everyone else. We learn from our mistakes.

Crossword puzzles are good to teach people about the CG without them really knowing they are learning it.

I would also like to hear about some of the rescues that are being done. That is our job and I would like to know if we are doing it.

Publish enlisted locator telephone number.

More action photos, consumer tips, informing us on housing costs, etc...

I feel the Bulletin is a worthwhile pub that should be expanded. At the very least it lets people (junior enlisted not long in the CG) to see how it is in other places.

It needs more comments from the field about an issue facing the CG and/or its people posed in a previous issue.

I am pleased you are trying to improve the Bulletin.

I think they should limit the history section to just a couple of pages.

I think that the Bulletin is the only source of information for a lot of junior enlisted. Meaning that they don't know the channels yet to get important info. I think that for juniors with

undecided career paths, they should make a "Day in the life of ..." for different rates and of the different duty stations (ie. 378', Group, RESU (Reserve Unit), Loran, etc...)

I also think it is great that you are taking the time to find out the Readers' opinions.

The C.B. is a propaganda rag. It never reports on any controversial or potentially controversial issues. CG members die in an accident? Don't mention it. We should be left to get the story from the Navy Times or by word of mouth. Why not have the company tell us the straight dope?

20% of the CG is ops afloat yet 90% of the C.B. is on... ops afloat. Whatever happened to M, E, N? Heard of VTS (Vessel Traffic System)? Been to the 2nd? What does an MLC do? Other branches have their own rag (E, aviation, etc.). We need a pub that will give us straight talk.

Consider a newspaper style approach, ie. the Navy Times format with a weekly publication.

Bring back officer, CPO, and enlisted assignments.

I miss the enlisted transfers because I know a lot of people that I met during my 21 years in and it would be nice to see if any of them are being transferred and where.

Use to have the retirement list in every month. Also would like to see that article returned.

I've noticed the officer and CPO shopping list posted. What about the E-4 to E-6 also? I feel that this would help cut down the number of people calling detailers and make it easier to fill out dream sheets. With the information at hand, people wouldn't be listing stations or ships that they would like to be stationed at and the units are not open during their rotation date.

Being in for 21 years, I have noticed the Bulletin change. But I feel if you included the above, more personnel would read and enjoy it knowing that there is more useful info contained in it.

I was wondering, with the Coast Guard in such a budget crunch and having to cut the enlisted force, how can we afford to

pay for stupid surveys like this? Or maybe this is some officers Masters Project and that's okay.

It should contain information about NJP (Non-Judicial Punishment) at various units, obituary columns, and enlisted assignments.

More assignment info -- who is going where?

Thank you from the field. Keep up the good work.

The information in the Bulletin is often too late for use. Should be more current.

The Bulletin has become little more than a history magazine. Would like to see more on our people.

The ability to track people in the service has been lost. Also like the shopping list in the Bulletin.

I am disappointed in general with the way the Coast Guard is headed with regard to women and minority issues. A recent issue exalted the benefits and need for diversity management. The term seems to be a cleverly disguised name for quotas. These policies are disturbing to me and worse, the C.B. is the medium to distribute these destructive and divisive doctrines. The only place I can address this at the present time is in the Alumni Bulletin, a much narrower group of readers.

With a little more variety and some honest, open communication, it could be better.

The Bulletin is first and foremost for CG members. There are enough publications for "family." Let's have more for the actual CG member and leave to TQM and worklife to the pubs specifically for that purpose.

The title should be changed to something also because the articles and info are not all really from the Commandant and it really is not a bulletin. Maybe something like "Coast Guard Magazine" or "Semper Paratus Magazine" or "Our Coast Guard" magazine.

Don't stop publishing the officers shopping list.

Perhaps increase the circulation numbers to make it accessible to more members.

With desktop publishing, scanners, etc.. the Bulletin become an impersonal external publication. Although I appreciate history, too much of the Bulletin is wasted with 4-8 pages of regurgitated publications. History should be limited. Editorial privilege should be reduced. If major changes are made in a submitted article, the author should be informed before publication. I personally wrote an article last year on CG Mutual Assistance for the annual campaign. The article was reduced to approximately 1/4 of a page, even though the Commandant wasted requested a full page. Although this last year a very interesting article was submitted from my command regarding work with a visiting Russian Frontier Guard (old KGB). This well written article was returned because the "editorial staff" stated this visit was not Coast Guard news. D17 published the article. My officers and crew were very disappointed that this historic visit was not published.

