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Title: End-of-Day Reflection for Job Satisfaction: An Action Research Study of a New High School Principal

### **Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)**

Being a new high school principal, I am not sure how I would feel in this role as it relates to my personal satisfaction levels related to my work. Not only am I new to the principal's seat, I am new to my district and building.

This year, I have felt that I am in a constant "fire-extinguishing" role. Everyday, there are several "fires" brought to us (our Assistant Principal is new to the role and district as well). This has led to my perception of being too "responsive" in my role rather than "proactive." Oftentimes, I feel defeated when I reflect on the day.

I've consistently heard the advice of "build relationships and do nothing 'major' the first year." Yet, this year, we were mandated to implement parameters for a new Indiana high school diploma. I was also charged with carrying on work that began before my arrival centered around a new scheduling model (traditional 7 periods to hybrid block). Finally, the high school needed to do a better job at executing the mission of the district as it relates to serving students (this is my jam)!

### **The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)**

Therefore, I wanted to identify patterns, practices, and moments that contribute to or detract from my daily job satisfaction and to develop strategies for improving professional fulfillment and well-being. I have enjoyed a very fulfilling and rewarding experience as a classroom teacher and assistant principal, but was struggling to experience the same satisfaction (joy) level in my new role.

### **My Wonderings (Slide 4)**

With that purpose in mind, I wondered: What activities or interactions during the day contribute most to a sense of accomplishment? What factors contribute to feelings of stress or dissatisfaction? How does reflective practice at the end of the day impact overall job satisfaction?

### **My Actions (Slide 5)**

Therefore, I decided to start tracking my end-of-day satisfaction level as it related to interactions I had had that day. End-of-day journaling or a quick reflective survey with prompts such as:

- How did today go?
- What challenges did I face in my interactions?
- How aligned were today's activities with my goals as a principal (mission/vision)?

I would look for any patterns that were shown in my data collection and hopefully be able to identify factors that impact my satisfaction level. I would do this over a period of 2 months (8 weeks).

- Monitor patterns in workload, interactions, and the balance between administrative and instructional

leadership duties.

### Data Collection (Slide 6)

I collected data using a 5 point rating scale and documented characteristics of my interactions: whether or not meetings were scheduled or impromptu, the topic (logistics/management, vision/mission/students, or personnel), and was the issue at the building or district level. I then rated each interaction on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being a high level of accomplishment and satisfaction and 1 being the lowest.

- Journalled after 2-3 meetings/interactions per week for 8 weeks
- Data collection period: January-March
- Tracked key data points–
  - Scheduled or impromptu interaction
  - Topic: logistics/management, vision/mission, personnel
  - Related area of impact: building or district
- Journalled at the end-of-day about experience & rated job satisfaction level 1-5
- Rating scale
  - 1-5: 1 frustration/dissatisfaction – 5 accomplishment/satisfaction

### My Data (Slide 7)

Event	Scheduled/Impromptu	Topic	Building/District	Rating 1-5
1	Scheduled	logistics/management	Building	3
2	Scheduled	vision/mission	District	4
3	Impromptu	personnel	Building	1
4	Impromptu	logistics/management	Building	2
5	Impromptu	vision/mission	District	4
6	Impromptu	vision/mission	District	5
7	Scheduled	personnel	Building	3
8	Scheduled	logistics/management	Building	4
9	Impromptu	vision/mission	Building	4
10	Impromptu	vision/mission	Building	5
11	Scheduled	vision/mission	Building	2
12	Scheduled	vision/mission	District	5
13	Impromptu	vision/mission	Building	4
14	Scheduled	vision/mission	Building	2
15	Impromptu	vision/mission	District	5
16	Scheduled	vision/mission	District	4
17	Impromptu	vision/mission	Building	3
18	Impromptu	personnel	Building	2
19	Scheduled	vision/mission	Building	2
20	Scheduled	vision/mission	District	4
21	Scheduled	vision/mission	Building	2
22	Impromptu	logistics/management	District	3
23	Impromptu	personnel	Building	2
24	Scheduled	vision/mission	Building	2

## **Data Synthesis (Slide 8)**

Below, you will find a brief synopsis of the data:

- 24 events
- 12 scheduled events & 12 impromptu events
- 4 personnel events
- 4 logistics/management events
- 16 mission/vision/students events
- 8 district related events
- 16 building related events
- Average rating: 3.21
- Highest ratings: “district” mission/vision/students
- Lowest ratings: “building” mission/vision/students & personnel
- “Scheduled” interactions yielded higher ratings compared to “unscheduled”

## **My Discoveries (Slides 9-12)**

Interactions that had a focal point of “mission/vision/students” led to higher satisfaction ratings. However, “building” or “district” data points were a contributing factor in the rating.

- Mission and vision related areas provide me with a high level of satisfaction. I enjoy carrying out our mission for kids. This is why I am here!
- I noticed the group of people I am with impacts my satisfaction. Three rating levels of “5” can be attributed to work centered on mission/vision with a group of individuals fully engaged and supportive of the work.

“Personnel” interactions yielded lower satisfaction ratings

- Of the 4 “personnel” related interactions, the average rating was 2.
- The “personnel” meetings are all related to carrying out job functions as they relate to the mission and vision of the school corporation.
- These meetings left me feeling like I was defending or justifying the mission of the district.

