ABSTRACT

DIGGS, BYRON KENNETH. The Perceptions of Transfer Climate Factors in the Macro and Micro Organizational Work Environment. (Under the direction of Carol E. Kasworm.)

This qualitative study was designed to provide insight on the perceived transfer climate factors in the macro and micro organizational work environment that may influence an employee's willingness to transfer what was learned in a training program to the job. More specifically, the purpose of the study was to delineate descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors that may facilitate or inhibit people as they apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities, gained in a training program to the job setting. Transfer climate is not the work environment per se, but rather an interpretation through which the work environment affects job behaviors and attitudes. Within the construct of the work environment, the transfer climate will emerge which is the perception of factors either facilitating or inhibiting the use of trained skills back on the job. This case study examined the perceptions of managers and their employees who attended a sales training program. The sales training program was designed to teach the managers and their employees new selling techniques and skills that were to be used back on the job. Through this qualitative case study, the twenty-eight participants shared their perspectives in relation to the sales training program and how they perceived transfer climate factors as either facilitating or inhibiting the use of the new selling techniques and skills back on the job. The data was analyzed using constant comparative analysis which allowed categories to emerge as the study participants shared their perceptions of the transfer climate factors in the work environment that either facilitated or inhibited
the transfer of training. The study participants’ perceptions of the transfer climate in relation to the sales training program were presented in the three key aspects of 1) background of trainee expectations, 2) perceptions of the macro organizational work environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained skills, and 3) perceptions of the micro organizational work environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job. This study concluded that a) the study participants expressed specific beliefs and expectations for attending the training that influenced their willingness to use the sales training skills back on the job, b) the study participants identified several macro environment factors, to include: brand reputation, sense of pride, and job security as influencing their willingness to learn and apply the sales training skills back on the job, and c) the study participants identified several micro environment factors, to include: supervisor support, peer support, opportunity to use, reward for performance, and task constraints as either facilitating or inhibiting their willingness to use the sales training skills on the job.
Perception of Transfer Climate Factors in the Macro and Micro Organizational Work Environment

by
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Organizations spend significant amounts of money on training and development activities in belief that the knowledge and skills gained in the training will improve their employees' performance and therefore the organization’s productivity. Even in the face of economic uncertainty, globalization, and competition, most organizations have invested in formal training for their employees in hopes of having this training investment reciprocated through improved performance and competitive advantage (Awoniyi, Griego, & Morgan, 2002).

In 2006, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) in their *State of the Industry Report*, posits that as business leaders focus on top-line growth, the value of learning is becoming better understood and more relevant. Those leaders who understand how to drive business results in an increasingly competitive, global environment recognize that a better-trained workforce improves performance, and investing in employee learning and development is critical to achieving success (Paradise & Rivera, 2006). In the report, the American Society for Training and Development estimated that U.S. organizations spend $109.25 billion dollars on employee learning and development annually, with nearly three quarters ($79.75 billion) spent on the internal learning function, and the remainder ($29.50 billion) spend on external services (Paradise & Rivera, 2006). With such a sizable investment dedicated to training, business leaders are challenged with measuring its
efficiency, effectiveness, and alignment with organizational strategies. More importantly, the business leaders are asked to justify the value and effectiveness of training.

In a more recent study, the 2009, American Society for Training and Development, *State of the Industry Report*, Paradise (2009) reports that despite the worse economic conditions in several decades, business leaders continued to allocate substantial resources to the learning functions (training) in their organizations. ASTD estimates that U.S. organizations spent $134.07 billion dollars on employee learning (training) and development in 2008. While many organizations were forced to cut expenses in all areas of business, including training and development, others maintained a strong financial commitment to employee learning.

In addition to the dollar investment by organizations, other factors play a significant role in terms of investment. Specifically those factors are: 1) time away from the job to attend training seminars or conferences, 2) travel expenses which includes lodging, 3) cost of replacement or overtime cost while an employee is attending the training, 4) technology investments for just-in-time training, and 5) the unknown impact of transfer of climate on the employee's ability to transfer what has been learned in training into the job situation.

The purpose of employee learning [training] and development is to enable employees to acquire new knowledge, skills, and behaviors that will be used in the job setting. However, Broad and Newstrom (1992) posit that “most of the investment in organizational training and development is wasted because most of the knowledge
and skills gained in training (well over 80% by some estimates) is not fully applied by those employees on the job” (p. ix). Holton, Bates, Bookter, and Yamkovenko (2007) state, “…transfer of learning is necessary to build intellectual capital in organizations” (p.414). Thus, the challenge for organizational training and development professionals is to effectively design, implement, and evaluate transfer strategies to facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities from the classroom to the job.

Significant research investigations have demonstrated that transfer of training is complex and involves multiple factors and is affected by a system of influences (Holton & Baldwin, 2003). In a review of the literature on the transfer of training, it was found that a significant amount of extant research focuses on trainee characteristics and design factors (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). However, significantly less had been done to understand how: 1) transfer climate [work context factors] influences transfer of training, 2) transfer-related factors present themselves in organizations, and 3) transfer-related factors can be effectively changed or managed (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004). Furthermore, there is a gap in the transfer of training literature that does not provide understanding and meaning of the perceived factors in the work environment that influence transfer of training. By filling that gap in the literature with research that delineates the descriptive patterns and understandings of the perceived transfer climate factors in the work environment, that either facilitates or inhibits the transfer of training, training practitioners and human resources development professionals can more effectively design, implement, and evaluate training programs. In order for business leaders and, specifically, training and
development and human resource professionals to justify the continued invest in employee learning [training] and development; they must both understand and be able to create a transfer climate that effectively impacts an employees’ ability to use the new knowledge, skills, and abilities back on the job.

**Conceptual Framework**

According to several researchers, the transfer climate greatly affects learning transfer (Baldwin & Holton, 2003; Baumgartel, Reynolds, & Pathan, 1984; Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanagh, 1995). Transfer climate can be regarded as perceptions describing characteristics of the work environment that may facilitate or inhibit the use of trained skills (Baldwin & Holton, 2003). The transfer climate is not the work environment per se, but rather the interpretation through which the work environment affects job behaviors and attitudes. In other words, the work environment is the work setting where all work-related behavior takes place from occupational choice to performance on the job. It is where social interactions take place in work groups. Within the construct of the work environment, the transfer climate will emerge which is the perception of factors either facilitating or inhibiting the use of trained skills back on the job. Some researchers have used the term “transfer climate” to represent the social supports from the organization such as supervisory and peer support (Cheng & Ho, 2001). Other types of support include subordinate and top management (Facteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995). Transfer climate has also been defined in the literature as work environment factors the trainee perceives as
encouragement or discouragement in the use of knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in training on the job (Cromwell & Kolb, 2002). The transfer climate can include immediate supervisor’s influence, the nature of the employee’s attitudes toward training, and the extent of formal training policies and practices that exist to support training initiatives. In summary, transfer climate includes: supervisory support, supervisor sanctions, opportunity to use, peer support, and reward and recognition. Transfer climate may, therefore, be described as either supportive (favorable, positive) or unsupportive (unfavorable, negative) in relation to these characteristics (Baldwin & Holton, 2003).

The transfer climate factors was the focus of this research and transfer climate defines the conceptual framework. Transfer climate highlights the variables in the work environment that either inhibit or help to facilitate the transfer of training. Holton, Bates, Seyler, and Carvalho, (1997, p.97) describe transfer climate as a “sense of imperative” that arises from a person’s perception of the work environment, and that influences the extent to which a person applies learned skills to the job. Transfer climate is seen as the mediating variable in the relationship between the organizational context and an individual’s job attitudes and work behavior (Holton, Ruona, & Leimbach, 1998). Hence, when learning occurs in training, the transfer climate may either support or inhibit application of the learning on the job. For example, if a manager attends training on sexual harassment and applies the principles learned but the organizational culture does not value anti-sexual
harassment principles then, the transfer climate will inhibit the application of learning on the job.

Yorks (2005) posits the transfer climate is made up of many cues learners receive when they return to work from training that support their new skills back on the job. These cues can include reminders from supervisors to use the new skills, providing opportunities to use the new skills, and other influential behaviors from supervisors and peers in support of the learning. The way the work itself is designed and feedback from others are also important factors in the transfer climate.

Moreover, Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) offer a conceptual framework for operationalizing transfer climate. They defined transfer climate as those situational cues and consequences cues that either inhibit or help to facilitate the transfer of what has been learned in training into the job setting. Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) suggest that transfer climate consists of two types of workplace cues: 1) situational cues and 2) consequence cues. Within each of the workplace cues, they suggest four types of dimensions. The first set of workplace cues, situational cues, remind trainees of their training or provide them with opportunities to use their training when they return to work. They suggest four types of situational cues: 1) goal cues – these cues serve to remind trainees to use their training when they return to their jobs, 2) social cues – these cues arise from group membership and include the behavior and influence process exhibited by supervisors, peers, and subordinates, 3) task cues – these cues are concerned with the design and nature of the job itself, and 4) self-
control cues – these cues refer to a various self-control processes that permit trainees to use what they have learned.

The second set of workplace cues, consequence cues, occur as trainees return to their jobs and begin applying their learned behavior; they encounter consequences that affect their use of what they have learned. They suggest four types of consequences cues: 1) positive feedback – these cues occur when trainees are given positive feedback about their use of trained behavior, 2) negative feedback – these cues occur when trainees are informed of the negative consequences of not using their learned behavior, 3) punishment – these cues occur when trainees are punished for using training behaviors, and 4) no feedback – these cues occur when no information is given to the trainees about the use or importance of the learned behavior (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993).

Finally, Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) hypothesized that the more positive the [organizational] transfer climate, the more likely it is that trainees will transfer key behaviors to the job that were learned in the training program. In their conceptual model, transfer climate is seen as a mediating variable in the relationship between the organizational context and an individual's attitude toward the job and work behavior (Bates, Holton, & Seyler, 1996; Holton, Bates, Seyler, & Carvalho, 1997). Hence, they suggest that the [organizational] transfer climate may be a tool that should be investigated as a potential facilitator for enhancing positive transfer of training into the work environment.
Problem Statement

Transfer of training does not occur in isolation, but rather in a dynamic work environment. Once trainees return back to their jobs, the pressures of day-to-day demands may push them back into old habits and behavior patterns. If employees do not transfer the knowledge and skills they have acquired from training back on the job, then neither the employee nor the organization will benefit (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999). It follows, then, that the skills and performance of people are critical. It is estimated that the extent to which learning typically is transferred into performance range from 5 to 20 percent (Broad, 2000). Thus the evaluation of training must demonstrate improved performance and determine what factors in the work environment are either facilitating or inhibiting the transfer of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from the classroom to the job setting. Past research confirms that the work environment can support or discourage learners to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills (Tannebaum & Yukl, 1992). More importantly, elements of the learners’ work environment may impact their ability to transfer learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job. One conceptualization of the influence of the work environment variables on the transfer of training to the job is through a transfer climate (Bates et al., 1996). Transfer climate refers to an individual’s perceptions about a defined set of organization elements, such as policies, rewards, and managerial behaviors. In effect, [transfer] climate emerges from aspects of the organizational context that individual employees perceive to be important and influential to their work (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005). Furthermore,
transfer climate refers to an individual’s perception about characteristics of the work environment that facilities or inhibits the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job (Holton et al., 1997; Tracey et al., 1995).

Several studies concur that transfer climate can significantly influence an individual’s ability and motivation to transfer learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job (Ford, Quinones, Sego, & Sorra, 1992; Mathieu, Tannebaum, & Salas, 1992; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey et al., 1995). However, few studies address the issue of employees’ perceptions of the transfer climate. More importantly, little research has attempted to provide descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors that may facilitate or inhibit people as they apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in a training program to the job. There is a need to know more about the mechanics of this transfer process and how to increase application of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from the classroom to the job. There is a need for human resource professionals and training and development professionals to know more about the transfer climate factors so they can effectively design, implement, and evaluate training programs. This study will address both needs by expanding the body of knowledge on transfer climate. Specifically, how the transfer climate is perceived by the trainees to influence the transfer of training.

**Research Questions**

This research will explore transfer climate factors that are perceived by the program trainees to facilitate or inhibit understanding and application of the
knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in a training program to their job. The research questions are as follows:

1. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as facilitating (supports, favorable, positive) the use of trained skills back on the job. How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

2. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as inhibiting (unsupportive, unfavorable, negative) the use of trained skills back on the job. How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

**Significance for Research and Practice**

To be effective managers and human resource professionals, there is a need to create a climate that fosters learning transfer from training programs. The transfer climate is identified as one of the key areas of research that will help practitioners identify and understand factors that may impact transfer of training. In fact, according to Baldwin and Ford (1988) practitioners stress the importance of the work environment in creating a positive transfer climate. Additionally, Tracey et al. (1995), state that the work [transfer] climate is a critical condition in determining whether employees [trainees] apply skills on the job after training. What is needed is further investigation of transfer climate as a potential facilitator for enhancing positive transfer of training into the work environment (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). For
example, while research suggests that supervisor support is an important component affecting transfer, there has been limited research to identify and understand the supervisor behaviors that lead to perceptions of support by trainees.

Hence, the findings of this study will delineate descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors which may facilitate or inhibit the use of trained skills back on the job. Specifically, this study provides perceptions of trainee expectations of attending a training program, transfer climate factors in the macro organizational work environment, and transfer climate factors in the micro organizational work environment. More importantly, this study will add to the body of knowledge by providing descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors that are perceived to affect transfer of training. Finally, for training practitioners and human resources development professionals, it will provide information to help identify organizational transfer climate factors that may either inhibit or facilitate the transfer of training.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is no question that transfer of learning is a formidable challenge for organizations. Current research suggest that only 10 percent of learning transfers into job performance (although there is little empirical basis for this claim) and reports from the field suggest that a substantial part of organizations’ investment in human resource development is wasted due to poor learning transfer (Baldwin & Holton, 2003). Since Baldwin and Ford's (1988) review of the literature over a decade ago, considerable progress has been made in understanding factors affecting the influence of transfer. This study will build on that foundation of progress and expand the literature by providing a descriptive analysis of transfer climate factors that either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of learning. Specifically, this study will examine the transfer climate factors from the perspective of managers and their employees who attend training and are immediately required to transfer the new knowledge, skills, and abilities to the workplace. Thus, this study will expand the literature by providing descriptive patterns and understandings of perceived macro and micro organizational environment transfer climate factors from the perspective of managers and employees in their natural setting. Baldwin and Burke (1999) call for training researchers to consider the effect of climate in ongoing research, stating, “much of prior training research could be subject to re-interpretation if contextual factors and trainee perceptions had been measured and reported. This does not mean
abandoning the core of training research but it does mean more careful attention to the variables that have been ignored or controlled for” (p.237).

The purposes of this literature review are to provide an understanding of the history and relevant studies related to transfer of training, to lay the theoretical groundwork for transfer of training by reviewing the models of training and their components, and finally, to examine the importance of each of the transfer climate factors.

**Overview of Literature**

This overview of the literature will provide a brief historical review of the literature to demonstrate that transfer of training has been an interest of training professionals for more than forty-five years. According to Broad and Newstrom (1992), Edwin Fleishman, Edwin Harris, and Harold Burtt conducted one of the first formal transfer of training research studies in 1955. They measured the changes in behavior of International Harvester foremen who completed a leadership principle and techniques course. The foremen demonstrated desired behavior change back on the job immediately following the training. However, over time most of the foremen reverted back to their old habits and behaviors. The desired changes in behavior stayed only with a few foremen: those whose supervisors themselves consistently demonstrated the desired leadership principles and techniques (Broad & Newstrom, 1992).
Two years after the International Harvester study, James Mosel identified three conditions for transfer of training to occur. One of the three conditions was the trainee must be motivated to change job behavior to apply what was learned. Mosel noted, motivation to apply what was learned was the most difficult behavior because it required incentives and deterrents in the job situation and these are under management’s control (Broad & Newstrom, 1992).

Since Mosel’s research, Baldwin and Ford (1988) conducted a twenty-year review of the literature that dates from 1967 to 1987. In their review, they examined seven studies that researched the relationship of the work environment characteristics to transfer of training.

Similarly, Cheng and Ho (2001) conducted a review of the literature, which covered a time period of 1989 to 1998. Cheng and Ho note that recent empirical research on work environment variables have focused on supports-in-organization, continuous-learning culture, and task constraints. As a result of their research, Cheng and Ho argue that research on transfer of training has done little to help the practitioner. They further argued that for practical applications more efforts should be dedicated to studying the relationships between work environment factors with learning and transfer (Cheng & Ho, 1992).

**Relevant Studies**

A closer review of the literature reveals a focused study of the work environment. According to several researchers the work environment greatly affects
learning transfer (Baumgartel et al., 1984; Ford et al., 1992; Holton, 1996; Huczynski & Lewis, 1980; Tracey et al., 1995). More specifically, several factors have been identified that affect the relationship between work environment and learning transfer. Tizner, Haccoun, and Kadish (1991) identified three factors that affect individual employees' relationship with their managers. These factors include feedback or performance coaching activities used to encourage the use of learning on the job, amount of support employee receive for using new learning, and the extent to which managers actively promote or oppose using new knowledge and expertise. Xiao (1996) identified two factors that affect the work group: 1) support peers provide for using new learning, and 2) the extent to which the group norm is open to change. Finally, two factors address the reward system: the extent to which the outcomes for the person are positive or negative (Holton, 2000).

In addition, Tracey et al. (1995) posit the work environment is a critical condition in determining whether employees [trainees] apply skills on the job after training. The employees' perceptions of supervisory support in terms of discussing learning goals, listening to and championing new ideas, and allowing for experimentation are all factors that increase learning transfer (Huczynski & Lewis, 1980). Noe (1986) reported that environmental favorability and increased learning transfer are positively correlated. Furthermore, Ford et al. (1992) discovered that when employees described their immediate work groups as supportive they performed more complex and difficult task more easily.
Roullier and Golstein (1993) reported that in locations with more positive transfer climates (as rated by managerial coworkers at each location) employees demonstrated significantly more trained behaviors and functioned more effectively on the job. From this study, they developed a conceptual framework for transfer climate consisting of two general types of workplace cues: situational and consequence. Situational cues are those that remind employees [trainees] of what they have learned or provide the opportunity for them to use what they have learned. Conversely, consequences cues are those on-the-job outcomes that affect the extent to which training is transferred (Baldwin & Holton, 2003).

Tracey et al. (1995) replicated this study and expanded on it using thirty-three items from Roullier and Goldstein’s (1993) instrument and twenty four others items designed to measure continuous learning culture. Drawing on data gathered from more than five hundred supermarket managers from more than fifty stores, the researchers found similar results to Rouiller and Goldstein. Tracey et al. concluded from the research that transfer climate and a continuous learning culture were directly related to post-training transfer effectiveness by way of demonstrating learned behaviors.

Finally, Burke and Baldwin (1999) reported that a supporting [positive] transfer climate is a key variable in training effectiveness. They found immediate work group climate to be such a strong indicator of transfer effectiveness that the impact of their core hypothesis (relapse prevention) would have been missed had they not included transfer climate in the study (Baldwin & Holton, 2003).
Transfer Climate

One conceptualization of the influence of the work environment variables on the transfer of training to the job is through a transfer climate (Bates et al., 1996). The transfer climate is defined as those situational cues and consequences that either inhibit or help to facilitate the transfer of what was learned in training into the job situation (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). Additionally, transfer climate has been defined in the literature as work environment factors the trainee perceives as encouragement or discouragement in their use of knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in training to the job (Cromwell & Kolb, 2002). The transfer climate is not the work environment per se, but rather the interpretation through which the work environment affects job behaviors and attitudes. Schneider and Rentsch (1988) argue that transfer climate is described as a “sense of imperative” that arises from a person’s perception of the work environment, and that influences the extent to which a person applies learned skills to the job (Holton et al., 1997). Bates and Khasawneh (2005) purport in their research that climate refers to an individual’s perceptions about a defined set of organizational elements, such as policies, rewards, and managerial behaviors. In effect, climate emerges from aspects of the organizational context that individual employees perceive to be important and influential in their work. Therefore, climate is seen as a more salient feature of an organization to the degree that different beliefs and meanings influence individual expectations, perceptions, and interpretations of the organizational environment that have a major impact on behavior (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005).
Furthermore, transfer climate refers to an individual’s perception about characteristics of the work environment that facilitate or inhibit the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities, to the job (Holton et al., 1997; Tracey et al., 1995). Even when learning occurs during a training program, the transfer climate may either support, inhibit, or prevent its application on the job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Mathieu et al., 1992; Tannebaum & Yukl, 1992). Several studies concur that transfer climate can significantly influence an individual’s ability and motivation to transfer learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job (Cromwell & Kolb, 2002; Ford et al., 1992; Mathieu et al., 1992; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey et al., 1995).

