Needs Assessment Report

Prepared by Neal Sanborn

Background	Operating Department management requested that an assessment be performed of their ScoreCard Program to determine strategies for enhancing its effectiveness. The ScoreCard Program is a tool used for evaluation and improvement of plant operator performance through on-the-job observations.
Purpose	The purpose of the needs assessment is to determine whether the problems associated with the ScoreCard program are related to the tool itself, how the tool is being utilized, the training and experience of those involved, or some other factor.

Performance Needs Identified

To enhance the effectiveness of the ScoreCard Program:

- Maintain a consistent and reasonable quota for ScoreCards.
- Communicate results of monthly ScoreCard reviews.
- Advertise successes resulting from the ScoreCard Program.
- Simplify the documentation of ScoreCards.
- Capture normal coaching done on a day-to-day basis.
- Thoroughly communicate expectations and changes.
- Provide supervisors with an example of a good ScoreCard.
- Eliminate the stigma that ScoreCards can be a punitive tool.
- Ensure Scorecards are spread evenly between operators.
- Evaluate task repetition and timing for maximum benefit.

Study Methods

The following were used as information gathering tools for this assessment:

- Interviews with every level of the Operating Department
  - Operations Director
  - Senior Operating Superintendent
  - Shift Managers
  - Unit Supervisors
  - Field Supervisors
  - Nuclear Station Operators
  - Non-Licensed Operators

**Study Methods
(continued)**

- Interview with Maintenance Department ScoreCard Coordinator
- Review of past year's ScoreCard data for the Operating Department
- Review of past 3 month's ScoreCard data for the Maintenance Department
- Surveys utilizing email for a sample of the Operating Department personnel

Data Summary

The interviews were conducted utilizing mainly scripted questions that did not vary greatly between the groups interviewed. Included here are those questions that provided the most revealing information.

Duration with the company and time in current position:

	Time with Company	Time in Position
Overall average for all interviewed	15 yrs	8 yrs
Management only	16 yrs	5 yrs
Union members only	14 yrs	11 yrs

These numbers do not include the Operations Director or the Senior Operating Superintendent, who have both been in their positions for fewer than 2 years. An interesting point to note here is that the supervisors who are performing the evaluations have typically been in their positions for less than half of the time of the people they are evaluating.

What is the perception of the ScoreCard Program?

This question developed into two distinct areas – the perceived purpose and scope of the Program, and the individual's views on its effectiveness and value.

Purpose and scope: All interviewees provided similar statements, that the ScoreCards are a tool used by management to evaluate operator performance and provide a means of feedback with the intent of improving performance.

Data Summary (continued)	Effectiveness and value: All interviewees indicated that if the ScoreCards are used as was initially intended, then they can, and have been, an effective tool, providing valuable information and coaching. However, due to inconsistent implementation of the program in the past and misconceptions as to its current intent, the answers from those interviewed covered the entire spectrum. The common view is that the Program can be an extremely useful tool if implemented properly.

Issues mentioned that have adversely impacted the effectiveness of the ScoreCard Program include:

- Unclear and/or frequently changing expectations
- Quantity-driven versus quality-driven metrics
- Cumbersome documentation requirements
- Use as a punitive tools versus an improvement tool
- Inconsistent implementation with regards to time period and recipients

What is the frequency of ScoreCard performance?

This question provided information in three ways. The intent was to determine how often supervisors perform ScoreCards and how often union members are the recipients of a ScoreCard. The additional facet provided was insight into whether Operating personnel are aware of the current requirements regarding the frequency of ScoreCards.

Supervisors ranged from once/month to six/week in their performance of ScoreCards. Union members ranged from "never" to once/week on being the recipient of a ScoreCard.

Only 60% of the supervisors interviewed were certain of the current requirement of performing ten ScoreCards per crew per month. For union members, 83% were unaware of this requirement.

The answers provided here indicate:

- Supervisors inconsistently employ the ScoreCard Program.
- The ScoreCard Program is inconsistently applied to the union members.
- The ScoreCard Program expectations are not well communicated.

**Data Summary
(continued)**

Is coaching a normal part of the ScoreCard process and is it done effectively?

All of those interviewed indicated that a coaching session is performed following every ScoreCard observation. The typical coaching session was described as a brief meeting in which the supervisor first provided positive aspects of what was observed and then discusses any areas of weakness. Both union members and supervisors find value in these sessions, indicating they are being performed effectively.

What are the greatest benefits of the ScoreCard Program?

Benefit	%	Comments
Sharing of knowledge	25	Improves the expertise between union and management, and between crews.
Communications & Feedback	38	Improves rapport between union and management and encourages good operating practices
Identifies weaknesses	25	Improves performance by noting deficiencies and identifies procedure inadequacies.
Increases in-plant time	6	Forces supervisors to spend more time in the plant with operators.
Ownership of the plant	6	Supervisors and operators taking responsibility for improving performance, procedures and equipment.