We show only glamour, why not the real job? Getting dirty or talk about ways to make life better for those people who have an nonoperational job. I'm sure the real Guard is a blast, but maybe for those who don't like those jobs, there should be articles showing how lucky they are to be in SAR (Search & Rescue)/LE (Law Enforcement).

It used to be pretty good at getting the word out. All we see now is stuff about TQM or women's issues. Put back in the assignments and use it to spread info to all of us. Don't use it to spit out the verbiage that one man (the Commandant) wants to see in there.

This is a good survey. The questions asked were such that you'll get useful info. I wish more data collection efforts were this good.

Question 19 -- becoming less informative on new programs. Used to be you could look to it for information similar to Navy Times. Now it's a "see how great we are" publication.

Most of the Coast Guard history stuff is on WWII. You should expand this to other areas. I have always noticed a high degree of interest of these articles by CG members, including myself.

I think it's a fluff rag, like People magazine. It is a slick, well-put together magazine, however, all form and no substance unfortunately. I would like to see a serious magazine similar to the Naval Institute's Proceedings.

The Bulletin also strikes me as a "white-wash" rag. Some of the more controversial or even negative areas of the Coast Guard are never examined or discussed. It is basically propaganda for the CG.

I have a rather low opinion of the Bulletin. Hopefully, your study will help improve it.

As far as humor goes, it would be nice to see a simple cartoon similar to "Broadside" in the Navy Times.

Would strongly like to see officer assignments printed in the Bulletin again. This allowed us to follow where contact/friends were located.

The bulletin's a good place for the Comdt to present facts to us such as the recent "60 Minutes" story.

From my perspective, it looks like the C.B. staff is focused on winning prizes. How about a little "balance"... How about an issue on why do we have a C.B.? How about an issue on SAR or surface ops? How about interviews with program directors or district commanders? How about linking all the history lessons to today's missions with an integrated history of a CG mission... The pub is blah! I'm not advocating a tabloid, but it is not compelling... I don't see people knocking down doors to get the most recent edition... It's time for a change... Please be a risk taker and make it.

I think the Bulletin should cover more of the legal issues as does the Navy Times, as it's the Coast Guard's only publication.

Too much time spent on TQM nonsense.

Distribution is/was very inconsistent. I've seen small units receive one copy per person. At HQ, I rarely, if ever, see one.

AP wire service stories is a feature I turn to first. However, in many cases, the wire story will be only from one day of an unfolding or developing event or incident, and the reader is left wondering about the outcome.

Again, due to the distribution problem at HQ, I rarely see ALDISTs. Therefore, reporting PCS (Permanent Change of Station) orders in the C.B. would be considered valuable in tracking friends. If cancelled/changed orders are a potential problem or cause for rework, only publish executed orders and retirements.

Need more commentary/news/benefits info similar to what is published in the Navy Times. Don't assume anyone reads other service publications.

Make more space for Mutual swaps. I believe there are more people unsatisfied with their duty stations than the few you print.

Just an idea... ALCOAST info in some cases could be put into the Bulletin rather than sent via message traffic. Doing so would ensure that all CG personnel have the opportunity to read/view ALCOAST information.

Overall, it's a great publication. However, what direction is it going and for who or what purpose? We have many areas that can be covered in the Bulletin. Consumer type articles can help us all, however, I don't know if the Bulletin is the right medium for such info. A half-page can be devoted to credit shams, etc. that we are faced with every day.

Include an awards presented section (who got what).
I miss the transfer section. It helped me keep track of friends.
Too much CG history.

It seems the info in the Bulletin is sometimes outdated.
I'm not sure how it can be more timely.

Although the information in the Bulletin does stimulate morale and does keep the enlisted member well informed from my point of view.

Suggest take all CG periodicals and place them into one CG newspaper. Quality of C.B. layout is much more than we need. Forget all the quality. Send the paper to everyone.

Only time in my career I've seen the Bulletin has been on special assignment or when I was the CO/XO/Div Off of a ship. At staff jobs, the Bulletin rarely gets routed. A cheap newspaper sent to the homes would do much more. Combine Governors Island Gazette, 7th District Coastline, Bulletin, On Scene, Proceedings, etc. into one paper and send to all. Wouldn't it be great for all to get the info! You could develop news, sports, personnel, personal, comics, morale, exchange, etc. sections.

Have not seen any impact of the recent decommissionings (\$9 million cut), also the impact on personnel.

I would like to see more personnel notes, eg. promotion climate, latest evaluation system perceptions, etc..