**Transfer of Training Models**

Models commonly serve as a framework for which a final, usually larger, object is constructed (Garavaglia, 1996). The study of transfer of training models serves as an effective way to organize knowledge sources, stimulate understanding, and help performance professionals analyze the transfer process. This section of the study will present transfer of training models that are relevant to transfer climate factors in the work environment. It is important to analyze the models because they provide a clear understanding of what is meant by transfer as well as the identification of transfer climate factors that affect transfer. More importantly, the models for transfer of training are designed to help performance professionals analyze and understand transfer problems in their organizations and provide insight for selecting appropriate interventions for those problems (Garavaglia, 1996).
Baldwin & Ford's Model of Transfer

In order to examine the transfer of training models, one must start with Baldwin and Ford (1988) because their model is probably one of the most influential of all models and has attracted a lot of empirical studies. Baldwin and Ford (1988) created a model as a framework for understanding the transfer process.
From Baldwin & Ford (1988, p. 65)

Figure 2.1. Model of the Transfer Process
In Figure 2.1, the transfer process is described in terms of training-input factors, training outcomes, and conditions of transfer. Training-input factors include training design, trainee characteristics, and work environment characteristics. Training outcomes are defined as the amount of original learning that occurs during the training program and the retention of that material after the program is completed. The conditions of transfer include both the generalization of material learned in training to the job context and maintenance of the learned material over a period of time on the job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). The major training-design factors are the incorporation of three factors: 1) the incorporation of learning principles, 2) the sequencing of training materials, and 3) the job relevance of the training content. In addition, trainee characteristics consist of ability or skill, motivation, and personality factors. Work environment characteristics include climatic factors such as supervisory or peer support as well as constraints and opportunities to perform learned behaviors on the job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). More importantly, trainee characteristics and work environment characteristics are hypothesized to have direct effects on transfer regardless of initial learning during the training program or retention of the training material (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). All three sets of training input features (trainee characteristics, training design, and work environment) are seen as affecting learning and retention which directly influence generalization and maintenance (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001).

Baldwin and Ford’s transfer of training model is probably the most influential of all models because the framework has attracted a lot of empirical studies to
investigate how individual characteristics, job attitudes, and work environment affect the transfer of training process (Facteau et al., 1995; Ford et al., 1992; Mathieu et al., 1992; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991; Tracey et al., 1995; Tziner, Haccoun, & Kadish, 1991). While Baldwin and Ford’s model highlights the importance of such training inputs as trainees characteristics, training design, and work environment, they further concluded that the samples, tasks, designs, and criteria used in the extant literature have limited the understanding of the transfer process (Noe & Ford, 1992). Some researchers have written updated reviews (e.g. Ford and Weissbein, 1997; Noe and Ford, 1992; Tannebaum and Yukl, 1992) intending to extend the work of Baldwin and Ford (1988).

In addition, other researchers (e.g. Holton, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Noe, 1986) have adopted alternative views on the transfer process (Tannenbaum et al., 1991). For example, Holton (1996) provided a conceptual evaluation model of training focused on individual performance. The issue at hand was learning is of little value to organizations unless it is transferred in some way to performance. Holton’s (1996) model proposes three primary outcomes to training interventions: learning, individual performance, and organizational results. Similarly, Kirkpatrick (1998) posits training effectiveness should be evaluated on four major levels: trainee reactions, learning, behavior change, and organizational results.

While this study recognizes the value of Baldwin and Ford’s transfer of training model, this researcher believes there are other models that warrant review because they relate directly to the transfer climate factors that impact the transfer of training.
Traditional approaches to transfer of training tend to consider it as a horizontal link between training and performance. In fact, all three sets of the training input factors posited by Baldwin and Ford are seen as affecting learning and retention which directly influence generalization (learning that is applied to task or jobs not originally anticipated by the training) and maintenance (repeating and maintaining learned performance). However, a significant purpose of training and development is to improve performance (Swanson, 1995). Learning is of little value to organizations unless it is transferred in some way to performance (Holton et al., 1997).

Holton’s Model of Transfer

As a result of the emphasis on performance, Holton (1996) provided a conceptual evaluation model of training focused on individual performance. This model proposes three primary outcomes of training intervention: learning, individual performance, and organizational results (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). The outcomes are defined respectively as: a) achievement of the learning outcome in an HRD intervention, b) change in individual performance as a result of learning being applied on the job, and c) results at the organizational level as a consequence of change in individual performance (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001).
Figure 2.2. Holton’s Factors Affecting Transfer of Training
In addition, Holton’s transfer of training model suggests that three crucial factors affect transfer of training: a) motivation to transfer, b) transfer climate, and c) transfer design (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). In summary, individual performance is at the core of Holton’s transfer of training model. Learning is expected to lead to individual performance change when the three primary influences (motivation to transfer, transfer climate, and transfer design) are at appropriate levels (Holton, 1996; Yamnill & Mclean, 2001).

Additionally, at the heart of Holton’s model is motivation to transfer. Motivation to transfer was hypothesized in Holton’s (1996) model to connect learning with individual performance change. Trainees leave training programs with different levels of motivation to use their learning on the job. According to Holton (1996), influences on transfer motivation fall into four categories: intervention fulfillment, learning outcomes, job attitudes, and expected utility.

**Intervention fulfillment.** Intervention fulfillment refers to the extent to which training meets or fulfills training expectations and desires. Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, and Connon-Bowers (1991) conducted a rigorous study and found that training fulfillment played a significant role in understanding training motivation. Training motivation was similar to motivation to transfer because it is a measure of the trainee’s perception of the relationship between training success and future job performance (Holton, 1996). If individuals perceive that what they learn is relevant to their goal (what they need to know) or an intervention has met their expectations and
fulfilled their need for performance related learning, they will be more motivated to
transfer learning into job performance (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001).

**Learning outcomes.** Tannenbaum et al., (1991) found that performance
during training had an independent relationship with post training motivation. More
successful learners would be expected to feel better able to perform and therefore,
more motivated to be transfer. In contrast, less successful learners would be
expected to be less motivated to transfer learning (Holton, 1996).

**Job attitudes.** Noe and Schmitt (1986) investigated the relationship between
training transfer and trainees’ attitudes concerning jobs, careers, and participation in
the training program. Results of the study suggest that job involvement and career
planning are antecedents of learning and behavior change. Tannenbaum et al.,
(1991) also found that participants with more positive job attitudes would be expected
to be more motivated to transfer learning to performance.

**Expected utility or payoff.** Clark, Dobbins, and Ladd (1993) found that
trainees who perceived training to have more job and career utility were more
motivated.

In summary, motivation to transfer was hypothesized in Holton’s (1996) model
to connect learning with individual performance change. However, critics of Holton’s
model (1996) state that the model needs theories and a conceptual framework to
explain: 1) why people desire to change their performance after attending a training
program, 2) what training design contributes to people’s ability to transfer skills
successfully, and 3) what kind of organizational environment supports people as they
apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in a training program to their job (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). This study will discuss several theories of human behavior to help explain and clarify the motivation to transfer factor in Holton’s model later in chapter 2.

**Foxon’s Transfer Model**

Dissimilar to Holton’s (1996) model but equally important is Foxon’s (1994) model of transfer. Foxon’s (1994) model based on Lewin’s theory of force field analysis (Figure 2.3) supports the conceptual framework of this research. It situates training within the organizational system treating transfer not as a training product or outcome but as a process subject to various inhibiting and facilitating factors.
Figure 2.3. Foxon’s Transfer Model.

From: Foxon, M. (1994, p.2)
In addition, Foxon (1994) posits that the training environment cannot replicate or incorporate the organizational system pressures and factors that influence trainees to revert to their former work habits and forget about the training applications; “at best the training environment is only an approximation of the application environment” (Foxon, 1994, p.3). Moreover, trainers do little to equip learners with techniques and skills to facilitate transfer. Consequently, when learners return to the job a variety of organizational pressures may function to inhibit transfer. For example, learners usually lack the time and motivation to think through how and where to apply the training and the pressure to be productive forces them back into their habitual ways of behaving.

**Organizational Climate**

Although it is important to identify the factors that affect transfer of training by reviewing relevant transfer models, it is equally important to understand how the organizational environment supports or inhibits the transfer of training. According to Kozlowski and Salas (1997), the need for change, the implementation of interventions, and the transfer of trained skills are embedded within the context of work team, subunit, and organization levels. In addition, Koslowski and Salas (1997) propose an organization theory that benefits from the application of concepts drawn from systems-oriented theories. Their theory argues that organizations are open to external environmental influences, subsystem events are embedded in the larger systems context or network of relations, and it is impossible to understand complex
events in the systems by reducing them to their individual elements (Kozlowski & Salas, 1997).

Koslowski and Salas (1997) purport an organization theory that enhances the identification of tangible work environment characteristics. Contextual factors exert an influence on individual responses through their perceptions of the organizational environment (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). In other words, important, tangible, and meaningful work environment factors (structure, reward systems, or decision autonomy) are stimuli that underlie perceptions of the context. Therefore, preparing individuals to accept training-induced change and encouraging them to express their new capabilities in the work environment require training that is delivered at the appropriate level and is congruent with contextual supports (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). In summary, Kozlowski and Salas assert that if a context does not support or actively discourages the use of new skills prior to the implementation of training, it is unlikely that trainees will be motivated to learn (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). For example, if a trainee is sent to a course on coaching for performance training yet the organizational context is one of top-down autocratic management style, the organizational context itself will cause the trainee not to be motivated to transfer what was learned in the training. Therefore, it is important for organizations to understand and view transfer of training not as a training product or outcome but as process that is influenced by many variables. Training programs do not occur in isolation; they exist in a larger organizational context. One of the most important variables is the transfer climate.
Yamnill and Mclean (2001) state that transfer climate influences the extent to which a person can use the learned skills on the job.

**Theories on Motivation to Transfer**

In addition, it is important to understanding the training participants’ varying levels of motivation due to personal characteristics and factors in the work environment. In order to support the degree of transfer of training desired, it is important to understand why individuals choose to apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities in their workplace. Motivation to learn is extremely important because it prepares trainees to learn by heightening their attention and increasing their receptivity to new ideas. In this study, it will be important to consider those transfer climate factors that influence training participants’ motivation to learn.

Several theories of work motivation help to predict behaviors that contribute to performance at work, as well as clarify the motivation to transfer learned knowledge and skills from the classroom to the job. Three motivational theories will be discussed in this study: 1) expectancy, 2) equity, and 3) goal setting. Each of the theories provides a theoretical framework of human behavior to help understand and predict behaviors that contribute to performance at work. Additionally, each of the theories deals with the component of individual perception which cannot be ignored when determining transfer climate factors that either support or inhibit transfer of training. Training participants’ perception of their abilities and their experiences influence their levels of motivation to learn. Mathieu and Martineau (1997) suggest that trainees who
are motivated to learn have an advantage over those who do not have positive training related attitudes and expectations.

**Vroom’s Expectancy Theory**

Vroom’s (1964) expectancy theory was originally placed in the mainstream of contemporary motivation theory and is considered to be the most comprehensive explanation of motivation (Moorhead & Griffin, 1992; Robbins, 2000). “Expectancy theory argues that the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual” (Robbins, 2000, p.53). To put it differently, the strength of a person’s motivation to perform (effort) depends on how strongly he or she believes he or she can achieve what he or she attempts. If he or she achieves this goal (performance) will they be adequately rewarded? If he or she is rewarded by the organization will the reward satisfy his or her individual goals (Robbins, 2000)? Vroom’s (1964) theory emphasized an individual’s capacity or ability rather than willingness to perform a specific task. As a result, organizations must be aware that the rewards the organization is offering must align with what the employee wants. Hence, organizations should offer rewards to individuals that they value positively.

Perceptions and motivation are affected by both personal and transfer climate factors. Employees are motivated to learn if they perceive that the learning will benefit them in some way. Employees’ confidence that they will get what they want involves
three separate and distinct beliefs: 1) believing that they can perform well enough to get what is offered, 2) believing that they will get it if they perform well, and 3) believing that what is offered will be satisfying (Green, 1992). Expectancy theory suggests that individuals will be more motivated if they believe that their efforts will lead to enhanced performance. In expectancy theory, successful learners are expected to feel better able to perform and therefore, more motivated to transfer learning to the workplace.

**Equity Theory**

Equity theory, as a second theory of motivation, is based on the simple premise that people want to be treated fairly (Adams, 1963). The theory defines equity as the belief that employees are being treated fairly in relation to others, while inequity is defined as the belief that employees are being treated unfairly in relation to others (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). Vroom (1964) recognized that individuals seek equity in their jobs. Hence, job satisfaction reflects the extent to which rewards received match the rewards the employee believes should be received. Vroom also stated that the “greater the difference between the two amounts the greater the tension or disequilibrium experienced by the person” (p.168). In addition, equity theory is based on three main assumptions: 1) people develop beliefs about what constitutes a fair and equitable return for the contributions they make to their jobs, 2) people compare their own returns and contributions to those of others, and 3) beliefs about unfair treatment (inequity) create tension that motivates people to reduce that tension.
(Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). Lawson and Shen (1998) purport in their research that, it is clear that organizational members observe actions and associated consequences of other members and compare themselves to others and that the “perception” of equity is much more important than actual equity conditions. Noe (1986) explained the relationship between motivation to transfer and equity theory in the following manner, “if an individual feels that by attending training he or she is likely to gain equity in pay or other sought-after rewards, there is a greater chance that learning will occur, and such learning will transfer to the job” (p.55).

**Goal Setting Theory**

Finally, goal setting theory states that intentions expressed as goals can be a major source of work motivation. In fact, goal-setting theory suggests two cognitive determinants of behavior, that of intentions and values. Intentions are viewed as the immediate precursors of human behavior (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). Values are viewed a cognitive process that manifests itself in the choice or acceptance of intentions and subsequent commitment to those goals. In other words, goal setting is the recognition that training will affect workplace performance only if the training outcomes are consciously accepted by the trainee. A goal is the level of performance the individual is trying to accomplish: it is the object or aim of behavior (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). Difficult and specific goals direct attention and action and once an individual accepts a goal, the person will try (performance) until the goal is achieved or the goal is lowered or abandoned (Lawson & Shen, 1998). Therefore, goal setting
like expectancy theory may explain how and why behavior is facilitated or restrained in the pre-training, training, and post-training processes (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001).

Research further suggests that both goals and feedback are necessary to improve performance and that participation, incentives, and individual differences affect performance primarily through goal setting (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). The performance can result in two kinds of rewards: 1) intrinsic, which is an intangible (feeling of accomplishment) outcome, and 2) extrinsic, which is a tangible (pay, promotion) outcome. If individuals believe there is a link between training and rewards, then it is likely they will be enthusiastic about training and be willing to make an effort to acquire desired knowledge and skills (Tracey, Hinkin, Tannebaum, & Mathieu, 2001). In a study of a management development program for a hospital, Wexley and Nemeroff (1975) found that a treatment group assigned performance goals was significantly better at applying learned knowledge, skills and abilities than a control group for which no goals were assigned.

**Training Alignment with Corporate Strategy**

To further explore the transfer climate factors that either support or inhibit the transfer of training, this study examined the alignment of training programs with the strategic direction of the organization and its supports for training transfer.

Recent studies in training and development indicate that there has been a dramatic growth in dollars invested in training over the past two decades. Several human resources development scholars have explored the size of the investment in
training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Broad & Newstrom, 1992; Cheng & Ho, 1992, 2001). However, estimates suggest a low return on investment in training overall. Baldwin and Ford (1988) estimated that no more than 10 percent of these expenditures typically result in transfer to the job.

Some scholars and practitioners argue that human resources development professionals have emphasized much more state-of-the-art training delivery devices at the expense of the critical connection between training site and work environment that enhances transfer of training (Montesino, 2002). This disconnection seems also to permeate the link between training and organizational strategy in many organizations (Montesino, 2002). According to Woolfe (1993), strategic alignment describes the state in which the goals and activities of the business are in harmony with the systems that support them. Semler and Wognum (2000) posit two theoretical models of the connection between training and corporate strategy. Semler (2000) proposes a model of broader organizational alignment made up of eight components of the environment: visions-value-purpose, strategy, structure and systems, rewards, practices, behavior, and performance. Then Semler developed a questionnaire to measure the degree of organizational alignment. In Semler’s model, training is just one of the components of the organizational alignment (Montesino, 2002). Similarly, Wognum (2000) proposes a model that looks at three human resources development functions: 1) policymaking, 2) administration, and 3) implementation; as well as three levels of organizational problems: 1) strategic, 2) tactical, and 3) operational. Both Semler and Wognum (2000) tested their model
empirically, conducting their research in the United States and the Netherlands. The research results of Semler and Wognum revealed a low to moderate positive correlation between the perceived alignment of training with the strategic direction of the organization and the presence of practices to support usage of training.

More importantly, the research suggests that in subsequent training programs the company needs to pay close attention to linking its training programs with the company’s strategic direction in a way that is explicit, clearly communicated, and evident to trainees and their respective managers from the outset (Montesino, 2002). To support this position, the research reported finding a correlation between perceived alignment of training with the strategic direction of the organization. When the authors compared two groups of trainees, the group of trainees that self-reported very high usage of training perceived a significantly higher alignment of the training program with the strategic direction of the organization than did the group of trainees that self-reported low to high usage of training. The research by Semler and Wognum (2000) suggested that those trainees who saw more clearly the connection of the training program with the strategic direction of the organization were able to apply on the job skills they learned in the training program, in greater proportion, than were the trainees who did not see that connection clearly.

In a study conducted in 1992, Training Strategies found two organizational scenarios emerging as recurrent themes in the connection of training and corporate strategy. These two included: 1) the organization that integrates training into the strategic business planning and implementation processes and 2) the organization
that marginally inserts the training function into these processes (Montesino, 2002).
In scenario one, the human resource director sits at the strategic planning table and training activity connects through a strategic map to the strategic business goals. In contrast to scenario one, scenario two has a small select group of top officers formulate the corporate strategy. This strategy is then transmitted to the lower levels in the organization and translated into a training plan. The study conducted by Training Strategies provides evidence that there must be a link between training and corporate strategy if the work environment is to have a positive impact on transfer of training.

In addition, in the Training Strategy study, where alignment exists between training and corporate strategy, the transfer research consistently documents that work environment can influence worker ability and opportunity to perform learned behavior on the job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanaugh, 1995). Certain transfer climate factors in the work environment have been identified as facilitating or impeding transfer. Those factors commonly reported are management and collegial support, resources and technology to support transfer, timeliness of training, relevance of training, and potential application of training the job (Kupritz, 2002).

Organizational Factors Affecting Transfer

Additional research has documented the value of organizational reward processes to motivate transfer behavior (Bates, 2000; Kozlowski & Salas, 1997) and
the importance of transfer climate (Burke & Baldwin, 1999; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). Earlier research determined that organizational factors can also indirectly influence transfer by decreasing motivation and self-efficacy beliefs and increasing job-related frustration (Peters, O'Connor, Eulberg, & Watson, 1988).

The research supports the fact that trainees returning to a supportive work environment appear to use their training skills more often (Baumgartel et al., 1984; Broad & Newstrom, 1992; Richey, 1990). The research also indicates that organizational climate may be at least as important as learning in facilitating transfer skills (Richey, 1992; Rouiller, 1989; Russell, Terborg, & Powers, 1985).

Organizational climate refers to the collective atmosphere of a workplace created by the attitudes, perceptions, and dynamics that influence how workers and the organization perform on a daily basis (Childre & Cryer, 1998). Transfer climate is also a product of a person's perception of his or her work environment but is seen specifically as a mediating variable for transfer that influences the “extent to which the person can use learned skills on the job” (Yamnill & McLean, 2001, p. 203).

