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INTERPRETATION OF "RECREACION LABORAL"

BY

SAUNDRA L. GROVES

ABSTRACT

This is a brief reaction to the publication "Recreacion Laboral" by Professor Alberto Juarez. The ensuing discussion is based upon not only the publication but discussions with Mr. Juarez. This should not be construed as a summary, but an expansion upon this publication.

INTERPRETATION OF "RECREACION LABORAL"

Culturally, there is a significant difference between the Mexican and U.S. employee services program. Employee services programs in the U.S. are a non-negotiated benefit and, in most cases, directly tied to management influences. In Mexico, it is more an inherited right and is a function of the labor movement. The philosophical base is the same, that is, based upon such management philosophies as "Weber". The definitions and recreational benefits derived from the programs are similar. The difference is in the concepts of work.

In the Mexican culture, employee services is tied closely to the concept of time and education. The basic position, in terms of outcomes, is associated with the individual. Employee service programs, in the U.S. culture, are tied to organizational outcomes, such as, productivity and profits. Recreation, in the Mexican culture, is integrated into the total time expenditures, while it is not usually integrated in the U.S. culture.

A comparison of employee services in the Mexican and U.S. cultures are based upon broad generalizations. The importance of the employee services program in both cultures, as an innovator to the public sector, is growing. This is becoming more important because individuals in the leisure movement are realizing the positive benefits of developing cohesive relationships between two institutions work and leisure. The leadership aspect, therefore, is allowing a greater beneficial exchange between the public and private sectors to the benefit of both. The base participation in any program takes on greater meaning if there is integration, not segregation.

In many instances, the public and private sectors have segregated themselves from one another and have not been involved in these symbiotic relationships. The larger questions that are raised are "what are the roles of the public and private sectors" and "how can one benefit from

the other?" This has been better accomplished in the Mexican society than in the U.S., and may serve as a model for the development of positive relationships. Different models have developed based upon cultures and can give the scholar an operational perspective of the success and failure of different approaches. This type of perspective can only be obtained through an international comparison of employee service programs.

A system of comparison can be developed on the basis of outcomes and the methods of interactions. There are three types of outcomes: political, individual, and organizational. One basic way to classify relationships between the public and private sectors is on the impacts of the outcomes. Another way of characterizing systems is on the amount of competition, cooperation and/or collaboration among the private and public agencies. The one type of model that is producing the greatest impact, at the present time, is one that recognizes individual needs and tries to provide a cooperative atmosphere for the integration of both public and private goals. The one culture that has effectively implemented this type of approach is the Japanese.

The current role of the private sector, in most cultures, has been as a medium for change because of the competitiveness to develop new products, especially where there is a constant demand by consumers for change. There is presently not a model that has incorporated the advantage of competition, and the solidarity of cooperation to produce a system that can accommodate the future demand for leisure services, based upon the sophisticated consumer interested in quality. Most of the systems are currently either completely competitive or cooperative and have developed as a result of random happenings. A consistent method of development is needed to help integrate the public and private segments into an effective provider of leisure services.