Publish upcoming boards and board members. We now get that info from the Navy Times and it is old or non-existent. We deserve more timely and better input.

For what it accomplishes, which is providing some information unofficially to the members of the Coast Guard, the money could be better spent to service external customers.

Overall, it's a good publication.

More about the enlisted and not so much about the officers.

I look forward to reading the Commandant's Bulletin. You do an excellent job.

As an enlisted, I do not really care about issues that pertain to officers. Why not have an enlisted magazine and an officers magazine? The officers magazine could be more serious and the enlisted magazine could be more comic relief. The majority of Os and Es are two different customers.

I think it should show more real people in the Guard. Interview the people that make things happen and not just the CO of the unit.

I would like for the Commandant's Bulletin to be more personal. I think you'll reach more Coast Guard members if you make them feel a part of the Bulletin and not just a story telling magazine.

Need some types of stories on non-married personnel. I feel the CG puts too much toward the dependants and not enough about single people.

Enlisted assignments was dropped a few years back without any explanation. I would like to see it resumed for it was a source of morale.

The Commandant's Bulletin to me, is a forum used to add colorful pictures to the "company line." It meets no need for me. As my answers indicate, I think it should be used to track friends through their careers.

I feel we receive enough worklife, Hispanic, African-American information, and the like from ALCOASTs and similar messages. Let's not take ourselves too seriously.

If I were to add anything, it would be stories of success/failure in Quality. We do a poor job of marketing quality. If we're going to walk this talk, we must start marketing this cultural exchange.

I would like more pictures and articles of our Coast Guard in action - see pictures of personnel involved in unit programs - less history. The Coast Guard of the 90s is now. Let's move forward to the next objective.

Dispel the rumors - straight talk with less fluff.

Tell us what we can expect from the Coast Guard in the future. Prepare those of us who are separating from the service with hope of joining the civilian sector with little difficulty.

I am an E-9 Telephone Technician. TTs do more work behind the scenes than any other rate. They never have been credited with any of the work they perform. I have been in the CG for 26 years and have seen only 2 articles on our rate.

The C.B. serves the Coast Guard very well. I think we go overboard in TQM and improving things in the Coast Guard. I ask you, please do not take money away from operational budgets to attempt to improve this publication.

The publications should address controversy, issues like gays in the military, declining benefits, etc. These seem to be glossed over. The CG truly needs a forum to address these issues.

This publication should be used to dispel rumors.

The Bulletin's viewpoint echoes the party line.

I would like to see the enlisted assignments section in order to keep track of other peers.

I definitely would not like to see the Commandant's Bulletin turn into a gossip magazine like the Navy Times.

Keep up the good work. But start writing about the issues everyone is concerned about - like RIF, marks, service-wide, advancements, etc...

Uniform changes should be added.

I have found in the past that some articles can fail to portray what is exactly happening. Taking photos of officers operating radio equipment when in fact they have nothing to do with the gear shows me that (a) the Bulletin can be biased toward officers, and (2) it isn't very truthful.

I feel the Bulletin should contain articles like the "Good Order & Discipline" notice that comes out periodically. I know this information is supposed to be passed by the command, but it's not and people continue to get into trouble with the same problems. Just maybe someone would learn from someone else's mistake. Let's not try to cover up, let the CG be the first service to operate above board and be proud of it. I believe honor should be stressed whenever possible.

The overall appearance of the Bulletin has improved dramatically in recent years. Colorization largely responsible.

The historical section is important, but should not occupy so much prominent space each issue. Shorten it and move it toward the back.

I deeply miss the section on personnel transfers that was removed several years ago. It was one of the only ways available to keep track of the many shipmates you bond with over the years. I'm sure if it were brought back it would be a very popular section of the Bulletin.

Include a section highlighting future initiatives from around the CG. Start with RADM Woollover's group. There are also many other smaller stories related to the future of the CG.

The Bulletin lost my interest when officer and CPO assignments were eliminated. There is no other way of keeping track of shipmates.

In these tough times of not enough money and budget cuts, it amazes me that we are printing a publication with a full color cover on high quality expensive paper. We should go back to black and white on recycled paper.

While I always thought the Bulletin was interesting, I personally always thought it was simplistic. Because there are so many other pubs that deal with developments in specific areas, I understand it would be hard to back up, say an article about LE development with new developments in LE without being redundant, but that's what I would like to see.

I think the historical section is very important because while everyone might not read it, that information is so hard to get anywhere else, and fosters my sense of continuity with the service.

We still need a forum for professional debate and discussion. Why not the Commandant's Bulletin?