**Work Environment**

Current research in training literature as well as empirical studies on transfer has suggested that work environments are important with regard to transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Facteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey, Tannebaum, & Kavanagh, 1995). Ford, Quinones, Sego, and Sorra (1992) demonstrated that trainees who performed similar
jobs might be given opportunities to perform their trained skills on the job depending on their work environment. In their study, the work environment was found to limit trainees’ ability to transfer the learned material to the job. Tracey et al. (1995) found that behaviors that send a message that learning and the application of learning are important and valued encourage the application of newly trained skills. This is an important finding in the research because trainees’ perceptions of the work environment have been found to influence transfer of new behaviors to the job. In addition, the research suggest that one might also expect the trainees’ ability to make use of post-training interventions depends on the type of work environment in which they work (Hirsch-Richman, 2001).

Furthermore, in a work environment that supports the application of trained skills and values learning and development activities, trainees may be better able to apply their new skills because they have the resources, support, and encouragement needed to translate their goals into effort and performance (Hirsch-Richman, 2001). More importantly, trainees maybe able to focus on transfer constraints (personal or organizational) present in the work setting when they work in a supportive environment (Hirsch-Richman, 2001).

Even though the research on work environments showed a correlation between a positive work environment and transfer of training, there are two inherent problems with the research according to Baldwin and Ford (1988). The first issue is the static nature of the research in relation to the dynamic nature of the transfer process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). The “strong” support for the importance of environmental
characteristics to transfer is based solely on correlational studies in which causality cannot be inferred. What is needed is the identification of key work environment variables and the operationalization of these variables (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). For example, while research suggests that supervisory support is an important component affecting transfer, there is little attempt to understand the supervisory behaviors that lead to perceptions of support by trainees. Only by operationalizing work characteristics clearly, such as support, can interventions be developed and their effects on generalization and maintenance of training be examined (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). The second issue is the criterion problem. The studies on environmental characteristics have typically used self-reports of behavioral change as the major measure of transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). In fact, Baumgartel and his associates (1984) have often used an “intention to transfer” measure, which is actually a “motivation to transfer” measure rather than a measure of the extent of generalization and maintenance of trained skills (Baldwin & Ford, 1988, p. 85). The problem with this research is that it measured maintenance of trained behavior at only two intervals across time rather than at multiple intervals, which would have yielded the interactive effects of work characteristics and time on skill utilization after training.

Overall the research suggests the importance of the work environment in creating positive transfer. Recent studies are based on such work-environment variables as supports-in-organization, continuous-learning culture, and task constraints (Facteau et al., 1995, Tracey et al., 1995).
Support-in-Organizations

The supports-in-organization variables come from the concept of social support that is said to be influential when employees believe that other client systems in the organization (for example, their supervisor and peers) provide them with opportunities for practicing new skills and knowledge in the job settings (Noe, 1986). Opportunity to practice ensures that when trainees have chances to apply what they have learned to their jobs, training content can be transferred (Ford et al., 1992). Some researchers use the term “transfer climate” to represent the social supports from the organization (Tracey, 1992). According to Facteau et al. (1995), there are four sources of social support: a) subordinate, b) peer, c) supervisor, and d) top management support.

As such, supports-in-organization variables are one area in the literature where research findings demonstrate both positive and no impact on transfer of training. For example, (Tziner et al., 1991) found that a supportive environment alone could not influence trainees’ use of trained skills. Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) found that transfer climate was not significantly related to learning. Yet, some authors’ findings (Olsen, 1998; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey et al., 1995) indicate that a positive transfer climate encourages transfer of behavior in the job setting. Other studies showed that support from supervisors and peers moderately affected pretraining motivation (Facteau, et al., 1995) but significantly affected the perceived transfer of training (Xiao, 1996). Moreover, Brinkerhoff & Montesino (1995) note that subordinates’ support and management support could facilitate transfer of training. Brinkerhoff and Montesino (1995) also found that a strong relationship built by
involved parties (trainers, trainees, and managers) before, during, and after could ensure a positive transfer.

**Continuous-Learning Culture**

A continuous-learning culture is defined as “a pattern of shared meanings of perceptions and expectations by all organizational members that constitute an organizational value or belief” (Tracey et al., 1995, p. 241). Employees working in a continuous-learning environment share the perceptions and expectations that learning is essential to them and associated with their work (Tracey et al., 1995).

**Task Constraints**

The final work environment variable is task constraints. Mathieu et al. (1992) found that task constraints were shown to be negatively, but only marginally, related to training motivation. Furthermore, the study of Facteau et al. (1995) revealed that managers’ perceptions of task constraints in the environment were not significantly related to their pre-training motivation and perceived training transfer.

**Opportunity to Perform**

Given all of the research on work environment and its impact on training transfer, one point remains constant, without the opportunity to perform the skills, knowledge, or attitude on the job there is no relevance to training transfer. Opportunity to perform is defined as the extent to which a trainee is provided with or actively obtains work experiences relevant to the tasks for which he or she was trained (Ford, Quinnoes, Sego, & Sorra, 1992). The definition also makes it clear that
the opportunity to perform is not simply a function of the assignment of tasks by a supervisor to the trainee. It includes the active efforts of trainees to obtain work experiences relevant to the tasks for which they were trained.

Conceptually, the opportunity to perform can best be understood by taking a multidimensional perspective. Based on a review of the literature (Ford, Quinones, Sego, & Sorra, 1991), three dimensions that are particularly relevant to the opportunity to perform include: 1) breadth, 2) activity level, and 3) the type of tasks performed.

First, breadth is defined as the number of trained tasks that the trainee actually performs once on the job. The greater the number of trained tasks performed on the job the greater the breadth (Ford et al., 1991). Second, activity level is the number of times a trained task is performed. The more times a trainee performs a task the more likely that performance will improve (Ackerman & Humphreys, 1990; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). Third, type of tasks performed is defined as the number of task that varies in complexity and difficulty. Some trainees may have the opportunity to perform only the simplest of task while others work on the more complex and difficult.

**Factors affecting opportunity to perform.** The transfer of training literature has identified a number of factors that might be important for enhancing or inhibiting transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Ford et al., 1992). These factors include three general levels: a) organizational, b) work context, and c) individual characteristics. The three levels provide a useful framework for examining relationships to a trainee’s opportunity to perform trained tasks (Ford et al., 1992).
**Organizational factors.** When a newcomer enters an organization they are often provided initial training prior to being assigned a particular department or area within the organization. Each department or functional unit within the organization is differentiated in terms of goals, objectives, and values (Ford et al., 1992). Hence, because each department or functional unit deals with a particular aspect of the total organizational environment they create specific cultures with their own goals and values. These “goals and values can be considered to be sets of constraints that limit an entity’s scope of action” (Ford et al., 1992) p. 14. Due to the differences in the department’s scope of action, the assignment of individuals to a particular department can have a major impact on their opportunity to perform trained tasks (Ford et al., 1992).

**Work context factors.** Work context includes three work context factors that seem particularly relevant for affecting the opportunity to perform: a) supervisory attitudes towards the trainee, b) workgroup support, and c) the pace of the work flow within the workgroup (Ford et al., 1992). The mentoring literature recognizes that a supervisor’s perception of a subordinate’s likeability, skill, and career potential can influence the amount of guidance and opportunities provided to that subordinate (Noe, 1988). On the one hand, a supervisor who has negative attitudes towards the capabilities of an individual may be more apt to assign simple and unchallenging tasks or not allow the individual to practice those tasks that were taught in training. On the other hand, positive attitudes toward the trainee may result in the supervisor allowing the trainee to perform many of the tasks that were trained (Ford et al., 1992).
**Individual characteristic factors.** Individual characteristics may affect the opportunity to perform trained tasks. One characteristic is the ability level of the trainee. The training literature suggest that an individual’s ability is often related to the amount learned in training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Hence, high-ability individuals should be better prepared to complete trained tasks especially the more complex and difficult ones (Ford et al., 1992). This could lead to supervisory assignment to high-ability trainees to a greater number of diverse tasks or the high-ability trainee might be more likely to actively seek and obtain the opportunity to perform trained tasks in order to maintain and improve performance levels (Ford, et al., 1992).

**Self-efficacy factor.** Finally, another factor affecting opportunity to perform is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual’s expectation or confidence that tasks can be successfully performed (Ford et al., 1992). Noe (1986) suggests that an individual’s self-efficacy will have an impact on his/her motivation to transfer. Therefore, Ford et al. (1992) contend that individuals high in self-efficacy are more likely to be active in trying out trained tasks and attempting more difficult and complex tasks on the job.

**Summary of Literature**

The literature attempts to address the impact of transfer climate factors on transfer of training. Baldwin and Ford (1988) note in their summary of the literature that practitioners stress “strong support” for the importance of environmental characteristics to transfer of training but much of that evidence is based solely on
correlational studies. Baldwin and Ford purport, that what is needed in the research on transfer of training is an understanding of the behaviors that lead to perceptions of support by trainees. Moreover, research focusing on the descriptive patterns and understanding transfer climate factors in the work environment that either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities from the classroom to the job is nonexistent. This is the void in the body of knowledge that serves as the focus for this research.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This research study was designed to provide insight on the perceived transfer climate factors that may influence employee’s learning in a training program. More specifically, the purpose of the study was to delineate descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors that may facilitate or inhibit people as they apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in a training program to the work setting. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as facilitating (favorable, positive) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

2. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as inhibiting (unfavorable, negative) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

This chapter describes the research design used to frame this study and the methodology used to conduct it, including participant selection, sampling, data collection and data analysis, and the methods of increasing trustworthiness of design and results.
Research Design- Case Study

Through this study, participants were encouraged to examine transfer climate factors in the work environment that either facilitated or inhibited the transfer of training and how their perception of those factors impacted the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the work setting. They were also asked to describe what transfer climate factors in the work environment that they perceived as facilitating or inhibiting. As this study sought to understand the impact transfer climate factors have on the transfer of training, it was situated in the frame of a case study, and in a broader sense in the qualitative genre of research.

Unlike the quantitative research, qualitative research does not seek to predict or explain phenomena in discrete terms. Rather than accept that there are certain positivistic truths, qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Creswell, 1998). Through qualitative research, the researcher seeks to understand how individuals make meaning of their lives and thus understand their perspectives. Through the lens of qualitative research, “the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports, detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1998,p.15).

Hence, the qualitative genre was chosen for three key reasons. First, the purpose of the study is to delineate descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors in the work environment that either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of training. The descriptions and analysis will come from descriptive accounts
from managers and their employees who attend training. Indeed, qualitative analyses is considered to be especially well suited for investigations of social phenomena that are descriptive, interpretive, or analytical (Yin, 1994). Second, the exploratory nature of the research itself lends itself to qualitative methods. This study will be concerned not only with the transfer climate factors in the work environment from the managers and their employees’ point of view but also how and why these transfer climate factors impact the transfer of training. These kinds of questions are best understood through thick descriptions and inductive analysis. Third, the “bounded” nature of qualitative methodology is particularly appropriate for qualitative research. A bounded system is any particular system, be it individual, an event, a situation, a program, or a phenomenon over which the researcher has little or no control and which is not easily separated from its context (Mills, 1993; Merriam & Simpson, 1995). Hence, the work environment will be specific to the company, the managers, and their employees.

Moreover, the case study genre will be used because it is one of many strategies employed for conducting social science research. Researchers often employ case studies when the research focus is on describing or exploring a contemporary phenomenon within a live context (Yin, 1994). Yin (2009) posits that “in general, case studies are the preferred method when a) “how and why” questions are being posed, b) the investigator has little control over events, and c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (p. 2). Additionally, Stake (1995) states that “we study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the
detail of interactions with its contexts. Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). In Stake’s research (1995) on case study methods, he describes two types of case studies, 1) intrinsic case study and 2) instrumental case study. When using the intrinsic case study method, the researcher has a need to learn about that particular case. In contrast, when using the instrumental case study method, the researcher has a need to learn about other cases or about some general problem. In the case of this research endeavor, the researcher used the intrinsic case study methodology described by Stake. Finally, this researcher believes that the impact the transfer climate factors have on transfer of training is a contemporary phenomenon that is best studied within a live context. Therefore, the research design chosen for this study is a single descriptive case study.

Participant Selection

Participation in this study was voluntary and of primary importance was a willingness of the managers and their employees to participate in interviews. The study participants were nine pre-sell managers and nineteen pre-sell representatives who attended training and were expected to demonstrate the new knowledge and skills back in the work setting. It was important for the researcher to gather multiple perspectives because the work environment was a multifaceted entity that was impacted by both internal and external influences. Hence, maximum variation was the sampling methodology that was utilized in this study. In a case study, maximum
variation is one of the strategies identified by (Miles & Huberman, 1994) as a preferred strategy because it allows for the display of multiple perspectives about the case. The ability to display multiple perspectives is important to this study and supports the rationale for the sampling method.

Participants in this study were chosen through a maximum variation sampling method (Miles & Huberman, 1994) so as to allow for the display of multiple perspectives about the case. The participants were chosen because: 1) they had attended the company sponsored training, and 2) they were tasked with a new job that required new skills taught in the training.

The participants consisted of managers and their employees of a non-durable goods manufacturer. The non-durable goods manufacturer was changing its strategy for selling products in the market and as a result of the change the managers and their employees were assigned new roles and responsibilities. In order to effectively transition in to the new roles each manager and their employee were required to attend training that was design to teach them the new skills and competencies needed to be successful in the new roles. The key to the success of the change in business strategy was linked in part to the managers and their employees using the skills and competencies learned in training back on the job. The non-durable goods manufacturer had 1700 employees located in 17 facilities across the state of North Carolina. The corporation had manufacturing, sales, and distribution facilities. The managers and their employees participated in the “Pre-Sell Training Program ” as part a business conversion of the selling process from a single function
(delivery/sales) to a dual function (sales and delivery), with each function having specific competencies and organizational objectives. For example, in the single function (delivery/sales), the delivery drivers had the responsibility to both sell in new products and promotional items as well as delivering the product from the truck. In the dual function selling process (pre-sell), the selling responsibility was given to a pre-sell manager and pre-sell representative who would interact with the customer, build customer relationships, sell product, and place orders for the next delivery. The pre-sell manager had oversight for a specific sales region and the pre-sell representative conducted the day-to-day selling with specific accounts. The delivery driver’s task was to deliver and merchandise the product. The pre-sell training program specifically targeted selling skills for managers and their employees who would be interacting with customers, selling promotional items, distributing new products, executing advertisement material, and gaining additional sales space in accounts.

Each manager and their employee were required to attend a two and one-half day training program. The managers were in a new selling position defined as “pre-sell manager” and their employee’s were in a new selling position defined as “pre-sell representative”. The participants in this study were “informed participants” recruited from the group of pre-sell managers and pre-sell representatives who attended the pre-sell training program held from March 2002 until June 2002. There were groups of 12 to 15 pre-sell managers and pre-sell representatives in attendance at each session and there was a total of 12 training sessions. I recruited pre-sell managers
and pre-sell representatives from the various training sessions held between March and June of 2002. Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 68) posit that “unless a study is quite narrowly construed, researchers cannot study all relevant circumstances, events, or people intensively and in depth; they select samples”. In addition, Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest that “qualitative researchers should choose sites and populations where: 1) entry is possible, 2) there is a high probability that a rich mix of the processes, people, program, interactions, and structures of interest are present, and 3) the researcher is likely to be able to build trusting relations with the participants in the study” (p. 69). From the group of pre-sell managers and pre-sell representatives, I selected informed participants that met each of the conditions above. More importantly, I selected participants I had previous interactions with and had established some level of trust.

Furthermore, I had entry into the sales training program and access to all the training participants because I was on the staff of the non-durable manufacturing organization as the Director of Organizational Development. In this capacity, I worked closely with the training consultant and assisted with the design and implementation of the training content. I attended all 12 training sessions and observed the participants' behavior in the training sessions as well as their comprehension of the concepts. One component of the training was role play which was an opportunity for the participants to demonstrate their comprehension of the training content. The role play used “real life scenarios” and as a researcher I had first hand exposure to Kirkpatrick’s level two training outcomes. These two outcomes were a) can the
learner demonstrate the new skills, attitudes, and b) demonstrate competencies. I did not make contact with the selected participants until after the training sessions were complete and all pre-sell managers and pre-sell representatives had completed the training.

While the researcher had contact with the organization and study participants, he had no power, control, or direct influence over the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representative. Other than directing the training initiative through the external consultant, the researcher’s relation to the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representatives was quite detached.

Once, I decided to start the research study, I contacted the selected informed participants by phone and asked them independently if they were interested and willing to participate in the study. As the Director of Organizational Development, during the contact phase I purposely did not pressure the participants. I offered to meet them on their time and to travel to their facilities to conduct the study. In addition, if a pre-sell representative gave a verbal consent for their participation, I would contact their pre-sell manager to get approval to meet with the representative. Twenty-eight of the thirty-five selected participants agreed to be participants in the study and gave a verbal consent for an interview. Nine of the study participants were pre-sell managers and nineteen of the study participants were pre-sell representatives. Those who declined to participate in the study and bothered to give a reason cited the two reasons of lack of time and not sure anything would change for not participating. In-depth interviews for the study were conducted between June 30,
2004 and February 2, 2005. Each of the participants returned the informed consent form prior to the start of the interview. The interviews were conducted at eleven different facilities across the state of North Carolina.

**Description of the Participants**

Demographic information about each participant is provided in Table 3.1 to enhance the reader’s understanding of the individuals that made up the group. All data represented in the table were self-reported by the participants during the initial part of the interview. When the participants joined the study each was assigned a number which corresponded to the sequence in the interview process. Interviews were recorded and date coded using each participant’s assigned number. Personal information, including name and facility for each participant, was kept separate from participant numbers to as to avoid data correlation and to protect participant confidentiality. The study participants are identified by their pseudonyms in Table 3.1.

As depicted in Table 3.1, the average number of years with the company per participant in the study group was 10.2 years. The exception was pre-sell representative 20 who had five months of service with the company. The study group consisted of 93% male and 7% female. The average age of the participants was 37 years old. All 28 participants attended the pre-sell training and were expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies taught in the class room back in the work setting.
Table 3.1 Participant Demographic Data

Summary of Participant Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th># of years</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr. 1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr. 3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr. 7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr. 9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr. 11</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 13</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr. 14</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 18</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th># of years</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5 (months)</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr. 22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Mgr.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 25</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep. 28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre-Sell Rep.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to section on gender: M = Male, F = Female, Pre-Sell Rep. = Pre-Sell Account Representative, Pre-Sell Mgr. = Pre-Sell Manager

**Data Collection**

One of the primary research components of this study was to understand the perception of the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representatives who attended the sales training program. By attending the sales training program, the participants were expected to demonstrate new knowledge and skills. As a result of the new knowledge and skills, individual performance was expected to improve. If individual performance improves, it is assumed that the organization as a whole benefits. The researcher in this study must delve into the information about the
organization, its processes, and job performers. This case study used the triangulation process for collecting data. Triangulation involves multiple data collection methods: observations, interviews, and document analysis.

The primary method of data collection was through 28 in-depth audio-taped interviews. Participant observations during the training sessions and sales document analysis were also used as data sources and will be discussed later in the chapter. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) posit that the complexity and variation of human life in its natural habitat mandates that those who study it must collect rich and diverse data on whatever they study (p. 158). Therefore, according the Glesne and Peshkin (1992), “three data gathering techniques dominate in qualitative inquiry: participant observation, interviewing, and document collection” (p. 24.) Furthermore, (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) suggest that “case study researchers might began a case study with one method of data collection and gradually shift to, or add, other methods” (p. 557). Gall et al. (1996) further suggest that the “use of multiple methods to collect data about a particular phenomenon can enhance the validity of case study findings through a process call triangulation” (p.557).

**Interviews**

Although, the researcher used multiple methods to collect data, in-depth interviews were the primary data collection method because of the researcher’s interest in collecting rich and diverse information from the study participants. Nine pre-sell managers and nineteen pre-sell representatives who had attended the pre-
sells training program completed on average an hour long interview. Marshall and Rossman (1999) describe interviewing as “a conversation with a purpose” (p. 108); it may be the overall strategy or one of several methods employed in a study.

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) interviews depend on face-to-face questioning of participants and eliciting data from them.