The vast majority of the comments (88%) suggest that the ScoreCard Program is effectively being utilized as a tool to identify areas of weakness and create a format in which those weaknesses can be communicated and corrected. An additional benefit of the Program has been realized in the process of sharing information regarding plant operations and how this has improved the overall expertise of the operating crews.

Data Summary (continued)

What are the shortfalls of the ScoreCard Program?

Shortfall	%	Comments
Effects of quota	40	Quality suffers and scheduling is erratic when number required is high.
Documentation	20	Time required to document detracts from effectiveness, and day-to-day coaching is not captured
Skewed view	13	Most performed during quiet moments, and operators perform better when observed.
Punitive image	13	Has been used inappropriately in past, so not trusted now.
Too few & inconsistent	7	A good program, but not used enough and seems to focus on select operators.
Focus is slanted	7	Operators observing operators may miss the obvious; may focus only on technical aspects.

The most commonly identified detriment to the Program was the effect that a prescribed "unrealistic" quota had on the quality of the ScoreCards being performed. At one time the quota had been 3/supervisor/day, resulting in very poor quality. The quota currently is 10/crew/month (averages 2/supervisor/month) and the current quality is generally very good. Since most supervisors now easily exceed their quota, they are encouraged by their success and are more favorable toward the program.

In the past (with the higher quota) the documentation of ScoreCards was very time consuming. The documentation is still considered to be somewhat cumbersome. There is also the opinion that coaching is performed as part of the supervisors' normal day-to-day activities, but these activities are not being captured by the ScoreCard process.

An interesting shortfall is that the ScoreCards may not provide a realistic view of operator performance. This is due to two factors. First, most are performed when there is time to do them – during slow moments – rather than when things are more stressful. And second, people tend to perform better when they are being observed.

Data Summary (continued)

What changes should be made to the ScoreCard Program?

The responses given can be divided into three general areas:

Change of format
- Simplify the ScoreCard forms.
- Expand the scope to include potentially overlooked areas
- Maintain ScoreCards current with procedure revisions

Change of use
- Use more as a coaching tool than an evaluative instrument
- Have union members observe union members
- Have union members observe supervisors
- Have individual evaluate self prior to supervisor's feedback

Change of implementation
- Place a higher priority on ScoreCard Program
- Perform on a more consistent frequency
- Perform on a uniform sample of operators
- Perform during busy periods

The consensus is that the ScoreCards are viewed as a valuable tool, if it can be given the attention needed in order for it to be properly used. The changes suggested indicate that what is desired is for the tool to be improved upon and taken seriously in order to help the operators help themselves.

How committed is the workforce to the success of the ScoreCard Program?

Each interviewee was asked, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how committed are you to making the ScoreCard program work (with 1 being throw it out with the bath water, and 10 being totally devoted to its success)?

The average rating of the supervisors was 7.5. Most had a very positive view of the concepts associated with the Program, but had reservations with its implementation.

The average rating of the union members was 3.75, exactly half that of the supervisors. The union members also indicated that they saw value in the concept, but they were concerned with how it has been implemented and extremely wary of its future use.
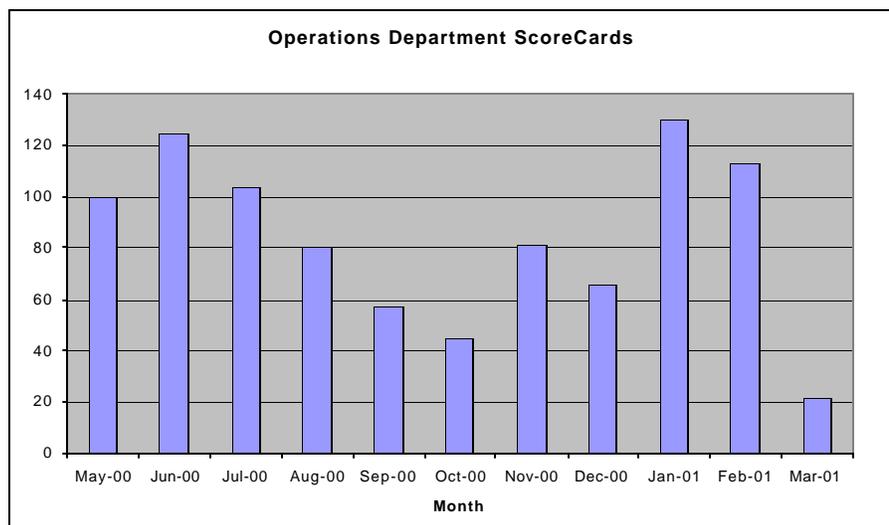
Data Summary (continued)

Review of past year (2000) Operating Department ScoreCard data.

The Operating Department experienced several organizational transitions during 2000 which had a negative impact upon the success of the ScoreCard Program, including:

- The SOS was replaced. This affected the expectations of the program and its consistency.
- The Operating Department ScoreCard administrator position was eliminated. This impacted the ability to review and analyze ScoreCard data.
- The two non-licensed operator job classifications were combined. This impacted management and union relations, impacting the program implementation.
- A large group of new operators were assigned to the plant. This impacted the time commitment of supervisors.
- The plant conducted a refueling outage. This affected the ability of all involved to meet imposed quotas for the program.