What is the mission/vision of the Bulletin? It should be directed for Coast Guard members. "To share information and ideas; important, interesting or informative to all Coast Guard people."

It is a great source of info for those of us not at a Coast Guard command. As a flight student at NAS (Naval Air Station) Pensacola, I get little CG info. I get a subscription of the Bulletin to stay in touch. By the way, getting a subscription isn't easy. I still have yet to receive a copy. GPO seems rather slow.

I would like to read the Bulletin, but I believe it is just sent to our officers. I would enjoy receiving it at home, as we receive the work-life bulletin and women in the Coast Guard bulletin. I would be able to definitely read it then.

I have only four years in the CG and am an E-5. I have to beg, borrow or steal to get a copy of the Bulletin.

I would be very interested in writing to the editor on some articles.

I do believe the Coast Guard sweeps a lot of trouble under the rug and I would definitely be more interested if some controversial subjects were addressed.

Focus on Coast Guard members' outside activities (ie. rowing teams, athletic events, etc...) and acknowledge achievements of field units in new programs (ie. fishing vessel safety, adopt-a-school, etc.)

Advertise for articles from the field on specific programs or topics.

The Bulletin should cover more than just what O-1s and above want covered. I would like the Bulletin as it was in 1984 when I first joined the CG. I remember a time when everyone used to fight over who was going to read the Bulletin first. Now, unfortunately, it holds very little interest to the average enlisted Coastie.

The Bulletin is too general in its discussion of policies and programs (not enough detail).

Please don't be afraid of touching on controversial issues. Letters to the editor might be a way of exploring those controversial areas.

Would like to see more write ups/interviews about individual units and things that are happening now or in the future that will affect us.

Use it more to pass info about programs, opportunities, assignments, and not as a glossy magazine.

The historical stuff is okay, but it takes up too much space, and always covers WWII it seems.

More regularly scheduled production would be better. Is the C.B. a monthly publication? I never know when to expect it.

Some of the big stories, instead of being merely "operational," could feature internal news. I suppose I get most of that info from the Navy Times, but I think I would like to see it more thoroughly addressed in the Bulletin (eg. stories about realignment, the CG budget, RIF (t decisions, the "60 Minutes" expose, etc.)

The Bulletin should be used to pass timely career and CG info in a timely manner.

Often I must hunt for an issue, right here in HQ and it seems the info is often several months late.

Spend more time on promotions, medals and awards listings, etc. and less on features like the Coast Guard in WWII. While that info is very interesting, I think it would be a very positive people oriented move to list transfers and awards.

More info on career and CG general info is needed like what is the policy on this and that and who reorganized this week.

It's an interesting publication... informative and very worthwhile. It helps to stimulate pride in being a Coastie.

I used to enjoy reading the PCS assignments in the back of the Commandant's Bulletin. I'd like to see that feature reinstated.

Thanks for the chance to provide comments.

The overall format is looking much better. Sometimes the issue seems to be fattened up with some unwanted fluff.

HQ should look around at how today's news affects the Coast Guard. Publish names and faces of senators and public officials that are not supporting our missions so we can write to them.

Do specials on the training teams, foreign Coast Guards, etc..

Maybe add a real estate section such as the Navy Times or any other newspaper. This would be extremely helpful for upcoming PCS moves if someone is looking for something in a particular area. I personally own a home and I would like to use it as a rental for fellow Coasties. Since this magazine reaches every unit in the CG, renting or selling to shipmates would become more convenient and easier.

Do away with the history inserts as most people are not interested.

Should contain more articles on SAR, and issues concerning zero tolerance, sexual harassment, and members' rights should be printed.

I feel the Bulletin is declining.

The historical articles are very interesting.

I don't feel the Bulletin keeps the field updated on changes. There are rumors in the field with no official information provided.

The Bulletin is a very informative magazine for enlisted personnel. It allows us to know what is going on outside of our own offices.

By the time the Bulletin reaches our unit, the information is already a couple of months old.

You should have more stories on more variety of units as most SAR and LE is on cutters. Divide it up on small boat stations, ANT teams and LEDET (Law Enforcement Detachment).

I feel the Commandant's Bulletin has helped instill in me a greater sense of pride and awareness with the Coast Guard.

Too much TQM.

By the time I get to see the Bulletin, most of the info is old and outdated.

I enjoy it.

I'd like to see articles addressing units' relation with local communities, and articles addressing tough issues like prejudice and discrimination.

More emphasis should be placed on operational missions like SAR and LE (our bread & butter missions).