The in-depth interviews were designed to collect data that provided answers to the following research questions: a) What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as facilitating (favorable, positive) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?, and b) What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as inhibiting (unfavorable, negative) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

Each interview was informal and allowed the participants the freedom to speak openly. Before the interviews began, each study participant was given a copy of the interview guide to review the interview questions (Appendix A). While the interviews centered on the transfer climate factors in the work environment that either facilitated or inhibited the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the work environment, participants were allowed to guide the interview, change opinions and answers during the interview, and to stop the interview if the participant felt uncomfortable. Additionally, the participants signed an informed consent form as prescribed by the NC State University Institutional Review Board for the use of
human subjects in research acknowledging their involvement and that the interview would require a 1-1/2 hour commitment of their time (Appendix B).

Merriam writes (1998) “for the most part interviewing in qualitative investigations is more open-ended and less structured. Less structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways. The largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored and neither the exact wording nor the questions are determined ahead of time; “This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (p. 74).

In addition, in order to address trustworthiness in the interview process, the interview scripts were ordered. Ordering according to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) “the arranging, organizing, and sequencing of questions and statements communicate to the respondents the researcher’s intent and direction” (p. 175). Moreover, LeCompte and Preissle (1993) emphasize that interviews are conducted more smoothly when prefaced by a brief statement of research purpose, by assurances of protection of respondents’ identity, and by an outline of how the interaction is expected to proceed.

**Participant Observation**

Furthermore, as part of the triangulation of methods for data collection, the researcher used participant observation. The researcher attended the pre-sell training sessions and observed the behavior of participants during the training. Specifically,
the researcher observed the behavior and ability of the participants to demonstrate the learned skills and competencies during the role play scenarios. On the third day in each training session, the participants had to select a partner, develop a “real-life sales scenario”, and apply the sales techniques during the role play. One of the participants would act as the customer while the other participant demonstrated the sales technique. The role plays were video-taped. The remaining classroom participants served as observers that provided feedback to the role play participants. Each role play video was reviewed by the class while the instructor commented on the demonstration of the skills and competencies. As the Director of Organizational Development for the organization, my presence in the training sessions was both expected and accepted by all participants. The constant and frequent interaction with the participants while in the training sessions (during breaks, at lunch time, before and after each session) allowed the researcher to “develop trust” among the participants. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) “participant observers watch what people do, listen to what people say, and interact with participants” (p. 196). The observational record will be in the form of field notes which are detailed, nonjudgmental, concrete descriptions of what has been observed (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).
**Document Analysis**

To complete the data collection process the researcher reviewed sales analysis and performance tracking documents. The review of documents is an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the settings (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). All of the documents were analyzed to see if they contained cues that would indicate transfer climate factors in the work environment that either facilitated or inhibited the transfer of training. For example, one document that was analyzed was the weekly sales performance analysis. Each week the sales performance of the pre-sell manager and pre-sell account representative was posted on the department door. The pre-sell manager and pre-sell account representative with the highest sales volume was listed at the top of the sales sheet. To some of the study participants this document served as a motivation factor, but for others it was de-motivating if there were factors outside their control that caused them to be near the bottom of the list. The other document that the researcher analyzed was the performance tracking document. The performance tracking document was essentially a “scorecard” that measured gains or losses against expected goals. For example, for a particular new product brand the pre-sell manager and pre-sell representative were expected to get a certain amount of displays (new product placements in accounts) above the normal distribution goal of the product. Certain incentives (cash prizes, trips) were rewarded to those who reached the goals. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) posit “as the documents are analyzed the researcher will be asking questions of the data just as questions are asked of informants; these questions generate additional
questions, insights, and puzzles to discuss with other investigators and to ponder alone" (p. 239).

**Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed in this case study using the constant comparative analysis. Specifically, the research questions attempted to uncover the perceptions of pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representatives as they relate to transfer climate factors in the work environment that either facilitated or inhibited the transfer of training. I began the tasks of data analysis by coding the transcripts of the audio taped interviews. Each interview transcript was coded for department location and category of participant (Appendix C). Coding involved line by line analysis or chunk by chunk analysis that generated questions or phrases found in the data. As a result, categories began to develop. Yin (1994) posits, “data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining evidence to address the initial proposition of a study” (p. 102). Hence, the first and more preferred strategy is to follow the theoretical propositions that led to the case study. Yin (1994) also notes that the proposition helps to organize the entire case study and to define alternative explanations to be examined (p. 104).

In addition, the data was analyzed using the constant comparative method. Glaser and Strauss, (1967) state that:

“constant comparative method is an iterative process meaning that it is moving back and forth between data collection and analysis. This ongoing process
encourages the development of theory based on emergent categories rather than arbitrary predetermined or fixed categories identified by the researcher and which may be meaningless to the participants of the study” (p. 197).

For example, the first step in the constant comparative process is open coding which involves line-by-line or chunk-by-chunk analysis that generates questions about the words or phrases found in the data. As a result, categories will be developed (Appendix D). “This ongoing process encourages the development of theory based on emergent categories rather than arbitrary predetermined or fixed categories identified by the researcher and which may be meaningless to the participants of the study” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p. 197).

Moreover, what the researcher attempted to do was find meaning from the interviews, observations, and document analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that “people are meaning-finders; they can very quickly make sense of the most chaotic events” (p. 245). We keep the world consistent and predictable by organizing and interpreting it (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The critical question is whether the meanings we find in qualitative data are valid, repeatable, and right (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to address the issues of validity, repeatability, and accuracy, the researcher generated meaning from the data by noting patterns or themes. The outcome of the data analysis was the development of “pools of meaning”. According to Coffey & Atkinson, (1996) organizing systems of data are based on developing pools of meaning. “Concepts are identified or constructed from prior material, theoretical frameworks, research questions, or the data themselves”
(Coffey & Atkinson, 1996 p. 31). Pools of meaning are the result of segmenting and coding data which according to Coffey & Atkinson, (1996) enable the researcher to think about and with the data.

The researcher used the patterns or themes to aid in the data reduction process and to start linking critical information from the interviews, observations, and document analysis into a coherent structure for study. The patterns or themes came from the second step in the constant comparative method, which is axial coding. Axial coding is the level of analysis where one category is developed at a time. The categories emerge by the researcher thinking about the boundaries of each category and the relationships, consequences, conditions, and interactions among the categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Once this process is complete, the data should be reviewed again looking for specific clusters of evidence that support the categories developed. Miles and Huberman (1994) posit “patterns that emerge are patterns involving similarities and differences among categories and patterns of processes involving connections in time and space within a context” (p.146). Miles and Huberman (1994) also note that two criteria are important for the researcher to remember: 1) to see added evidence from the same patterns and 2) to remain open to disconfirming evidence when it appears.

Clustering of evidence will be a vital part of the data analysis process. The researcher looked for evidence that can be clustered into the situational cues category as well as the consequence cues category. LeCompte and Goetz (1983) state, “the qualitative analyst is looking to see “what things are like each other; which
things go together and which do not?” (p. 249). The categories or classes used may be pre-existing or may emerge from the data. As a result of clustering the evidence a core category emerged or what was considered the main theme of the study. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This clustering of evidence allowed the researcher to determine the “story-line” of the case study and addressed the research questions.

The final stage of the constant comparative method is selective coding. This involves analyzing the data and collecting data around the core category. All other codes must relate to the core category in some way (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This will be important in the case study because it will address conceptual and theoretical coherence. Specifically, does the data fit with the literature and is it confirmed or does the data challenge the literature and add to the literature base?

**Trustworthiness of Research Design**

Trustworthiness in qualitative studies refers to the believability or credibility of the study. It was critical to this case study to be able to establish the credibility of the findings. Credibility addresses the extent to which the researcher, the primary instrument for date collection, has accurately interpreted the data. Researchers who rely on their own interpretations of data are likely to misinterpret meanings intended by the participants or to miss important nuances in transcription of data. For this study, a potential pitfall surrounding credibility was the fact that the researcher was a part of the organization and familiar with terms, nomenclature, and business
practices. Therefore, it is important to focus on credibility to ensure that the researcher did not use his own interpretations of the data.

Common methods of addressing credibility include the following: 1) using multiple methods of data collection and checking for consistency among the messengers, 2) conducting member checks or asking the participants’ to verify researcher interpretations of their data, and 3) establishing researcher assumptions and biases up front (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Given the importance of addressing credibility in this study, all three techniques listed above were employed. Use of multiple methods of data collection was discussed in the data collection section above. Member checks will be discussed in the next section. Information on researcher beliefs and biases is discussed later in the chapter.

Transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) refers to the reliability of data. While quantitative studies tend to look for generalizability or the ability to replicate a study’s findings in another population, qualitative studies are not prescriptive and do not seek to develop formulas (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Qualitative research uses “thick descriptions” of data to help the readers see themselves in the setting and therefore make more informed decisions. Thick descriptions creates “verisimilitude and produces for readers the feeling that they experience or perhaps could experience the events described” (Creswell, 1998. p. 184). The use of thick description is a primary method used in this study to address transferability.
Member Checks

The researcher developed a comprehensiveness rating tool that was mailed to each study participant (Appendix E). In addition, the researcher sent each study participant a copy of the transcription of their interview to help them remember the details of the interview questions and responses. The interviews were conducted nine to twelve months prior to the distribution of comprehensiveness rating tool. The comprehensiveness rating tool asked the study participants to validate the accuracy or inaccuracy of the interview transcript. Each study participant was given a copy of the interview transcript and asked to rate its accurate representation of the interview and their responses. The study participants were given two options on the comprehensiveness rating tool: option 1- indicating the participant believed the transcription of the interview accurately represented the content of the interview questions and responses, and option 2- indicating the participant believed the transcription of the interview did not accurately represent the content of the interview questions and responses. If the study participants chose option 2 they were given two questions to answer: a) I want to change some language to more accurately reflect the interview discussion, and b) I don’t want to comment. These reviews helped the researcher further ensure trustworthiness. Glesne (1999) suggests that by “reviewing the interpretation of the data, the respondent can 1) verify the researcher has reflected the respondent’s perspective, 2) inform the researcher if parts of the research could be problematic if published, and 3) help the researcher develop new ideas and interpretations” (p. 152).
Twenty eight of the study participants received the comprehensiveness rating tool yet only fourteen returned the tool with responses. Two of the fourteen on their first reply chose option 2 indicating they did not believe the transcription accurately represented the content of the interview questions and responses. The researcher contacted the study participants to make edits to the transcriptions based on their feedback. A revised comprehensiveness rating tool was sent to the two study participants after the changes were made and each completed a new rating tool indicating they believed the revised transcription accurately represented the interview questions and responses. The remaining fourteen study participants did not return the comprehensiveness rating tool. The researcher followed up with a phone call to each of the fourteen study participants who did not return the comprehensiveness rating tool. The study participants provided a wide variety of reasons for not returning the tool from “I forgot” to “I don’t remember receiving the envelope”. During the telephone conversation, the researcher asked the study participants the questions listed in the comprehensiveness rating tool and they all indicated they believed the transcription accurately represented the interview questions and responses. Each telephone conversation lasted from 10-12 minutes.

In summary, the results of the member checks (comprehensiveness rating tool) suggested that the researcher’s interpretation of the data was consistent with participant understanding of the interview questions and responses.
Limitations of the Study

One important potential limitation of the study is that the researcher had exposure to the study participants over the past years. In this regard, the researcher was familiar with many of the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representatives. To this end, the researcher may have unintentionally influenced some of the responses of the participants to the interview questions. Additionally, the researcher was actively involved in the development of the training curriculum and had a stake in the success of the initiative. This may have influenced the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representatives to bias their responses to the interview questions because they viewed the researcher as a stakeholder in the training initiative. However, due to the nature of the training initiative and the direct association with the change in the business model, the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representatives established their own value proposition of the training initiative because it directly impacted their new job responsibilities. More importantly, the researcher had little contact with the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representatives that were interviewed because the facilities were geographically dispersed.

This same potential limitation could also have been viewed as significant research strength. This research strength is because the researcher had a high amount of internal credibility with the organization which may have helped to elicit more honest and potentially more accurate descriptions of their perceptions of what
transfer climate factors in the work environment facilitate or inhibit the transfer of training.

Equally important, while the researcher had contact with the organization in the past, he had no power, control, or direct influence over the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representative that were interviewed. Other than directing the training initiative through an external consultant, the researcher’s relation to the pre-sell managers and pre-sell account representatives was quite detached.

**Researcher Perspective and Beliefs**

As the researcher, I am keenly aware that I am the “instrument” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999) through which data gathering in this study is filtered and shaped into this presentation of participants’ perspectives on what transfer climate factors in the work environment facilitate or inhibit the transfer of training. The researcher is aware that he conducted the study with several biases and assumptions that may have influenced the filter through which the data was processed. First, the researcher was actively involved in the development of the training curriculum with an external consultant and the success of the training initiative was largely the researcher’s responsibility. The researcher viewed the training initiative as a vital link to the business conversion to a pre-sell system and felt the training would provide the necessary skills and competencies for the participants to be successful in their new roles.
Second, because the researcher had an integral role in the organization, he believed there were some organizational constraints that would inhibit the transfer of training for the participants in the study. This belief was in part due to the organization moving so quickly to change the business model due to the cost savings. Hence, the researcher knew from the outset that he would need to refrain from asking leading questions that simply reinforced what he already believed.

Additionally, the researcher believed that because of his integral role in the organization, it gave him the ability to appreciate and recognize themes and patterns that emerged from the comments and backgrounds of the study participants that others without a similar role might have missed. To guard against being too familiar with the organizational factors the participants described, the researcher decided to interview a selection of informed study participants (new to the organization was well as tenured participants). A detailed list of the study participants and sampling methodology is listed in the description of the study participants section.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

This study was designed to provide insight on the perceived transfer climate factors that may influence an employee’s learning in a training program. Further, this study will extend the research on descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors that may facilitate or inhibit people as they apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in a training program to the work setting. This study sought to delineate descriptive understandings about perceived transfer climate factors. Specifically, this case study examined the perceptions of managers and their employees who attended a sales training program. The sales training program was designed to teach the managers and their employees new selling techniques and skills that were to be used back on the job. Through this qualitative case study, twenty-eight participants shared their perspectives in relations to the sales training program and how they perceived transfer climate factors as either facilitating or inhibiting the use of the new selling techniques and skills back on the job. The research questions that guided the study were:

1. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as facilitating (favorable, positive) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

2. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as inhibiting (unfavorable, negative) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate
their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

The findings in this chapter are presented in three parts. To provide a sense of the boundaries for this study’s findings, an overview of the people participating in this study and a composite description of the pre-sell training program is presented. Within the presentation of the findings, the first section provides background based in a discussion of the study participants’ expectations in attending the pre-sell training. The second section of the findings delineates perceptions of the macro organizational work environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained skills. The macro organizational work environment refers to the larger organizational context, which includes: perceptions about the organization’s culture, reputation, and employees’ opinions about the organization. The third section of the findings explores perceptions of the micro organizational work environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job. The micro organizational work environment refers to the day to day factors in the work environment that influences the perceptions of employees. Throughout the chapter, the participants’ words are used when appropriate to illustrate and illuminate the findings.
Profile of Study Sample

This study explored transfer climate factors by probing the perceptions of a group of managers and their employees who were required to attend a two and one-half day sales training program. The managers were in a selling position defined as pre-sell managers and their employees were in a selling position defined as pre-sell representatives. They applied and interviewed for their respective positions in a company restructure call pre-sell. In addition, there were clear expectations, new roles and responsibilities, and revised job descriptions.

There were a total of 28 study participants. They were all adults (defined as over the age of 18) and the average tenure per participant was 10.2 years. The study participants were employed by a large beverage producer. At the time of the interviews, nine of the participants were in the pre-sell manager role and nineteen were in the pre-sell representative role. The study participants possessed a range of attributes and experiences in the beverage industry, allowing the researcher to explore key descriptive patterns of understanding about what transfer climate factors facilitate or inhibit the use of pre-sell skills back on the job. To enhance the readers’ understanding of the demographic background of the study participants, information is provided in chapter three. The names of the participants as well as people and products they referenced in their interviews have been changed to insure their anonymity.
Overview of the Pre-Sell Training Program

The pre-sell training program at this large beverage company was designed to teach the study participants selling skills that would allow them to sell, distribute, and market new products to customers. For the purposes of this study, the study participants were pre-sell managers and pre-sell representatives who were required to attend a two and one-half day sales training program. The sales training program was designed to equip the pre-sell managers and pre-sell representatives with new knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform in a new selling structure called pre-sell.

The pre-sell structure created two distinct roles in the sales department. The first role was a sales function responsible for selling and executing product. The second role was a delivery function responsible for delivering and merchandising the product. The selling positions were similar for the two pre-sell job functions, except the pre-sell manager had more responsibility for managing the day to day activities, while the pre-sell representative had responsibility for the actual execution of the day to day activities. Specifically, the sales training program targeted selling skills for pre-sell managers and pre-sell representatives who would be interacting with customers, selling promotional items, distributing new products, executing advertisement material, and gaining additional sales space in accounts.

The learning objectives of the pre-sell training program were: 1) to help the sales employees understand the needs of the customers and to meet those needs through partnership, persuasion, and utilizing effective selling techniques, 2) to help the sales employees identify their strengths and improve specific skills needed to
conduct face to face sales calls, and 3) to equip the sales employees with selling skills and knowledge. The pre-sell training program had five critical elements that were part of the training objectives. The first element was “present the situation and opportunity”. The emphasis of “present the situation and opportunity” in the sales training was to teach the study participants to help the customers identify a perceived need. The training content centered on asking open ended questions, effective listening, and getting the customer to recognize the opportunity. The second element was “explain the solution, how it works, and benefits. The emphasis of “explain the solution” in the sales training was to teach the study participants to provide a solution to the perceived need of the customer and describe what they wanted the customer to buy. In the explanation of the solution, the study participants would highlight the features and benefits of the solution to the customer. The company had a portfolio of different brands and flavors of beverages which could easily be tailored to meet the customers’ need. The third element was “provide the details”. The emphasis of “provide the details” in the sales training was to provide the customers with the right level of detail regarding the product solution. The sales training centered on teaching the study participants how to provide specific details to the customers so they would know exact what they were purchasing. The fourth element was “secure the sale with success”. The emphasis of “secure the sale with success” was to teaching the study participants how to watch for buying signals, overcome objections, ask for and close the deal. The sales training centered on the three different types of customer objections and how to overcome them; these objections could include doubt or
concern, misunderstanding, or indifference. Finally, the fifth element was “implement the sale”. The emphasis of “implement the sale” was to recap with the customer the specifics of the sale and to define next steps. The sales training centered on closing techniques and follow-up with the customers. Table 4.1 illustrates and defines the sales terms that were used in the pre-sell training and will subsequently be used throughout this chapter to help the reader’s understanding.

Table 4.1 **Sales Definition**

*Sales Definitions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Penny Profit</strong>: selling price minus Cost</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Margins</strong>: penny profit divided by the Selling price</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Selling Price</strong>: cost of the product plus mark percentage x cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mark Up</strong>: selling price minus cost divided by cost</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wired Accounts</strong>: customer accounts that have established contract agreement for sales volume and incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Wired Accounts</strong>: customer accounts that have no established contract agreements for sales volume and incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Customers</strong>: customer accounts that are privately owned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Development Agreements (CDA)</strong>: contract agreements with customers for sales promotions throughout the fiscal year. The contracts secure space in the accounts for displays and feature ads in the advertisements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Route Rides</strong>: when the regional sales manager or higher levels of management ride along with a pre-sell representative or delivery driver to observe and audit the customer accounts on the route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Tour</strong>: scheduled visit by the senior sales management to observe and audit a general sales area to assess the competitive position in the market.</td>
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Key Findings

To provide background to delineate the trainee’s perceptions of the transfer climate in relation to a pre-sell training program, these findings will present key aspects of 1) background of trainee expectations, 2) perceptions of the macro organizational work environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained skills, and 3) perceptions of the micro organizational work environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job.

Trainee Expectations for Pre-Sell Training Program

All of the program trainees in this study were required to attend the pre-sell training because it was a vital part of the company’s restructure of the sales business channel. The purpose of the pre-sell was to provide the program trainees with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform in the new sales structure. Despite the requirement to attend the pre-sell training, the program trainees also had specific beliefs and expectations expressed as short term expectations and long term goals. These expectations were explored as potential perceived influencers of the transfer of training program objectives to their work performance.