Scheduled interactions yielded higher satisfaction ratings

- I believe this is related to my ability to plan and prepare for a thoughtful, intentional, solutions/action-oriented interaction.
- Part of my lower ratings were related to the impromptu nature of an interaction that was in opposition to the mission/vision of the district.

## **Where I am Heading Next (Slide 13)**

The mission/vision or the way in which it is carried out. Impromptu meetings centered on complaint without solution yields much lower satisfaction levels. I must focus on being intentional with staff to give them a platform to express concern or ask questions but also be able to invite them to consider the positive benefits our mission and vision offers to students.

It is important to schedule time for big ticket items rather than attempting to respond or collaborate in an impromptu moment. Not every conversation relates to a “fire” (although to staff, the topic they are wanting to address is important to them at that moment). Likewise, it is equally important to have the right people serving in the right places when working on mission/vision related items.

Reminding myself of the long-term missional goals increases satisfaction and helps focus conversations—even when there is disagreement. Roos (2022) indicates that the days of principal managers are past and that the most successful principals are leaders that create a “pull” towards them, are reflective on their actions and skills, and are able to let go of things that limit their ability to intentionally act in the spirit of leadership to create passion in people to carry the work to fruition.

### **Bibliography (Slide 13)**

Roos, Rhonda J. (2022). *The Deliberate and Courageous Principal*. Bloomington, Indiana: Solution Tree Press.

# **End-of-Day Reflection for Job Satisfaction:**

## **An Action Research Study of a New High School Principal**



**Brown County High School  
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[ssherohman@browncountyschools.com](mailto:ssherohman@browncountyschools.com)**

# Background:

- Being a new high school principal, I felt like I was always responding to the “fire” of the day.
- Everyone has a “fire”
- Feeling responsive and not proactive
- Feeling defeated when staff members were not satisfied with a situation, decision, or outcome



# Purpose:

- To identify patterns, practices, and moments that contribute to or detract from my daily job satisfaction
- To develop strategies for improving professional fulfillment and well-being



# My Wonderings:



- **What activities or interactions during the day contribute most to a sense of accomplishment?**
- **What factors contribute to feelings of stress and dissatisfaction?**
- **How does reflective practices at the end of the day impact overall job satisfaction?**



# My Actions:



- End-of-day journaling or a quick reflective survey with prompts such as:
  - How did today go?
  - What challenges did I face in my interactions?
  - How aligned were today's activities with my goals as a principal (mission/vision)?
- Observation:
  - Monitor patterns in workload, interactions, and the balance between administrative and instructional leadership duties.
- Tract this data over a defined period of time (8 weeks)

# Data Collection:

- **Journalled after 2-3 meetings/interactions per week for 8 weeks**
- **Data collection period: January-March**
- **Tracked key data points–**
  - **Scheduled or impromptu interaction**
  - **Topic: logistics/management, vision/mission/students, personnel**
  - **Related area of impact: building or district**
- **Journalled at the day about experience & rated job satisfaction level 1-5**
- **Rating scale**
  - **1-5: 1 frustration/dissatisfaction – 5 accomplishment/satisfaction**



# My Data:

Event	Scheduled/Impromptu	Topic	Building/District	Rating 1-5
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# My data–synthesis:



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# My discoveries:



- Interactions that had a focal point of “mission/vision/students” led to higher satisfaction ratings. However, “building” or “district” data points were a contributing factor in the rating
- “Personnel” interactions yielded lower satisfaction ratings
- Scheduled interactions yielded higher satisfaction ratings

# My discoveries:



**Interactions that had a focal point of “mission/vision” led to higher satisfaction ratings. However, “building” or “district” data points were a contributing factor in the rating.**

- **Mission and vision related areas provide me with a high level of satisfaction. I enjoy carrying out our mission for kids. This is why I am here!**
- **I noticed the group of people I am with impacts my satisfaction. Three rating levels of “5” can be attributed to work centered on mission/vision with a group of individuals fully engaged and supportive of the work.**

# My discoveries:



## “Personnel” interactions yielded lower satisfaction ratings

- Of the 4 “personnel” related interactions, the average rating was 2.
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- These meetings left me feeling like I was defending or justifying the mission of the district.

# My discoveries:



## Scheduled interactions yielded higher satisfaction ratings

- I believe this is related to my ability to plan and prepare for a thoughtful, intentional, solutions/action-oriented interaction.
- Part of my lower ratings were related to the impromptu nature of an interaction that was in opposition to the mission/vision of the district.



# Where am I heading...

## Reflection:

Much of my work is centered around carrying out the mission/vision of the district. My building is not fully supportive of the mission/vision or the way in which it is carried out. Impromptu meetings centered on complaint without solution yields much lower satisfaction levels. I must focus on being intentional with staff to give them a platform to express concern or ask questions but also be able to invite them to consider the positive benefits our mission and vision offers to students.

It is important to schedule time for big ticket items rather than attempting to respond or collaborate in an impromptu moment. Not every conversation relates to a “fire” (although to staff, the topic they are wanting to address is important to them at that moment). Likewise, it is equally important to have the right people serving in the right places when working on mission/vision related items.

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## Goals:

- BE AS INTENTIONAL AS POSSIBLE
- NOT EVERY ISSUE IS A “FIRE”
- TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DYNAMICS OF THE TEAM
- LEVERAGE MY MISSIONAL DRIVE

# Bibliography



**Roos, Rhonda J. (2022). *The Deliberate and Courageous Principal*. Bloomington, Indiana: Solution Tree Press.**