The above information is provided because when reviewing the ScoreCard data it helps to understand the state of the organization being analyzed. The vast majority of the ScoreCards performed in 2000 simply provided comments such as "Good job" or "No problems noted." Fewer than 5% contained what would be considered meaningful comments. A meaningful comment records a specific strength or weakness and describes the coaching performed to address these.

The most significant revelation gained from this review is that the ScoreCards were not consistently being utilized effectively as a tool for improving the performance of operators in 2000. It is important to note that this does not mean that operators were not being coached and improvements made, only that the documentation of this effort was not well properly recorded.
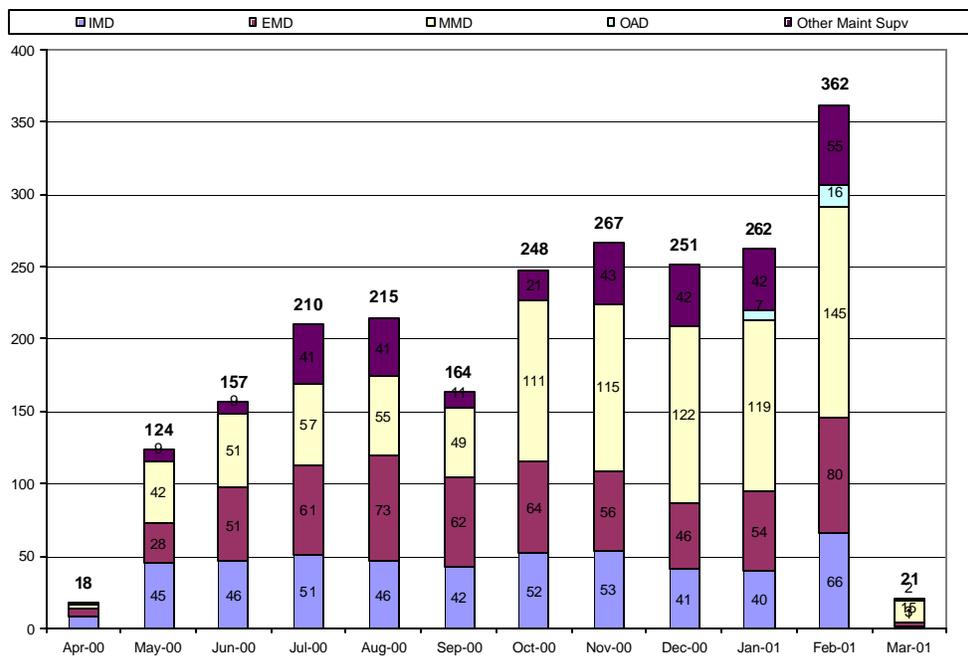

7

Data Summary (continued)

Review of past 3 months of Maintenance Department ScoreCard data.

Prior to reviewing this data, the Maintenance Department ScoreCard Program administrator was interviewed. This individual collects all Maintenance ScoreCards, reviews the comments, trends areas of weakness, and provides a monthly report to the Maintenance supervisors. This information is then disseminated to the work groups as a means of improving performance.

The Maintenance Department is in the process of simplifying the documentation requirements associated with in-the-field ScoreCard observations. The forms to be used will be pocket-sized and formatted for Scantron scoring and database entry.

Approximately 75% of the ScoreCards reviewed for the Maintenance Department contained a meaningful comment. The comments related to personnel performance (both good and bad), equipment condition, procedure inadequacies, or suggestions for enhancements.

The chart below shows the number of ScoreCards performed by all disciplines of the Maintenance from April of 2000 through February of 2001.

Recommendations	**To improve the effectiveness of the ScoreCard Program for improving operator performance:**

Administration
- Formalize the ScoreCard goals and expectations and then ensure entire department understands them
- Re-institute the position of ScoreCard Program administrator and have that individual coordinate with peer in Maintenance Department
- Evaluate ScoreCard content and format, then revise as needed with input from the line
- Consider periodic cross-departmental ScoreCards

Implementation
- Develop a means of ensuring ScoreCards are evenly distributed among the operators
- Evaluate whether ScoreCards are providing a skewed image and correct, if possible
  · Mainly easy tasks observed
  · Performed only during quiet times
- Adjust ScoreCard quota requirements as plant conditions vary
  · Fewer during outage periods

Training
- Utilize supervisors who excel in coaching to observe and mentor those needing improvement
- Have SOS or ScoreCard Program administrator present training session to all members of department
  · Goals
  · Expectations
  · Answer questions

Evaluation	To evaluate the effectiveness of the ScoreCard Program after recommendations are implemented, the following activities will be performed:

- Review ScoreCards performed during subsequent quarter
  · Content and format changes
  · Comment improvements
  · Evaluate operator distribution
  · Evaluate tasks distribution
- Survey operators
  · Understanding of goals and expectations
  · Supervisor mentoring
  · ScoreCard use and effectiveness