Short term expectations. The program trainees shared two short term expectations for attending the pre-sell training. The first short term expectation of the program trainees was that pre-sell training was a way to improve their performance back on the job. They believed the pre-sell system required a different set of selling
skills and by participating in the training program, the program trainees believed it connected with their desire to be successful in their new role. For example, Pre-Sell Representative 2 who had been in the business for 13 years said, "Well as we spoke earlier about how most of my career has been in full service and on-premise and I had never been into the conventional side [pre-sell] side of it [the business]. So as far as the [pre-sell] training goes, I was looking forward to it because I needed to learn something." Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 5 commented, "Well my overall perception of [pre-sell training] was to prepare me to perform the responsibility that I had been given to the fullest: not just putting me out there and telling me what is expected. But, it was teaching me and showing me how to become successful in doing what I was asked to do."

The second short term expectation expressed by the program trainees for attending the pre-sell training was they understood the selling dynamics of the business had changed and with that change, a new set of selling techniques and skills were required. The company had many new and different products than in years past. For example, the company had dramatically increased its portfolio of energy drinks, new age beverages, coffee, and teas. So, the program trainees believed that learning new selling techniques and new ways of selling products would be beneficial to them in their new role. Pre-Sell Representative 24 remarked, "I was looking forward to it. I was excited. I am always looking for new ideas and selling techniques. It is always better to have someone come in that is not so closely involved who can give you insight and better ways of doing things." Pre-Sell Manager
9 who had been in the business nine years expressed similar sentiments, “The more you learn, you have got to adapt. I mean you know the things [products] we sell now we did not sell ten years ago when I started. The things [products] we sell now are completely different, so you have to be willing to learn and adapt. The training we get is helpful.”

**Long term expectations.** Additionally, the program trainees talked about having two long term goals associated with attending the pre-sell training. One, the program trainees perceived the pre-sell training as something that would improve their long term value to the company. In addition, they believed that this training would improve their opportunities for advancement. In reference to the first long term goal, many of the program trainees talked about how they wanted to be successful in their new role as pre-sell representative and pre-sell manager. Hence, they perceived the pre-sell training as something that would improve their long term value to the company. The notion of “improving their long term value to the company” came from the feeling that pre-sell training was an investment, on the part of the company, in the employees who were part of the pre-sell conversion. The program trainees perceived that the company invested a lot of money by allowing the training to take place off-site, pulling the participants out of the market for two-and-one half days, and hiring an outside consultant to conduct the training. So, as a result of the company’s investment, the program trainees felt that by participating in the training it improved their value to the company. The program trainees believed they would have new
knowledge and skills that the company would rely upon to make the pre-sell conversion successful.

For Pre Sell Manager 1, the pre-sell training was an indication of the company investing in the employees and in return the employees would benefit as well as the company. He noted, “Absolutely, as I said earlier, the company has invested a lot of money and when you take people off site to do training, it lets employees know they have invested time and money to make sure the new structure we are going to; We are really trying to make it work.” In a similar manner, Pre-Sell Representative 8 stated, “I feel it does [training matters], because the more the company give to you and the more you produce in the field because of the knowledge they have given you. The [pre-sell] training in the long run will help you to be successful. It will help you out as well as the company.”

In reference to the second long term goal, the program trainees perceived that by attending the pre-sell training, it would improve their opportunity for advancement. The opportunity to move up in the company was a clear goal expressed by many of the program trainees. To the program trainees, there was a perceived link between the pre-sell conversion, pre-sell training, and opportunity for advancement. For all of the program trainees, the pre-sell conversion provided an advancement opportunity within the company. The program trainees applied for either a pre-representative or pre-sell manager position as part of the pre-sell conversion. The trainees were screened, interviewed, and selected based upon their qualifications and prior experience. All of the program trainees were promoted from a lower level sales
position to the newly created roles of either pre-sell representative or pre-sell manager. So, for many of the study participants, the perceived benefit of pre-sell training was that it helped them to accomplish their goal of “going to the next level” in the organization. Pre-Sell Representative 6 commented, “A lot of the extra [training] or a lot of the skills that we learn is not just to benefit the company but also benefit me. I want to get to the next level. I want to be at the top.” Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 8 asserted, “I feel that if the company offers me something [training] in the long run that is going to pay off for me. You can use it [training] as stepping stone and it is a way of moving up the ladder. Because the farther you go in the company the more of it [training] you will need.” Finally, Pre-Sell Representative 16 explained, “The possibility of advancement: that is my drive.”

Summary of Trainee Expectations for Pre-Sell Training Program

The program trainees in this study expressed specific expectations and long term goals for attending the pre-sell training. The program trainees described their perceived short term expectations as pre-sell training improving their performance back on the job and providing them with new selling techniques and skills which were required because selling dynamics of the business changed. The long term goals were described as future benefits they expected to gain from the pre-sell training such as improved long term value to the company and opportunities for advancement. The short term expectations and long term goals the program trainees
talked about suggest they expected the pre-sell training to benefit them as well as the company.

**Perceptions of the Macro Environment Perceived to Either Facilitate or Inhibit the Transfer of Trained Skills**

In examining factors which could influence transfer of training, it was not only the key motivations and expectations of the program interviewees, in addition, the macro environment of the employee was also perceived as an influence on the transfer climate. As an overview, the program interviewees identified several macro environment factors, to include: brand reputation, sense of pride, and job security. These factors were perceived to influence the program interviewees' willingness to learn and to apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job. These factors, as part of the transfer climate, represented key aspects of the company culture and the program interviewees' work. Further, the program interviewees actively engaged in the training and the application of new knowledge and skills because they believed the training objectives would increase their chances of selling a recognized brand. Likewise, they expressed a belief that they were working for a company that was growing. The belief that the company was growing gave them a sense of pride in the company that influenced them to learn and apply the pre-sell skills back on the job. Finally, the program interviewees expressed a belief that working for a stable company with recognized brands and products gave them a sense of job security.
The perceived “job security” influenced the program interviewees to learn and apply the pre-sell skills on the job.

**Brand Reputation**

The program interviewees suggested the company’s brand reputation influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell skills. The program interviewees participated in the pre-sell training because they believed the new sales strategy presented in the training objectives would increase their chances of selling a recognized brand. The pre-sell training was designed to give the program interviewees the selling skills necessary to sell the company’s products and brand. The pre-sell training objectives taught the program interviewees how to present the company products as a solution to their customers’ business needs. For example, Pre-Sell Representative 10 described his experience in the pre-sell training this way:

One of the things that sticks out in my mind the most was the motto….*with a need don’t proceed*. This motto taught me to always help the customers identify a perceived need and that the company had a product solution to satisfy the need. My customers, they love it when I come; and they know that whenever the driver comes, they will not have that much inventory because I order only what they will sell.

Citing a similar experience Pre-Sell Representative 8 commented:

Pre-Sell gave us a way to go about it [selling]. A direction to follow and you were not blinded as before, because after taking the [pre-sell] class you had
a few words that you knew right then that you could throw at the people [customers] that would get their attention. So, the [pre-sell] class itself gave you a key to at least get your foot in the door to at least think about how to sell new products.

Finally, Pre-Sell Manager 11 explained, “I work for small independents [private owners] and they are in groups of 10 to 13. I use that [pre-sell] training all the time. I show them the margins or penny profits to show them how the business has grown or not grown. I show what package is doing great and others that we need to improve on. I am always using those [pre-sell] tools.”

Once equipped with the selling skills, the program interviewees were taught to emphasize the company’s brand. The company has a product brand that is globally recognized and over 100 years old. In the beverage industry, the company’s brand reputation is one of innovation, quality, and consumer loyalty. Because the company’s brand was so widely recognized, the program interviewees talked about how the company’s brand influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job. Pre-Sell Representative 20 asserted, “To me, the product is the main thing. You have to be excited about what you are doing out there [in the job setting] especially when you have new promotions. We are there to push [sell] the product." Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 19 suggested, “They [the sells incentives] are all important; but overall, I think the brand is important especially when you are trying to sell something.” All of the study participants in the role of either pre-sell manager or pre-sell representative were tasked with selling existing products as
well as new products into customer accounts. As Pre-Sell Representative 24 put it, “I think good tools with brands and logo helps to sell. The tools are the promotional activity and the product itself: which is the number one product.” Finally, Pre-Sell Representative 2 summarized the perception of the brand recognition with this comment:

As far as working with the public and customers, I think we’ve got it a lot easier than a lot of other companies because we sell the number two product in the nation. It is something that they [employees] want to sell. They know it is going to sell, so we’ve got it easy. You try to sell [the product] to people [customers] and they jump at the opportunity. So, yea, just having the brand name is excellent.

**Pride**

Another transfer climate factor which influenced the program interviewees was their sense of pride in the company. The program interviewees suggested that pride influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job. For some of the study participants, the pride expressed towards the company was because the company had made several acquisitions and gained *anchor bottler status* which was a recognized position in the industry. New territories and franchises were added to the base business and the pre-sell conversion was a part of the new selling system which would allow the company to continue to grow. As Pre-Sell Manager 7 stated, “I think the fact that we are a growing company and we have
grown from a small mom and pop operations to now a very large corporation acquiring other people. We are all here on the ground floor of our delivery system [pre-sell] that is probably going to lead the company through the next big thing. So that encourages me, because what we do now could outline the future of the business."

Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 4 remarked, “Overall, working for this company you are working for a large company. You don’t have to explain to people who you are and who you work for. I work for drink company X and so people automatically know who you are and what you are. That’s positive and makes you proud.”

**Job Security**

The third factor suggested by the program interviewees as influencing their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job was their belief that they were part of a company with job security. For many of the program interviewees, there was an expressed confidence in the parent company, because it had been in business for over 100 years. Further, the company marketed and sold the number two beverage product in the world. Also, the program interviewees believed there would be a demand for the products. Therefore, they believed their jobs were secure. This perceived sense of “job security” was identified by the program interviewees as important because it allowed them to concentrate on the job and not worry about whether they would have a job due to a lack of business. The pre-sell training was designed to provide the program interviewees with tools and
techniques that would increase the consumer demand for the products. Specifically, the tools and techniques taught in the pre-sell training equipped the program interviewees with information regarding profit margins, penny profit, and mark-up which allowed the interviewees to present information that was beneficial to the customer. For example, Pre-Sell Manager 9 said:

Well, the job security is important because you know you can focus on doing the job and not looking over your shoulder every minute. You leave an account and you know it looks good and you have made a competitor look bad. Then it [the job well done] just gives you that feeling of pride. The store we did this morning, I went in and talked to the manager. I said you know we have been talking about this for a while…. that we could have first position. I have all my tools, and I am ready to do it, and he [the customer] said go for it. Then you move everything and you look at it and you know it makes you feel proud. The job security allows you to concentrate on the job.

Pre-Sell Representative 8 shared similar sentiments, “Each time we are coming out with new products time in and time out it, gives me a good attitude. [I] feel that the job is secure. We are dealing with the health food craze, but we are responding to that. So, we are motivated as a drink company. Now we have energy drinks and we can deal with just about anybody. It’s well put together, its job security.” One of the primary sections of the pre-sell training was the emphasis on selling non-carbonated soft drinks. The pre-sell training learning objectives focused on teaching the program
trainees how to sell energy drinks and other non-carbonated products despite the higher cost per case to the customer.

Additionally, the pre-sell training taught the program interviewees how to grow the business by emphasizing the new and exciting benefits to the customers. One of the key learning objectives the program interviewees learned was how to explain the difference between a feature and a benefit. The interviewees were taught that a feature is the graphics, container, and perceived image of purchasing the brand. A benefit was how much profit or marginal contribution the product would generate for the customer. It was believed that by emphasizing the benefits of each new product sold, the program interviewees would increase sales and subsequently grow the business. Hence, continuing to drive demand for the product and the sense of “job security.” When Pre-Sell Manager 7 was describing the transfer climate factors that were important to him, he remarked, “Ah, job security is definitely a positive factor.” Similarly, Pre-Sell Manager 15 responded this way, “I would say job security and benefits. Because lets face it, I am getting older and I feel pretty comfortable that if I do my job, I don’t think anybody will be able to come and say I am not employed.”

**Summary Macro Environment Factors**

The program interviewees in this study identified several transfer climate factors, to include: brand reputation, sense of pride, and job security. These factors were perceived to influence their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job. These factors represented key aspects of the company culture
and the program interviewees’ work. First, the program interviewees suggested that having a recognized brand influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell skills back on the job. They expressed a belief that the pre-sell training provided them with the selling skills necessary to sell the company’s products and the reputation of the company’s brand influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job. Second, the program interviewees suggested that pride influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job. The sense of pride expressed towards the company was because the company had made several acquisitions, gained anchor bottler status, and was recognized in the industry. Additionally, the company was poised for growth and that influenced the sense of pride felt by the program interviewees. Finally, the program interviewees suggested that they were working for a company that gave them a sense of job security. The program interviewees commented on how the perceived sense of “job security” influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training back on the job. They expressed a belief that working for a company that sold the number two beverage product in the world made them feel their jobs were secure which allowed them to concentrate on selling the product.

Perceptions of the Micro Environment Perceived to Either Facilitate or Inhibit the Transfer of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

As the research focus of this study, the program trainees in this study suggested micro environment factors that either facilitated or inhibited their willingness to use
the pre-sell skills back on the job. The trainees were expected to utilize the pre-sell training skills back on the job because the success of the pre-sell conversion was hedged on the transfer of the pre-sell skills to the work environment. Once the program trainees left the pre-sell training and returned to the work environment, these trainees suggested that there were factors that either facilitated or inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job.

The program interviewees identified several micro environment factors, to include: supervisor support, peer support, opportunity to use the pre-sell skills, reward and recognition, and task constraints. These factors were perceived as either facilitating or inhibiting their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. These factors, as part of the work environment, represented key aspects of the transfer climate. The program trainees expressed specific ways in which each of their identified influences in the micro environment facilitated or inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job.

Perceived Influence of Supervisor Support

One of the first transfer climate factors expressed by the program trainees was their perception of the amount of support given by their managers as these trainees attempted to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The program trainees expressed how the perceived role of their managers influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell training back on the job. The role of managers in the pre-sell conversion was to manage the sales aspect of the business and to influence the program trainees to
use the pre-sell skills taught in the pre-sell training back on the job. The program trainees identified two perceptions of their managers as transfer climate factors that influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. First, they perceived their managers as a guide and second, they perceived them as a coach. The first perception, a guide, stemmed from the belief that managers knew the sales business and experienced most of the situations the program trainees would encounter as they tried to use the pre-sell skills in the market. The program trainees believed managers could relate to their problems and would be able to support and guide them as they implemented the pre-sell skills. For Pre-Sell Representative 25, working for a company where the managers were viewed as a resource was important. He commented: “For me, it is knowing that I can call my supervisor and have a support system there. I can present any kind of scenario and I know he will be able to relate to it. I am not ashamed to ask for help.” Pre-Sell Representative 25 continued:

In several of my accounts there are opportunities for [selling in] maybe another cooler [beverage cooler]. [My Supervisor] makes me aware that there are available funds [customer incentives] in case I am not able to talk to the customer into giving us the extra space. Being able to communicate with them [the customers], I don’t know how to put it….just helping me communicate with them [the customers] and walking around the store and findings ways to where I can help increase the products that are in the store and things like that.
Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 2 asserted:

I went from the [pre-sell] training pretty much right into the field so you had to use it [pre-sell skills] pretty quickly. Um, I had a good teacher with me, he [pre-sell manager] can sell ice to Eskimos. Just learning from him [pre-sell manager] and knowing what to say to the customer; what they [the customers] wanted to hear and then telling the customers it [the product] is guaranteed. They [customers] will make this amount of money or we will pick it [the product] up. So, that made it pretty easy.

Finally, Pre-Sell Representative 6 noted, “There is one main positive thing and that is the amount experience that is in the management level. It seems we get some good experienced people [managers] that can help guide.”

The second perception of their managers identified by the program trainees was that of a coach. The perception of a coach stemmed from the belief that the pre-sell system forced the program trainees into a selling role which meant being able to influence customers to buy products. The pre-sell training was designed to equip the program trainees with new selling skills and techniques. The program trainees expressed a willingness to use the new selling skills and techniques in the trade, but they also expressed an appreciation for the coaching provided by the managers. The managers were instrumental in coaching the program trainees on how and when to effectively use the pre-sell skills taught in the pre-sell training.
As Pre-Sell Representative 6 asserted:

My peers and I are on the same level but my supervisor knows his job. We call on him and, basically depending on the situation, instead of telling us he will say…hey do you remember what you learned? He may ask us to think about another situation that he heard us bring up and say how did you Handle that? Tell me what you did? Then he will allow us to use what we learned in [pre-sell] training and give him the answer without telling us.

Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 5 commented:

We are often reminded by management [managers] to talk gross margin, penny profit, and selling techniques. We are reminded by management [managers] in our meetings on every Monday. We are reminded in some form to not just be order takers. We are in the customer accounts to sell product and to find ways to benefit the company as a whole as well as the customer. So, we are often reminded of that [pre-sell training skills].

**Perceived Influence of Peer Support**

The program trainees in this study expressed peer support as a transfer climate factor, within the work environment, that inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job. In the pre-sell system, the delivery drivers were tasked with delivering the product that the pre-sell representatives sold using the pre-sell training skills. So, the success of the pre-sell system was contingent upon the pre-sell representatives and delivery drivers supporting each other by performing the required
job duties. The delivery drivers were responsible for tasks such as delivering the product, placing the product in the coolers or on the shelves, rotating the product, and placing product in the back room of the customer accounts. When the delivery drivers did not perform their duties, the responsibilities for those tasks were transferred to the pre-sell representatives. The perceived impact of the additional task inhibited the pre-sell representatives from selling to the customer, hence, using the pre-sell skills back on the job. Pre-Sell Representative 13 described the perception of the additional work this way, “With the delivery [drivers] specialist not putting up product like he should, it makes it difficult for me when I am trying to sell because the customer says…your drivers did not do this…and so that becomes an obstacle to overcome.”

Furthermore, within the transfer climate of peer support, the program trainees identified two factors they believed inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The first factor was the pre-sell representatives were not assigned a designated delivery driver. As a result of not having a designated delivery driver, the pre-sell representatives felt they spent time fixing or doing re-work left by the delivery drivers. The pre-sell system implemented dynamic routing, which meant, the delivery drivers were switched to different routes each day. The pre-sell representatives believed a designated delivery driver would create a better support system because they both would be familiar with the customer accounts and how each customer account was serviced. As Pre-Sell Representative 2 commented, “My biggest problem in the pre-sell [system] is not having a designated driver and I never know who is delivering to my stops. Um, if it is a new driver, they don’t always know where
stuff [product] is supposed to go.” Having a designed driver in certain areas and that would free me up to be able to do other things except clean up messes all the time.” Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 19 expressed his concerns this way, “Honestly, I have three or four people driving behind me and I don’t know their names. So, I think those two positions should work more together.”

The second factor expressed by the program trainees was the delivery drivers were not included in the pre-sell training, so they did not have the same level of motivation to obtain the pre-sell goals and objectives. As program trainees, the pre-sell representatives knew that part of the pre-sell training learning objectives was to apply the pre-sell skills back on the job. The pre-sell representatives were taught new selling techniques and charged with selling new products to customers as part of the pre-sell conversion. They understood the level of importance of pre-sell because they were an integral part of the conversion. However, the pre-sell training did not include the delivery drivers. There was a misconception that the delivery channel of the business was able to execute and perform in the pre-sell system without the pre-sell training. Pre-Sell Representative 6 asserted:

A lot of emphasis was put on the training for us the salesman [pre-sell representatives]. I think there was a lot of misconception that the delivery side was where they needed to be to make this whole thing work. The way I see it, it is not. The pre-sell training we received was excellent and it got us to a level that we needed to be at to perform, but without the other half [delivery drivers] at or near the same level, then it causes huge problems.
Finally, Pre-Sell Representative 17 described his frustration in this way. “Essentially, the [pre-sell] system is not designed to make us work together.”

In summary, the program trainees felt the pre-sell system missed a critical element in its design: to include the delivery driver in the training. Additionally, the program trainees felt that not having a designated driver caused them to spend time on other tasks not related to the pre-sell skills taught in the class. The lack of peer support created by the lack of a designated delivery driver and by not including the delivery drivers in the pre-sell training created a perception that peer support or, the lack thereof, was an inhibiting transfer climate factor in the work environment.