Being more timely would help. I just received the Jan. 94 issue on 2 March.

Would like to see issues such as budget, presidency and world politics that are affecting the life of Coast Guardsmen. Many issues such as the aviation rates being congested and billets being involuntarily extended from 3 to 4 years need to be spotlighted for our magazine.

I would like to see a section on Letters to the Editor like the Navy Times has.

It's not very timely on its articles. It usually highlights a new personnel policy "months" after it's promulgated. That's not news I can use. It should be more informative on personnel issues. It also should be more provocative.

I think that CG personnel are so saturated with reading material that it is hard to make time for all the reading we would like to do. The Bulletin is a real nice publication and provides a lot of good info, but is sometimes overshadowed by the bulk of reading material we are presented.

Seems to be a month behind. Maybe switch to a bi-monthly format.

In my opinion the only articles I ever see about people are fluff pieces. Let's hear some controversial info like the recent "60 Minutes" piece. Include an unbiased interview with the people involved.

I used to read every issue of the Commandant's Bulletin. Now I only skim most issues, glance at pictures. Most info has been published elsewhere by the time the Bulletin hits my office. I did prefer the old-style Bulletin.

Don't publish shopping lists. It's too old by the time it hits the street.

Do a personal story on a Coastie like the spotlight on units.

Enlarge the swap-shop.

I think the Commandant's Bulletin is a great way for people to see how other CG units operate.

But there are some people who do not get a chance to read it. I know that it is distributed out, but many people never see it. Sometimes it just ends up in the COs or XO's office and most of the lower enlisted people hardly get to read it.

My only suggestion is to include current affairs: messages that have come out recently regarding events that effect the entire CG or solicitations for TAD assignments.

I enjoy the Bulletin and read it cover to cover every issue. I would like to see more about the rest of the Coast Guard highlighting the "little people." Many things that seem to be small and insignificant are actually some of the most interesting reading.

The Bulletin has always been interesting to me, especially down here in a semi-isolated area.

The Bulletin needs to be better distributed. In my career, I have been at commands where the Bulletin never made full distribution. For example, I saw 3 in 8 months at my current assignments, 3 in 3 years at Support Center Alameda, half of them

at MLC Pacific, 100% at district office, 25% at an MSO, 100% at a Group, 100% aboard ship, and none at Support Center Kodiak.

The Bulletin is a means for the Commandant to put forth policies and should not be used for contradiction like gays in the military, illegal drug use, etc... The contradiction articles are given more than enough time on the radio, TV, newspapers, and magazines and require no further discussion.

The Commandant's Bulletin reflects what headquarters wants us to think. Facts are carefully chosen to defend only their point of view. I don't think it should be used for controversial issues as it is the Commandant's Bulletin, but they could at least give us a complete picture.

It should spend less time on the special insert pieces and more time on the current and future role of the Coast Guard.

It has gotten better over my seven years, particularly in the presentation arena. I think that in truth, however, it is a management controlled device to put a positive spin on whatever story is reflected (ie. a spotlight on Governors Island that whitewashes some of the downsides of being there.) If I look at it from the Commandant's perspective, perhaps I can rationalize why it has to be that way, but once you've been around a year or two, you take some stories in the Bulletin with a grain of salt.

We don't need a CG Times with cartoons and movie reviews, but maybe just a little more balance on some hot issues.

On controversial issues, the Bulletin takes management's side always. I feel more input from the field is important. If the Bulletin is about the Coast Guard, let's see some more enlisted input.

More spotlights on different units so we can get an idea where we want to transfer in the future.

Keep up with the current events in the Coast Guard like new housing regs, courts martial, cutting of retirement benefits, and mainly keeping in touch with detailers to get an idea of the projected number of openings from each rate for the SWE (Service-wide Exam).

Although CG history is interesting, I feel your time could be better spent informing us of today's Coast Guard.

Quality of layout has improved, but content hasn't.

Give us more articles on: assignment policies, advancement opportunities, benefits, education opportunities.
Also need a better distribution system.

VITA

Scott Paul LaRochelle was born in Dover, New Hampshire on January 26, 1961. He attended elementary and junior high school at Dover Catholic and graduated from Saint Thomas Aquinas High School in June 1979. That same month he entered the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut and in May 1983 received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. In August 1992 he entered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and in May 1994 received a Master of Science degree in Communications.

He is presently a lieutenant commander in the United States Coast Guard. He is married to the former Marilyn Ann Tanksley of Houston, Texas and the couple has one son, Eric.