Perceived Influence of Opportunity to Use the Pre-Sell Skills

Another transfer climate factor, identified by the program trainees, as influencing their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job was the opportunity to perform or use the pre-sell training skills back on the job. A major emphasis of the pre-sell training was the application of the new selling skills and techniques on the job. The pre-sell representatives and pre-sell managers were expected to influence customers to buy the company’s products by using the pre-sell techniques.

The program trainees expressed a belief that being able to use the pre-sell training skills was determined by the selling opportunities back on the job. The program trainees talked about two perceived factors, immediate opportunity to use the pre-sell skills and the introduction of new products, which facilitated the use of the
pre-sell skills back on the job. The first perceived factor, immediate opportunity to use the pre-sell skills, was facilitated by the fact that immediately the program trainees were able to use the selling skills on the job. The program trainees returned to a selling environment that were poised for practicing the pre-sell skills. As Pre-Sell Representative 7 commented, “Is there an opportunity to use what I learned? Yes. Out there in the trade, there is always an opportunity. There will always be an opportunity.”

Similarly, Pre-Sell Manager 14 stated:

> We use the pre-sell skill right after the training. When I went to the pre-sell training our competitor was using the 20 ounce deal. On the ticket, it looked like they were offering a better deal but when you broke down the penny profit, our deal was better. So, when we came back from pre-sell training we were able to capture a lot of business by using what was taught in the training regarding penny profit.

Likewise, Pre-Sell Manager 11 commented:

> Well, I use them [pre-sell skills] everyday. I use them [pre-sell skills] plus I am always doing something to increase sales in the area. I am always trying to get my people [pre-sell representatives] to use the selling skills. I encourage them to use the skill that feels comfortable to them. I do that in each sales meeting. Also, because I have a lot of independent or CDA (customer development accounts) I am always in front of somebody trying
to sell something or keep the customer on contract. So, I use it [pre-sell skills] everyday. Pre-Sell Representative 4 summarized the perception of immediate opportunity to use the pre-sell skills by stating, “Yes, it is. There is definite opportunity and what we learned you can use that no doubt. It was real life training.”

Next, the program trainees cited, the perceived factor of the introduction of new products as a second factor which facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. The company designed the pre-sell training with an emphasis on selling new products introduced into the market. It was the nature of the business to consistently introduce new products to meet the changing demands of the consumers. The new product introductions were products with new flavors, different graphics, and limited time offers. The pre-sell representatives and pre-sell managers were tasked with selling in the new products to customer accounts. Consequently, the introduction of new products created an opportunity to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. For example, Pre-Sell Representative 24 commented, “Yea, new products roll outs [introduction of new products]. We had a lot of them [introduction of new products] this year which forces you to communicate with the owners and let them know what is going on. It gives you an opportunity to sell.” Pre-Sell Representative 6 supported the comment made by Pre-Sell Representative 24 with this comment, “Well, you have every customer, when you bring them new products; they want to know what is the cost. What are they going to make off it? Right then is when your penny profit, margin, mark-up, and your [pre] selling skills have to come in, right off the bat.” Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 13 commented, “I put emphasis on distribution of
new products because in most cases, it will take selling skills that you learned to get new products in the accounts. So, that is one thing that will cause us to go back to our [pre-sell] training.” Finally, Pre-Sell Representative 2 asserted, “Like I said, we are always coming out with new products.”

**Perceive Influence of Rewards for Performance**

The program trainees identified rewards for performance as influencing their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back the job. The program trainees were paid a base salary for their primary job task. The base salary was market competitive and viewed by the company as fair and equitable. However, because the pre-sell conversion was a change to the sales organization, there was a need to create other performance based incentives to motivate the program trainees to use the pre-sell skills and to sell more products. Performance based incentives was part of the company’s compensation structure because it allowed the employees the opportunity to be rewarded for meeting certain sales and distribution goals. In addition, the primary emphasis of the pre-sell training was to equip the program trainees to sell product.

For the program trainees, the opportunity to earn additional compensation was a transfer climate factor that motivated them to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The program trainees described how they believed two reward programs, linked to additional compensation, influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills on the job. The first reward system was the bonus program. The bonus program
implemented by the company enabled the program trainees to earn additional compensation for meeting period sales goals and objectives. The goals were divided into percentages equal to 100%. For example, one goal was to achieve individual volume (sales) for the period which was valued at 20%, a second goal was to achieve 70% distribution on a particular product in certain accounts which was valued at 40%, and a third goal was to achieve 80% distribution on another particular product (new product) which was valued at 40%. Each program trainee was measured against the established goals at the end of each period. There was a perception by the program trainees that if they effectively used the pre-sell training skills back on the job, it would help them to achieve the bonus goals for the period. Pre-Sell Manager 9 explained:

"Each period we give them [pre-sell representatives] goals, we pick something like distribution. Last month it was a particular product and we wanted 100% in all accounts. So, we do give them [pre-sell representatives] things to shoot for at different times each period. Some periods it is a lot of volume and other periods it is more distribution.

Additionally, Pre-Sell Representative 2 asserted, "Well, money is going to always be a factor especially the bonus. The profit margin on energy drinks is enormous and they [management] are really pushing it, which makes me want to push it and get it out there. Because the more I get it out there the more I am going to get on bonus."

The second rewards program the program trainees believed influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job was the sales incentives program. The company used several different types of sales incentives to encourage
the program trainees to compete against one another and to exceed the sales goals
for a specified time period. For example, the program trainees could win the
opportunity to scratch off a section of a sales board which revealed prizes. Other
incentives included gift cards and cash prizes. The sales incentives were another
type of rewards program designed to facilitate the use of the pre-sell skills back on
the job. The program interviewees were taught in the pre-sell training that utilizing the
sell skills was a key to increasing sales and reaching sales targets. Pre-Sell
Representative 5 described the sales incentives in this manner:

There are certain requirements that we have to meet to not only have an
opportunity to gain bonuses but they encourage us to exceed the numbers. If
we exceed them; it gives us an opportunity to scratch a board and the
possibility to win several different prizes. So, the incentives alone that are
offered to us really make me want to perform my responsibilities to the best of
my ability. That alone [incentives] encourages me or boost me to go out and
use those methods I learned in the workshop [pre-sell training] so that I can
perform to the best of my ability.

Likewise, Pre-Sell Manager 7 explained, “We had an abundance of eight ounce cans
and we needed to get rid of them. We told the pre-sell representatives that the guys
who sold the most over 200 cases will get $200 hundred dollars in cash. The next
day they [pre-sell representatives] sold all 20 pallets.”
Perceived Influence of Task Constraints

Finally, the program trainees described *task constraints* as a transfer climate factor which influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The program trainees perceived task constraints as a transfer climate factor that inhibited the use of the pre-sell skills on the job. All of the program trainees were taught, as part of the pre-sell training, that utilizing the pre-sell skills was the key to the success of the pre-sell conversion. The pre-sell training content focused on how to overcome customer objections to purchasing product, but it did not address other factors relevant to the job which caused the program trainees not to have enough time to sell. What the company did not take into account when designing the pre-sell training was transfer climate factors, within the work environment, that had the potential to inhibit the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. Therefore, the program trainees did not experience what they described as task constraints until they returned to the job and attempted to use the pre-sell skills.

Once back on the job, the program trainees described the perceived task constraints as: 1) too many customer accounts (stops per day), 2) inadequate staffing and 3) distribution demands. They expressed a belief that all three of the task constraints inhibited them from using the pre-sell skills back on the job.

**Perceived influence of too many customer accounts.** The program trainees were expected to use the pre-sell skills taught in the training to influence customers to buy products. Along with utilizing the pre-sell skills, the program trainees were tasked with merchandising product, interacting with the customer, and creating orders
for the next delivery. Additionally, the program trainees were tasked with servicing 20 to 30 customer accounts per day or stops per day. When the program trainees attempted to visit the 20 to 30 customer accounts per day, they quickly realized, they were tasked with too many stops. Soon the belief among the program trainees was the number of customer accounts (stops per day) inhibited the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. This belief was supported by the fact that many of the program trainees described how their focus shifted from utilizing the pre-sell skills (selling) to simply: getting through the day. For example, Pre-Sell Representative 4 commented, “I think the number of accounts that we work each day just inhibits from selling like you need to.” Likewise, Pre-Sell Manager 1 asserted, “The negative thing with the pre-sell representatives is they average 20 to 30 stops [customer accounts] per day. Well, you know as well as I do, that if you have 20 to 30 stops per day, there is not a lot of selling going on.” Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 19 stated, “It is not positive because of too many stops, not enough time, and that is basically what it is. I would love to be able to use [what we learned in the pre-sell training] but we are not able to use it.” He continued with this comment, “You could actually do what you were taught in the [pre-sell] training if we had less stops per day. I don’t think there should be any more than 15 stops or maybe 16 stops per day. That would give time for selling.” Finally, Pre-Sell Representative 28 asserted, “Well, I think right now we have too many stops. I mean, I get around but having the time to spend in the account is a challenge. The major thing for me is having more time in the accounts to sell. If we could address those factors then I would use the [pre-sell] skills a lot more.”
Perceived influence of inadequate staffing. The next task constraint described by the program trainees was inadequate staffing. When the company decided to implement the pre-sell system, one of the justifications for making the change was the ability to reduce the workforce. The labor savings generated by the reduction in head count helped to fund the pre-sell training. The program trainees believed that when the company decided to make the pre-sell conversion, they eliminated too many positions, which caused unexpected challenges when trying to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. One unexpected challenge was the program trainees were tasked with doing more in the same amount of time but with less people. The pre-sell training taught the program trainees how utilize new selling techniques and to take on a larger role, but it did not equip them to deal with the perception of being inadequately staffed. The perception of being inadequately staffed was an inhibiting factor to using the pre-sell skills back on the job.

As Pre-Sell Manager 14 commented, “I think the first cut backs have caused us to not have enough people to get things done that we need.” Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 6 asserted, “We are very short in terms of the work force. We are running it thin and I understand why we are running thin, but in the long run it is hurting the company to a great extent.” Likewise, Pre-Sell Representative 2 explained, “Some of the stuff [pre-sell skills] the guys did take with them and incorporated it, but we were too heavy going into it [pre-sell] and the guys made adjustments. They are able to get the selling in, but I don’t think it is as effective as it could be if we were possibly one more man, one more pre-sell representative.” In a
similar manner, Pre-Sell Representative 8 asserted, “I think we are short-handed for what we are expected to do.”

Finally, Pre-Sell Representative 4 stated:

I think one big thing they [the company] did not anticipate is the fact that our job now takes on a larger role. Now, we reset stores and we are redoing cooler sets and obviously that takes time, which is eating up more selling time.

**Perceived influence of distribution demands.** The final task constraint described by the program trainees was the demand for distribution of new products even when it was at the expenses of using the pre-sell skills to develop a sales strategy. The pre-sell training design emphasized the importance of preparing a sales strategy and presenting a product solution that would meet the customers’ needs. When the program trainees returned to their jobs and attempted to implement the pre-sell skills by preparing a sales strategy, it was often overruled by the company’s demand to get the products in to the market. In many cases, the program trainees were forced to distribute the new products even when it was not a feasible selling solution for the customer. For the program trainees, the demand for distribution was perceived as an inhibiting factor to using the pre-sell skills back on the job. The company’s perceive demand for distribution caused the program trainees to abandon the pre-sell skills taught in the training and focus on getting the product into the account.
For example, Pre-Sell Manager 3 explained:

A good example of forcing the product versus selling the product was with product X. You want to get distribution but you have some little stores out there who don’t want it. They are more interested in spending money on the brands they know and are going to put something [cash] back in to their pocket at the end of the day. It was a tough sell to get the distribution that they [company] wanted us to be at.

Similarly, Pre-Sell Representative 19 commented, “A negative for me is trying to make us sell things to some accounts that we know the person will not take, and we are told we are not salesman because we are not selling it to them. So, it [demand for distribution] is always negative. We get forced into selling something and if we don’t it is taken from our bonus.” In a final statement, Pre-Sell Representative 4 asserted:

Sometimes the company becomes very demanding and I am sure they [corporate] is coming down on management. Management in turn comes down on us. So, then you’ve got kind of resentment hanging over the workforce. You are being forced to get something out [new products] and told this is mandatory. This has to be done yesterday.

**Summary of Micro Environment Factors**

Once back on the job, the program trainees identified several micro environment factors; to include, supervisory support, peer support, opportunity to use the pre-sell skills, rewards and recognition, and task constraints as either facilitating or inhibiting
their willingness to use the pre-sell skills. These factors, as part of the transfer climate, represented key aspects of the work environment.

To begin with, the program trainees expressed how the perceived role of their managers influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job. They expressed a belief that the support shown by their managers facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. In fact, the program trainees identified two perceptions of the managers: one- as a guide and two- as a coach. Both perceptions positively influenced the program trainees’ willingness to use the pre-sell skills on the job.

The program trainees also talked about how their perception of peer support, as a transfer climate factor, inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The program trainees described how the lack of a coordinated effort by the pre-sell representatives and delivery drivers led to a perception of additional work and subsequently, an inhibiting factor to using the pre-sell skills. The program trainees identified two factors they believed inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The first factor was the pre-sell representatives were not assigned a designated driver, and the second factor was the delivery drivers were not included in the pre-sell training so they did not have the same level of motivation to obtain the pre-sell goals and objectives.

The program trainees noted that opportunities to use the pre-sells influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. They expressed a belief that being able to use the pre-sell training skills was determined by the selling
opportunities back on the job. Hence, the program trainees perceived the opportunity to use the pre-sell skills as a facilitating transfer climate factor. The program trainees talked about two perceived factors, within the work environment, which facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills; they included, immediate opportunity to use the pre-sell skills, and the introduction of new products. The program trainees talked about how they were able to use the pre-sell skills immediately upon returning to work and how new product introductions consistently created opportunities to use the pre-sell skills.

Additionally, the program trainees expressed how rewards for performance influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job. The program trainees talked about how the performance based incentives provided by the company motivated them to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. They perceived the opportunity to earn additional compensation as a transfer climate factor which facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills. The program trainees identified two reward programs linked to additional compensation; bonus program and sales incentives. Each program allowed the program trainees to earn additional compensation which influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills.

Last, the program trainees described task constraints as a transfer climate factor which inhibited the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. The task constraints identified by the program trainees were experienced when they returned to the job and attempted to use the pre-sell skill. The tasks constraints were described as: 1) too many customer accounts (stops per day), 2) inadequate staffing, and 3)
distribution demands. The program trainees believed all three task constraints inhibited the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job.

**Summary of Key Findings**

The findings from this study were presented in three parts. The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the study participants and a composite description of the pre-sell training program. Also within the first section, there is an examination of the background of the interviewees’ expectations in attending the pre-sell training. The program trainees described their perceived short term expectations as pre-sell training improving their performance back on the job and providing them with new selling techniques and skills which were required because selling dynamics of the business changed. The long term goals were described as future benefits they expected to gain from the pre-sell training such as improved long term value to the company and opportunities for advancement. The short term expectations and long term goals the program trainees talked about suggest they expected the pre-sell training to benefit them as well as the company.

The second section of the chapter, explores the perceptions of the macro environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained skills. The program interviewees identified several macro environment factors; to include, brand reputation, sense of pride, and job security as influencing their willingness to learn and to apply the pre-sell skills back on the job.
Finally, the third section of the chapter delineates the perceptions of the micro environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of knowledge, skills and abilities. This section of the chapter explores what happens when the program interviewees return to the work environment and attempt to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. It is suggested that transfer climate factors either facilitate or inhibit the program interviewees’ willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job. In fact, the program interviewees identified several micro environment factors; to include, supervisor support, peer support, opportunity to use the pre-sell skills, reward for performance, and task constraints as either facilitating or inhibiting their willingness to use the pre-sell skills on the job.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was designed to provide insight on the perceived transfer climate factors that may influence an employee’s learning in a training program. Further, this study will extend the research on descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors that may facilitate or inhibit people as they apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in a training program to the work setting. This study sought to delineate descriptive understandings about perceived transfer climate factors. The research in the area of transfer climate posits that transfer climate is a subcomponent of transfer of training in the work environment. While transfer of training is a complex phenomenon composed of trainee characteristics, training program design, learning environment, and work environment; transfer climate is defined as those work environment factors the trainee perceives as encouragement or discouragement in their use of knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in the training on the job (Cromwell & Kolb, 2002). Transfer climate factors may, therefore, be described as either supportive (favorable, positive) or unsupportive (unfavorable, negative) in relation to the work environment factors. Transfer climate is not the work environment per se, rather the interpretation through which the work environment affects job behaviors and attitudes. Some researchers have used the term “transfer climate” to represent social supports in the organization such as supervisor support and peer support. Other researchers define social supports in the organization as subordinate support, top management support, constraint, and opportunities to use the learned
behaviors. More broadly defined in the literature, transfer climate includes: supervisor support, supervisor sanctions, opportunity to use, peer support, reward and recognition (Cheng & Ho, 2001; Cromwell & Kolb, 2002; Facteau et al., 1995). In summary, the transfer climate is made up of many cues learners receive when they return to work from training that facilitate or inhibit their new skills back on the job.

Specifically, this case study examined the perceptions of managers and their employees who attended a sales training program. The sales training program was designed to teach the managers and their employees new selling techniques and skills that were to be used back on the job. Through this qualitative case study, twenty-eight participants shared their perspectives in relation to the sales training program and how they perceived transfer climate factors as either facilitating or inhibiting the use of the new selling techniques and skills back on the job.

Furthermore, this case study sought to extend the research on descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors that may facilitate or inhibit people as they apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in a training program to the work setting. The questions that guided the study were:

1. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as facilitating (favorable, positive) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

2. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as inhibiting (unfavorable, negative) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do
they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

The target population for this study was nine pre-sell managers and nineteen pre-sell representatives who attended a sales training program designed to teach them new selling skills and techniques in order to be successful in a company business conversion called “pre-sell”. The study participants were expected to demonstrate the new knowledge and skills back in the work setting. The primary method of data collection was through 28 in-depth audio taped interviews. Participant observations during the training sessions and sales document analysis were also used as data sources.

This chapter discusses key findings from the study as they compare to related theory and research. It also addresses implications for practice and future research.

**Summary of Findings**

This case study specifically examined the perceptions of managers and their employees who attended a sales training program. The sales training program was designed to teach the managers and their employees new selling techniques and skills that were to be used back on the job. Through this qualitative case study, twenty-eight participants shared their perceptions in relations to the sales training program and how they perceived transfer climate factors as either facilitating or inhibiting the use of the new selling techniques and skills back on the job. Two research questions guided this study and were used to delineate the program
trainees' perceptions of the transfer climate in relations to the pre-sell training program. The discussion of the findings will be presented in the key aspects of 1) background of trainee expectations, 2) perceptions of the macro organizational work environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained skills, and 3) perceptions of the micro organizational work environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job.

**Background of Trainee Expectations**

This study began with an examination of the background of program interviewees’ expectations in attending the pre-sell training. This study found that despite the requirement to attend the pre-sell training, the program interviewees expressed specific beliefs and expectations for attending the training that influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The program interviewees shared two short term expectations for attending the pre-sell training. The first was the program interviewees perceived the pre-sell training as a way to improve their performance back on the job. The second was the program interviewees understood the selling dynamics of the business was changing and, with that change, a new set of selling techniques and skills were required. The program interviewees believed that learning the new selling techniques presented in the pre-sell training would prove beneficial to them in their new role.

Additionally, the program interviewees expressed two long term goals for attending the pre-sell training. The first long term goal was they perceived the pre-sell
training as something that would improve their long term value to the company. The second long term goal was they perceived the pre-sell training as something that would improve their opportunities for advancement. Several studies in the literature suggest a relationship between training, job and career aspirations (Clark, Dobbins, & Ladd, 1993; Noe, 1986; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991). This study found that the program interviewees did perceive a relationship between training, job, and career aspirations.

**Perceptions of the Macro Organizational Work Environment**

This study also explored the perceptions of the macro organizational work environment perceived to influence learner engagement and transfer of learning. The program interviewees identified several macro environment factors, to include: brand reputation, sense of pride, and job security. These factors were perceived as either facilitating or inhibiting the program interviewees' willingness to learn and to apply the pre-sell skills back on the job. Several studies in the literature support the claim that contextual factors exert an influence on individual responses through their perceptions of the organizational environment (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005; Kozlowski & Salas, 1997; Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). In other words, important, tangible, and meaningful work environment factors such as brand recognition, sense of pride, and job security are stimuli that underlie perceptions of the context and can either support or discourage the use of new skills prior to the implementation of training. This study found that there were perceptions of the macro environment of the company
perceived to influence learner engagement in the transfer of learning. Also, this study lends support to the research that purports training programs do not occur in isolation; they exist in a larger organizational context.

**Perceptions of the Micro Organizational Work Environment**

The final discussion of the findings in this study delineates the perceptions of the micro environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities. The study’s findings explored what happened when the program interviewees return to the work environment and attempted to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. Many studies in the literature suggested that transfer climate factors either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from training to the work setting (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Ford et al., 1992; Holton et al., 1997; Mathieu et al., 1992; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey et al., 1995). In this study, the program interviewees identified several micro environment factors, to include: supervisor support, peer support, opportunity to use the pre-sell skills, reward for performance, and task constraints. The micro environment factors were perceived as either facilitating or inhibiting the study participants’ willingness to use the pre-sell skills on the job.

The program interviewees identified supervisor support as a transfer climate factor which facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. Supervisor support has clearly been established in the literature as a critical transfer climate factor influencing the transfer process. Much of the literature lends support to the
hypothesis that supervisor’s support is significant in the transfer of learned behaviors to the work setting (Bates & Holton, 2004; Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Ford et al., 1992; Hawley & Barnard, 2005; Seyler, Holton, Bates, Burrnett, & Carvalho, 1998).

Another transfer climate factor identified by the program interviewees was peer support. Much of the literature on peer support as a transfer climate factor suggested that peer support was positively related to perceived transfer (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005; Facteau et al., 1995; Ford et al., 1992; Hawley & Barnard, 2005; Seyler et al., 1998). However, this study’s findings suggested that a lack of peer support was perceived as negatively related to transfer and because of that perception, the work was perceived to be more difficult. Hence, the program interviewees expressed peer support as a transfer climate factor that inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job.

Additionally, the program interviewees identified the opportunity to use or [perform] the pre-sell skills back on the job as a transfer climate factor. They perceived the opportunity to use the pre-sell skills as a factor that facilitated the use of the skills back on the job. Opportunity to use or [perform] is defined as the extent to which a trainee is provided with or actively obtains work experiences relevant to the tasks for which he or she was trained. Opportunity to use or [perform] the knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in training has clearly been established in the literature as a critical transfer climate factor influencing the transfer process (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Hirsch-Richman, 2001; Lim & Johnson, 2002; Merriam & Leachy, 2005; Seyler et al., 1998). The program interviewees in this study expressed a belief that being
able to use the pre-sell skills was determined by the selling opportunities back on the job.

Furthermore, the program interviewees described how they perceived rewards for performance as a transfer climate factor that facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. Much of the research in this area purports, if individuals believe there is a link between training and rewards, then, it is likely they will be enthusiastic about training and will be willing to make an effort to acquire desired knowledge and skills (Noe, 1986; Tracey et al., 2001; Yamnill & Mclean, 2001).

The program interviewees in this study were able to receive additional compensation in the form of bonuses and sales incentives for meeting certain sales and distribution goals. For the program interviewees, the opportunity to earn additional compensation and participate in the sales incentives motivated them to use the pre-sell skills on the job.

Finally, the program interviewees described task constraints as a transfer climate factor which influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. For the program interviewees, task constraints were identified as inhibiting the use of the pre-sell skills on the job. Prevalent assumptions in the literature suggest that, although trainees may be able to apply the learned knowledge and skills during a training program, elements of the trainees' work environment may impact their ability to transfer these learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job (Facteau et al., 1995; Hawley & Barnard, 2005; Holton, 2000; Lim & Morris, 2006; Noe, 1986; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tannebaum & Yukl, 1992; Tracey et al., 1995). The
program interviewees in this study talked about three perceived task constraints which inhibited their use of the pre-sell skills on the job. One was having too many customer accounts or stops per day. The second was the perceived impact of inadequate staffing. The third was the perceived constraint created by the company’s demand for distribution of new products at the expense of using the selling skills taught in the pre-sell training.

**Conclusions**

The most meaningful factor in evaluating the effectiveness of training is the trainee’s work performance and therefore, a better performance indicator, maybe in the knowledge and skills employees transfer from the training back to the work environment (Burrow & Berardinelli, 2003). Although, program trainees may be able to apply the learned knowledge and skills during a training program, elements of the trainees’ work environment may impact their ability to transfer these learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job. One conceptualization of the influence of the work environment variables on the transfer of training to the job is through a transfer climate (Bates et al., 1996). Transfer climate refers to an individual’s perceptions about a defined set of organization elements, such as policies, rewards, and managerial behaviors. In effect, [transfer] climate emerges from aspects of the organizational context that individual employees perceive to be important and influential to their work (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005). Furthermore, transfer climate refers to an individual’s perception about characteristics of the work environment that
facilities or inhibits the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job (Holton et al., 1997; Tracey et al., 1995).

Several studies concur that transfer climate can significantly influence an individual’s ability and motivation to transfer learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job (Ford et al., 1992; Mathieu et al., 1992; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey et al., 1995). However, few studies address the issue of employees’ perceptions of the transfer climate. More importantly, little research has attempted to provide descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors that may facilitate or inhibit people as they apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in a training program to the job. This study will extend the research by providing descriptive understandings about perceived transfer climate factors. The descriptive understandings about the perceived transfer climate factors will be discussed in each of the conclusions against a backdrop of related theory and research.

Conclusion 1: Program trainees’ perceived expectations of attending training.

Conclusion 2: Perceived transfer climate factors of the macro organizational work environment.

Conclusion 3: Perceived transfer climate factors of the micro organizational work environment.
Conclusion 1

Program Trainees’ Perceived Expectations of Attending Training

This study began with an examination of the background of program interviewees’ expectations in attending the pre-sell training. The program interviewee's expectations in attending the pre-sell training align with Holton’s (1996) model of transfer of training. In the model, Holton posits that transfer motivation falls into four categories: intervention fulfillment, learning outcomes, job attitudes, and expected utility. Intervention fulfillment refers to the extent to which training meets or fulfills training expectations and desires (Holton, 1996). Additionally, the research posits, if individuals perceive that what they learn is relevant to their goal (what they need to know) or an intervention has met their expectations and fulfilled their need for performance related to learning, they will be more motivated to transfer learning into the job performance (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). This study confirms the research and found that despite the requirement to attend the pre-sell training, the program interviewees expressed specific beliefs and expectations for attending the training that influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The program interviewees shared two short term expectations for attending the pre-sell training. The first was the program interviewees perceived the pre-sell training as a way to improve their performance back on the job. The second was the program interviewees understood the selling dynamics of the business was changing and, with that change, a new set of selling techniques and skills were required. The program
interviewees believed that learning the new selling techniques presented in the pre-sell training would prove beneficial to them in their new role.

Additionally, the program interviewees expressed two long term goals for attending the pre-sell training. The first long term goal was they perceived the pre-sell training as something that would improve their long term value to the company. The second long term goal was they perceived the pre-sell training as something that would improve their opportunities for advancement. Clark, Dobbins, and Ladd (1993) found that trainees who perceived training to have more job and career utility were more motivated. Noe and Schmitt (1986) investigated the relationship between the training transfer and trainee’s attitudes concerning jobs, careers, and participation in the training program. The results of their study suggested that job involvement and career planning are antecedents of learning and behavior change. Tannenbaum et al. (1991) also found that participants with more positive job attitudes would be expected to be more motivated to transfer learning to performance. This study agrees with Tannenbaum et al. and found that the program interviewees did perceive a relationship between training, job, and career aspirations. The notion of “improving their long term value” to the company came from the feeling that pre-sell training was an investment on the part of the company in the employees who were part of the pre-sell conversion. So, as a result of the company’s investment, the program interviewees felt that by participating in the training, it improved their value to the company. Likewise, the program interviewees perceived that by attending the pre-sell training it would improve their opportunity for advancement. They felt the pre-sell
conversion had already allowed them to move to another position within the company and the pre-sell training would equip them for a future advancement opportunity within the company. The perceived long term goals expressed by the program interviewees are consistent with Mathieu and Martineau’s (1997) research which suggest that trainees who are motivated to learn have an advantage over those who do not have positive training related attitudes and expectations. Finally, the perceived expectations of attending the pre-sell training support Schneider and Rentschs’ (1988) argument that transfer climate is described as a “sense of imperative” that arises from a person’s perceptions of the work environment and that influences the extent to which a person applies learned skills to the job.

Conclusion 2

Influential Perceived Transfer Climate Factors of the Macro Organizational Work Environment

This study also explored the perceptions of the macro environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of trained skills. The program interviewees identified several macro environment factors, to include: brand reputation, sense of pride, and job security as influencing their willingness to learn and to apply the pre-sell skills back on the job. First, the program interviewees suggested that the company’s brand reputation influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell skills back on the job. The pre-sell training was designed to give the program interviewees the selling skills necessary to sell the company’s products and brand.
Once equipped with the selling skills, the program interviewees were taught to emphasize the company’s brand. The company had a product brand that was globally recognized and over 100 years old. In the beverage industry, the company’s brand reputation was one of innovation, quality, and consumer loyalty. Because the company’s brand was so widely recognized, the program interviewees talked about how the company’s brand influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job.

Second, the program interviewees described how pride influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job. For some of the program interviewees, the pride expressed towards the company was because the company had made several acquisitions and gained anchor bottler status, which was a recognized position in the industry. Additionally, the company acquired new territories and franchises which allowed the company to grow. Finally, the perception that the company had grown from a small operation to a large corporation facilitated the pride expressed by the program interviewees. The program interviewees talked about how being part of the pre-sell conversion cause them to feel a part of the company’s growth and that made them proud. The sense of pride influenced the program interviewees' willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell skills back on the job.

Finally, the program interviewees talked about how being a part of a company with job security influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell training skills back on the job. Many of the program interviewees expressed great confidence
in the parent company because it was in business for over 100 years. The company marketed and sold the number two beverage product in the world. Hence, the program interviewees believed there would be a demand for the products and their jobs were secure. So, the program interviewees perceived a sense of “job security” which allowed them to concentrate on the job and not worry about whether they would have a job due to a lack of business. With the sense of “job security” present, the program interviewees suggested it influenced their willingness to learn and apply the pre-sell skills taught in the training.

Past research confirms current findings that transfer climate is determined by an individual’s perceptions about a defined set of organizational elements. Koslowski and Salas (1997) purport an organizational theory that enhances the identification of tangible work environment characteristics. The theory states that contextual factors exert an influence on individual responses through their perceptions of the organizational environment (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). In other words, important, tangible, and meaningful work environment factors such as brand recognition, sense of pride, and job security are stimuli that underlie perceptions of the context and can either support or discourage the use of new skills prior to the implementation of training. Also, this study lends support to the research that purports training programs do not occur in isolation; they exist in a larger organizational context. In the research by Bates and Khasawneh (2005) they purport:

“in effect, [transfer] climate emerges from aspects of the organizational context that individual employees perceive to be important and influential in their work.
Therefore, [transfer] climate is seen as a more salient feature of an organization to the degree that different beliefs and meanings influence individual expectations, perceptions, and interpretations of the organizational environment that have a major impact on behavior” (p.47).

More importantly, the perceived transfer climate factors in the macro organizational environment extended the research on transfer climate by providing descriptive patterns and understandings of transfer climate factors. The program interviewees identified several macro environment factors, to include: brand reputation, sense of pride, and job security. These factors were perceived as influencing their willingness to learn and to apply the pre-sell skills back on the job.

The findings of this study fills a gap in the literature by exploring the meanings and understandings of transfer climate factors in the macro environment that influence a trainee’s willingness to learn and apply what was learned in training back to the job.

**Conclusion 3**

**Influential Perceived Transfer Climate Factors of the Micro Organizational Work Environment**

The final discussion of the findings in this study delineates the perceptions of the micro environment perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities. The findings of this study explored what happened when the program interviewees returned to the work environment and attempted to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. In the research by Baldwin and Ford (1988),
Mathieu et al. (1992), Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992), they posits, even when learning occurs during a training program, the transfer climate may either support, inhibit, or prevent, its application on the job. Studies by Holton et al. and Tracey et al. (1995) refer to transfer climate as an individual’s perception about characteristics of the work environment that facilitate or inhibit the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities, to the job. Additionally, Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) state, transfer climate is defined as those situational cues and consequences that either inhibit or help to facilitate the transfer of what was learned in training into the job setting. These studies conclude that transfer climate can significantly affect the individual’s ability and motivation to transfer learning to the job. This study aligns with claims of transfer climate researchers that transfer climate factors either facilitates or inhibits the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job setting. In this study, the program interviewees identified several micro environment factors, to include: supervisor support, peer support, opportunity to use, reward for performance, and task constraints. The micro environment factors were perceived as either facilitating or inhibiting the study participants’ willingness to use the pre-sell skills on the job.

**Supervisor support.** The program interviewees identified supervisor support as a transfer climate factor which facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. In this study, supervisor support was expressed by the program interviewees as their perception of the amount of support given by the managers as they attempted to use the pre-sell skills on the job. The program interviewees identified two perceptions of the managers that influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the
job. First, they perceived the managers as a guide and second, as a coach. The first perception, a guide, stemmed from the belief that managers knew the sales business and experienced most situations the program interviewees would encounter as they tried to use the pre-sell skills in the market. It is suggested that because the managers could guide the program interviewees, as they implemented the pre-sell skills, they perceived the managers as a resource and that influenced them to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The second perception, a coach, stemmed from the belief that the managers were instrumental in coaching the program interviewees on how and when to effectively use the pre-sell skills taught in the pre-sell training. The managers would prompt or remind the program interviewees of the pre-sell skills and coach them through different customer situations where the pre-sell skills would apply. Again, it is suggested, that because of the perceived role of the managers as a coach it influenced the program interviewees to use the pre-sell skills on the job.

In a recent study, Hawley and Barnard (2005) define supervisor support as providing reinforcement for learning on the job, including setting goals with trainees, modeling behavior, and providing positive reinforcement for the transfer of new skills. Additionally, Hawley and Barnard (2005) state, supervisor support comes in many forms, such as encouragement to use newly learned knowledge, skills, and abilities; assistance in identifying situations where learned knowledge and skills can be used; guidance and feedback on properly applying newly learned skills; sufficient practice; holding trainees accountable to apply new knowledge, skills, and abilities; and rewarding for performance. The perceptions of supervisory support expressed by the
program interviewees in this study are consistent with the definitions proposed in the research.

Furthermore, this study addressed one of the two problems presented in the research by Baldwin and Ford. In their review of the work environment characteristics, Baldwin and Ford (1988) examined seven studies that researched the relationship of work environment characteristics to transfer of training. These seven studies used large-scale questionnaires to examine the relationship of work climate, leadership climate, and supervisory support to transfer criteria. Baldwin and Ford (1988) determined that these studies had two major problems. The first issue is that work environment characteristics were not operationalized in past research. For example, research proposes that supervisory support is an important component impacting transfer of training, however, there is little attempt to understand the specific behaviors that lead to perceptions of support by trainees. This study addresses the first issue proposed by Baldwin and Ford (1988) by providing descriptive patterns and understandings of specific behaviors that lead to perceptions of supervisor support by program trainees.

Finally, the research on transfer climate includes supervisor support in the concept of social support within the organization. According to Noe (1986), the extent to which the supportive social context (supervisors and peers) of the work environment provides reinforcement and feedback, the more likely the trainee will use the learned skills and knowledge on the job. Supervisor support has clearly been established in the literature as a critical transfer climate factor influencing the transfer
process. However, there continues to be mixed results and gaps in literature regarding the specific supervisor factors that influence transfer (Clarke, 2002; Hawley & Barnard, 2005). Some of the studies lend support to the hypothesis that supervisor's support is significant in the transfer of learned behaviors to the work setting (Bates & Holton, 2004; Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Ford et al., 1992; Hawley & Barnard, 2005; Seyler et al., 1998). Other studies did not find a significant positive relationship between supervisor's support and transfer (Awoniyi et al., 2002; Facteau et al., 1995; Van der Klink, Gielen, & Nauta, 2001). This study supports the hypothesis in the research that suggests supervisor’s support is significant in the transfer of learned behaviors to the job. In fact, this study agrees that managers play a critical role as transfer agents when they use their managerial skills and abilities to support and influence employee learning and transfer, help training generate the outcomes for which it was intended, and enhance the return their organization realizes from the training investment (Bates, 2003).

Peer support. Another transfer climate factor identified by the program interviewees was peer support. Peer support is defined as the degree to which peers mutually identify and implement opportunities to apply knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in training; encourage the use of or expect the application of new skills; display patience with difficulties associated with applying new skills; or demonstrated appreciation for the use of new skills (Holton & Baldwin, 2003). This study found that peer support was not perceived as supportive. Because of that perception, the work was perceived to be more difficult. Hence, the program interviewees expressed the
lack of peer support as a transfer climate factor that inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job. In the pre-sell system, pre-sell representatives and delivery drivers were tasked with performing duties that required coordination and synergy. When the delivery drivers did not perform their duties and responsibilities, those tasks were transferred to the pre-sell representatives. The perceived impact of the additional task inhibited the pre-sell representatives from selling to customers; hence, using the pre-sell skills back on the job.

In this study, the program interviewees identified two factors, within the transfer climate of peer support, they believed inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The first factor was the pre-sell representatives were not assigned a designated delivery driver. The delivery drivers were switched to different routes each day because of a dynamic routing system and as a result, they were not familiar with the customer accounts or how to properly service the accounts. The perceived impact was the pre-sell representatives spent time fixing or re-doing the work performed by the delivery drivers. The second factor expressed by the program interviewees was the delivery drivers were not included in the pre-sell training. So, the delivery drivers did not have the same level of motivation to obtain the pre-sell goals and objectives. The program interviewees suggested that by not including the delivery drivers in the pre-sell training, they did not embrace the importance of utilizing the pre-sell training skills back on the job. Again, the lack of coordination between the delivery drivers and pre-sell representatives caused the program interviewees to believe that it inhibited their ability to use the pre-sell skills back on
the job. Cromwell and Kolb (2002), purport, “trainees who perceive higher levels of peer support throughout the training program indicated they were applying, to a higher extent, the newly learned knowledge and skills” (p. 6). The experiences shared by the program interviewees in this study suggested the opposite of the statement offered by Cromwell and Kolb (2002). The program interviewees perceived a low level of peer support by the delivery drivers which impacted their ability to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. The research by Lawson and Shen (1998) posit, it is clear that organizational members observe actions and associated consequences of other members and compare themselves to others and that the “perception” of equity is much more important than actual equity conditions.

Additionally, Xiao (1996) identified two factors that affect the work group: 1) support peers provide for using new learning, and 2) the extent to which the group norm is open to change. Additionally, Ford et al. (1992) discovered that when employees described their immediate work groups as supportive they performed more complex and difficult task more easily. The findings of this study somewhat differs from the research because the program interviewees described their immediate work group (delivery drivers) as non-supportive and the work was perceived as more difficult. Additionally, this study aligns with the research by Lawson and Shen (1998) that posit, it is clear that organizational members observe actions and associated consequences of other members and compare themselves to others and that the “perception” of equity is much more important than actual equity conditions.
Furthermore, the research on social supports includes peer support as a major source of social support within the organization. Facteau et al. (1995) identified four major sources of support, to include: subordinate, peer, supervisor, and top management. Their study was designed to examine the independent and differential effects of subordinate support, peer support, supervisor support, and top management support on training transfer of nine hundred sixty-seven managers and supervisors. Their study concluded that of the four forms of social support, subordinate and peer support are positively related to perceived transfer. Other studies on social support factors found support for the critical role of peer support in facilitating training transfer (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005; Hawley & Barnard, 2005; Seyler et al., 1998). In a study by Chiaburu and Marinova, (2005) they posit, peer support has been related to both pre-training motivation and skill transfer with the relationship between peer support and skill transfer being the stronger of the two. While this study supports the research on the critical role of peer support as a social support factor and impacting motivation to transfer, its findings differ from the research that purports peer support as positively related to perceived transfer. The program interviewees in this study expressed peer support as a transfer climate factor that inhibited their willingness to use the pre-sell training skills back on the job. Therefore, peer support was negatively related to perceived transfer of training.

**Opportunity to use.** Additionally, the program interviewees identified the opportunity to use the pre-sell skills or [perform] the skills back on the job as a transfer climate factor. They perceived the opportunity to use the pre-sell skills as a
factor that facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. Opportunity to use or [perform] is defined as the extent to which a trainee is provided with or actively obtains work experiences relevant to the tasks for which he or she was trained (Ford et al., 1992). The definition also makes it clear that the opportunity to use is not simply a function of the assignment of task by a supervisor to the trainee. It includes the active efforts of trainees to obtain work experiences relevant to the tasks for which they were trained.

The program interviewees in this study expressed a belief that being able to use the pre-sell skills was determined by the selling opportunities back on the job. They talked about two perceived factors, immediate opportunity to use the pre-sell skills and the introduction of new products, which facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. First, the program interviewees described “immediate opportunity to use the selling skills on the job.” The immediate opportunity was created by a selling environment that was poised for practicing the pre-sell skills. Second, the program interviewees cited the introduction of new products as a factor which facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. The company consistently introduced new products with new flavors, different graphics, and limited time offers, which created an opportunity to use the pre-sell skills back on the job.

The study’s findings agree with Hirsch-Richman (2001) that in a work environment which supports the application of trained skills, values learning and development activities, trainees may be better able to apply their new skills because they have the resources, support, and encouragement needed to translate their goals
into effort and performance. Additionally, this study's findings supports other studies cited in the literature that suggest “opportunity to use” as a significant key factor in transfer of training (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Lim & Johnson, 2002; Merriam & Leachy, 2005; Seyler et al., 1998). As Axtell et al. (1996) purport, a key factor affecting the transfer of training to the job is having the opportunity to use the newly learned skills. Finally, this study agrees with Elangovan and Karakowski (1999) who purport, skills may be lost over time if trainees are not given the opportunity to use them immediately post training.

**Reward for performance.** Furthermore, the program interviewees described how they perceived rewards for performance as a transfer climate factor that facilitated the use of the pre-sell skills back on the job. The program interviewees expressed how they were able to receive additional compensation in the form of bonuses and sales incentives for meeting certain sales and distribution goals. For the program interviewees, the opportunity to earn additional compensation and participate in the sales incentives motivated them to use the pre-sell skills on the job. This study's findings agree with Yamnill and Mclean (1991) that performance can result in two kinds of rewards: 1) intrinsic, which is intangible (feeling of accomplishment), and 2) extrinsic, which is tangible outcomes (pay, promotion).

Additionally, this study supports the research that suggest, if individuals believe there is a link between training and rewards, then it is likely they will be enthusiastic about training and will be willing to make an effort to acquire desired knowledge and skills (Tracey et al., 2001). This study’s findings also align with Vroom's (1964)
expectancy theory. Expectancy is the strength of an individual’s belief about whether or not a potential outcome is possible (Ramlall, 2004). According to Vroom (1964), individuals seek equity in their jobs. Therefore, individuals measure job satisfaction by the extent to which rewards received match the rewards the employees believe should be received (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001). As a result, organizations must be aware that the rewards the organization is offering must align with what the employee wants. Hence, organizations should offer rewards to individuals that they value positively (Robbins, 2000). Finally, this study supports the claim by Noe (1986) that “if an individual feels that by attending training he or she is likely to gain equity in pay or other sought-after rewards, there is a greater change that learning will occur, and such learning will transfer to the job” (p.55).

**Task constraints.** Finally, the program interviewees described task constraints as a transfer climate factor which influenced their willingness to use the pre-sell skills back on the job. For the program interviewees, task constraints were identified as inhibiting the use of the pre-sell skills on the job. The program interviewees in this study talked about three perceived task constraints which inhibited their use of the pre-sell skills on the job. One was having too many customer accounts or stops per day. The second was the perceived impact of inadequate staffing. The third was the perceived constraint created by the company’s demand for distribution of new products at the expense of using the selling skills taught in the pre-sell training. In the research by Foxon (1994), he posits, the training environment cannot replicate or incorporate the organizational system pressures and factors that influence trainees to
revert to their former work habits and forget about the training applications. Foxon (1994) states, “at best the training environment is only an approximation of the application environment” (p.3). Moreover, trainers do little to equip learners with techniques and skills to facilitate transfer. Consequently, when learners return to the job a variety of organizational pressures may function to inhibit transfer. The findings of this study agree with Foxon’s research. The perceived task constraints, as described by the program interviewees, were not experienced until they returned to the job and attempted to use the pre-sell skills.

Additionally, this study’s findings are consistent with prevalent assumptions in the literature that suggest, although trainees may be able to apply the learned knowledge and skills during a training program, elements of the trainees’ work environment may impact their ability to transfer these learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job (Facteau et al., 1995; Hawley & Barnard, 2005; Holton, 2000; Lim & Morris, 2006; Noe, 1986; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tannebaum & Yukl, 1992; Tracey et al., 1995). According to Peters and O’Connor (1980) task constraints or [situational constraints] are defined as characteristics of the work environment that promote, reduce, or prevent an individual from performing on the job. Their research identified eight task constraints or [situational constraints] that adversely affect performance: 1) job-related information - information from supervisors, peers, customers, needed to do the job assigned; 2) tools and equipment – specific tools, equipment, and machinery needed to do the job; 3) materials – materials and supplies needed to do the job assigned; 4) budgetary support – financial support and
budgetary resources, such as money for hiring personnel that are a part of the job assigned; 5) required services and help from others – the services and help from others needed to do the job assigned; 6) task preparation – previous personal preparation through previous education and experience needed to do the job assigned; 7) time availability – the available time taking into consideration both time limits imposed and interruptions, to the job assigned; and 8) work environment – physical aspects of the work environment that facilitate the ability to do the work assigned, such as temperature, noise, and other distractions. Peters and O’Conner (1980) argue that employees confronted with task constraints or [situational constraints] become frustrated when they cannot translate work motivation into performance. Furthermore, in three separate studies Mathieu et al. (1992), Noe and Schmidt (1986), and Ford et al. (1992) found empirical support for trainees’ perceived task constraints or [situational constraints] having a significant negative impact on trainees’ motivation to learn and motivation to transfer training.

However, Facteau et al. (1995) concluded that task constraints or [situational constraints] were not significantly related to perceived training transfer. These authors contribute their findings to the fact that managers did not believe that severe task constraints were present in the work environments, which is the case in most organizations (Clarke, 2002; Facteau et al., 1995). This study’s findings differ from the conclusions drawn by Facteau et al., (1995) and support the conclusions that task constraints do, in fact, have a significant negative impact on trainees’ motivation to learn and motivation to transfer training. The program interviewees in this study
described how the perceived task constraints inhibited them from using the pre-sell skills back on the job.

**Implications for Practice**

The implications derived from this study are two fold: 1) training practitioners and human resource development professionals should be aware of the difference between transfer of training and transfer climate, and 2) training practitioners and human resource development professionals should consider transfer climate factors in the macro work environment and micro work environment when planning training and development initiatives as well as evaluating the effectiveness of training.

Specifically, the findings of study suggest that within the work environment, the transfer climate emerges from aspects of the organizational context that individual employees perceive to be important and influential in their work (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005). Hence, the transfer climate is not the work environment per se, but rather the interpretation through which the work environment affects job behaviors and attitudes. For training practitioners and human resources development professionals, it important to differentiate between transfer of training and transfer climate because a cursory review of the literature can be confusing due to the interchangeable use of work environment, organizational climate, and transfer climate. In fact, transfer of training is a very complex concept made up of multiple categories or factors related to the trainee, training design, transfer, climate [environment] and many other factors. Transfer climate is a subcomponent of transfer of training in the work environment
category. Transfer climate has been defined in the literature as work environment factors that the trainee perceives as encouragement [facilitating] or discouragement [inhibiting] in their use of knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in training to the job (Cromwell & Kolb, 2002).

Additionally, the findings of this study suggest that although trainees may be able to apply the learned knowledge, skills, and abilities during a training program, elements of the trainees’ work environment may impact their ability to transfer the learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job. Specifically, transfer climate factors in both the macro and micro organizational environment may either facilitate or inhibit the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job. The program interviewees in this study expressed perceived expectations of attending the pre-sell training and how those expectations influenced their motivation to transfer what was learned in the class room to the job. Practitioners should be aware of trainees’ expectations of attending training beyond the requirement to attend by the organization. Understanding the trainees’ expectations for attending training can help to identify those transfer climate factors that may be perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the use of the learned knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job.

Likewise, the program interviewees in this study expressed perceived transfer climate factors in the macro organizational environment that impacted the degree or intent to transfer what was learned in the pre-sell class room to the job. Practitioners should be aware of the transfer climate factors in the macro organizational environment that are perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the use of learned
knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job. By understanding the perceived transfer climate factors in the macro organizational environment, practitioners may gain an insight into the perception of the organization’s culture, reputation, and employees’ opinion about the organization.

Finally, the program interviewees in this study expressed perceived transfer climate factors in the micro organizational environment that impacted the degree or intent to transfer what was learned in the class room to the job. Practitioners should be aware of the transfer climate factors in the micro organizational environment that are perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in the class room to the job. Many of the transfer climate factors identified in the micro environment can provide practitioners with information that can be used to develop a pre and post assessment of the work environment before and after a training initiative.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

To assist researchers in their understanding of the transfer climate factors that either facilitate or inhibit the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from class room to the job, this researcher recommends additional qualitative studies and longitudinal studies of transfer climate factors within the work environment. People and work environments are not static, but rather in constant change. By collecting data from a sample at different points in time, researchers can study changes or continuity in the sample’s characteristics (Gall et al., 1996). Additional qualitative
studies are essential for exploring descriptive patterns and meanings of understanding which would be useful research for practitioners and researchers who want to understand the perceptions that people describe as either facilitating or inhibiting the transfer of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from the class room to the job. Therefore, several research questions are suggested for future investigation:

1. How do the transfer climate factors that are perceived to facilitate the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from the class room to the job impact the trainees’ ability to maintain the new skills over time?

2. Does the transfer climate factors that are perceived to inhibit the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from the class room to the job change over time and what environmental factors cause that change, if any?

Additionally, a number of recommendations can be made related to the research that may serve to refine future research in this area. First, the population for this study was limited to the organization that the researcher had access. The organization was selected for specific purposes stated in Chapter Three. While this was an ideal setting from the researcher’s perspective, it would be valuable to conduct research in a variety of workplace settings or organizations that were conducting training to facilitate an organizational change initiative. This researcher recommends extending future research to organizational context, to include: government agencies, nonprofits, religious organizations, etc. Second, this researcher recommends extending future research to explore what transfer climate factors are perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of learned knowledge,
skills, and abilities when the training medium is technology. The last recommendation for extending future research in this area is to explore the perceived transfer climate factors that either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from the classroom to the job setting, when the job setting is telecommuting.

Finally, the number of program interviewees was limited which, in turn, may have provided a limited picture of the research results. Although, most program interviewees shared extensive information related to the topic, by expanding the population size more learning would be revealed.

**Summary**

This research study was designed to provide insight on the perceived transfer climate factors that may influence an employee’s learning in a training program. The study sought to delineate descriptive understandings about perceived transfer climate factors. Specifically, this case study examined the perceptions of managers and their employees who attended a sales training program. The research findings resulting from this study have filled a gap that exists in the transfer literature by providing descriptive patterns and understanding of the perceived transfer climate factors that either facilitate or inhibit the use of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from the classroom to the job. When studying human subjects interacting with training programs and work environments, transfer studies will continue to produce conflicting and mixed results. However, by having research that delineates the descriptive
patterns and understandings of the perceived transfer climate factors in the work environment that either facilitates or inhibits the transfer of training, training practitioners and human resources development professionals can more effectively design, implement, and evaluate training programs. More importantly, they can develop techniques to help trainees’ apply transfer strategies before, during, and after training that will facilitate the trainees’ improved job performance and organizational effectiveness.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
Appendix A. Interview Guide

North Carolina State University: Interview Guide

Title of Research Proposal: Perceived Transfer Climate Factors in the Macro and Micro Organizational Work Environment

Principal Investigator: Byron Diggs

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. James Burrow/ Dr. Carol Kasworm

Overarching Research Questions:

A. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as facilitating (favorable, positive) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate their perception to the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

B. What transfer climate factors do managers and their employees perceive as inhibiting (unfavorable, negative) the use of trained skills back on the job? How do they relate their perception of the transfer of what was learned in the classroom to the job setting?

Interviewees: Pre-Sell Managers and Pre-Sell Representatives     Time: 1 hour

Interview questions and probes:

Focus: Describe their perception of work environment factors that are perceived to be facilitating (favorable, positive) the use of trained skills back on the job?

Questions:
1. In your own words can you tell me how you perceive training or professional development initiative within this company?
   Probe:
   • Do you perceive training or professional development opportunities as time well spent or do you attend because you were asked to?
   Questions:
2. In your own words, what are some of the positive factors in the work environment within this company?
3. Tell me if any of those positive factors influence you to use the skills, knowledge, and abilities once you leave the training session.
4. How were you motivated to use the pre-sell training skills once the training was complete?
   Probe:
   • Can you describe any evaluation procedures that let you know there were work expectations to use what was learned in the pre-sell training?
   • Give me an example of when you were prompted to use what was learned in the training back on the job.
   Probe:
• Give me an example of a time when you were actually prompted not to use what was learned in the pre-sell training back on the job?
• Of the positive factors you described, can you tell me which ones are the most important to you?

**Questions:**
5. Why are they important and how do they motivate you to use what you learned in the classroom back on the job?
6. Would you say the organization has a positive work environment that encourages the use of what was learned in the classroom?
7. If you could change two things in the work environment that would make a better connection from the classroom to the job, what would they be?

**Probe:**
• Tell me what would be the single most important change in the work environment that would cause you to freely use the new knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in the pre-sell classroom back on the job?

**Focus:** Describe their perception of work environment factors that are perceived to be inhibiting (unfavorable, negative) the use of trained skills back on the job?

**Questions:**
8. Give me examples of things in the work environment that you perceive as negative or keep you from using the pre-sell skills back on the job?
9. Tell me how those negative factors influence your ability to use the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in the pre-sell training back on the job?
10. Tell me more about negative the work environment factors and if they stem from peers, work policies/procedures, organizational structure, or supervisor’s attitudes/behaviors, etc.
11. If you could list three negative factors that appear to be the most prevalent in the work environment, what would they be?

**Probe:**
• Do you think your peers would agree with your assessment of the negative factors of the work environment? If so, why?
• Would you say that the opportunity to perform the new knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in the pre-sell classroom is available in the work environment?
• What kind of nonverbal cues (cultural norms) do you perceive as negative factors in the work environment and do they impact your motivation to use the knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in the pre-sell training back on the job?
Appendix B: NCSU Informed Consent Form

North Carolina State University

INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Perceived Transfer Climate Factors in the Macro and Micro Organizational Work Environment
Byron Diggs, Principal Investigator
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. James Burrow/Dr. Carol Kasworm

You are invited to participate in an exciting research study. The purpose of the study is to delineate descriptive patterns of meaning and understanding of factors in the work environment that either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of learned knowledge, skills, and abilities from the classroom to the job setting? Specifically, this study will explore elements in the work environment that are perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of pre-sell skills from the classroom to the job. You will be asked questions to assess various aspects of your work environment. You are providing you opinion and beliefs, so there is no right or wrong answer. For more information and a complete description of what you will asses, refer to your interview guide.

I want to thank you in advance for agreeing to participate, and I appreciate your time commitment. The remainder of this letter will help you understand further all the important aspects of the research.

INFORMATION:
This study will be conducted in the following manner:
1. Consent approval will be requested from all participants in the study.
2. Observations will take place during routine route rides and plant visits. The principle investigator will record observations.
3. A memo will be the tool use for recording all observations.
4. The investigator will interview 10-15 pre-sell managers from different facilities.
5. The investigator will interview 10-15 pre-sell representatives from different facilities.
6. The interview will be one hour sessions.
7. The interview will be recorded via audiotapes and the interviews will be transcribed or written out in document form.
8. The investigator will review documents: sales analysis and performance tracking tools for qualitative research analysis.
9. A final research report will be developed using all that information gathered during the study.
10. Each participant in the study will be asked to allow the investigator to interview him or her for one hour.
RISK:
There may be some discomfort in the study when being observed or being interviewed for the participants. Most people may feel some discomfort knowing they are being recorded and their words will be used. Maintaining a respectful relationship with the interviewee will minimize this discomfort. The interview setting will be the place of choice by the interviewee, so they will feel comfortable.

BENEFITS:
The anticipated benefits of the research for the participants will be a chance to share their thoughts and beliefs regarding the factors in the work environment that are perceived to facilitate or inhibit the pre-sell skills learned in the classroom to the job. They will feel more apart of the success of the pre-sell program because of their insight. The anticipated benefit for the organization will be a chance to fully understand which factors in the work environment either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of training. This information will aide in assessing the organizational culture and making changes that will enhance the evaluation of training programs. Finally, this study will extend the body of knowledge on transfer climate factors in the work environment by providing descriptive patterns and understanding of those factors perceived to either facilitate or inhibit the transfer of training.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
This information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

CONTACT:
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Byron Diggs, at byron.diggs@pbvllc.com, or 919-863-5155. If you feel you have not been treated according to the description in this form, or your rights as a participant in the research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NSCU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148). You may also contact the Institutional Review Board directly at 919-515-4514.

PARTICIPATION:
Your participation in this study is voluntary and is not a requirement nor is it part of your employment. You are free to decline participation at any time without penalty and without loss of any benefits. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

CONSENT:
“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time”.

Subject’s Signature_________________________ Date________________________

Investigator’s Signature_______________________ Date________________________
Appendix C: Interview Transcript

Interview Number Ten
Interviewee: Coded “Pre-Sell Representative Ten” (noted as T in transcription)
White Male
Age 30
Number of years of experience — 4
Total years with company — 2
Position: Pre-Sell Account Representative
Time: 4:07 p.m. August 19, 2004
Time: 5:10 p.m. August 19, 2004
Place: Office: Coded “East Coast Sales Distribution Center”
Primary Investigator: Byron Diggs (noted as PI in transcription)

PI: In your own words can you tell me how you perceive training or professional development opportunities initiatives within this company? When you are told to go to a training class what is your perception of that?
T: It is good. Anything new helps.
PI: Ok, how was your perception of the pre-sell training?
T: It helped a lot. The instructor did an excellent job with the training. Some of the stuff I tried today.
PI: Did you have any apprehensions about going or attending the training class?
T: No. I was looking forward to going. I was looking forward to a new job and everything about it.
PI: Ok, great. What about for a person who is a pre-sell account manager now do you think it is best to give them some time in the field before you provide that kind of training or is it best to do the training up front?
T: I would with the up front training instead of putting them in the field first. I don’t know there are two different ways to look at it.
PI: Ok, tell me both sides.
T: Well, if you went out in the field first maybe that helps when he goes to the training. He may realize stuff he is doing wrong his way and pick it up better.
PI: Ok, do you perceive training and development opportunities as time well spent or do you basically because you were asked to go?
T: Yes, it helps. Even if you went and did not learn anything, there is always something to learn.
PI: Ok, just relax you are doing fine. Just relax there is not right or wrong answers so don’t be nervous.
T: Um, are there other things other training that you think the company could provide for you guys that would help you to be better at what you are doing now? What are some of the challenges you run into out there in the field?
T: Um, pushing new products for some of the mom and pop stores is a challenge. The higher margin products are a challenge because the mom and pop stores only carry so much money so that is one of the challenges. I guess riding with other salesmen could help out to see how you may do something better. In my area I don’t have that much push back because I have known these people for three years.
PI: In your own words what are some positive factors in the work environment?
I: The benefits are one of the reasons I came to PH. The 401K and insurance is getting higher and higher but I can deal with that. It is still excellent especially with two kids. I have everything. The work environment here is more family oriented at this plant than at others according to what I hear.

PI: What other things? What about the work itself?

I: Meeting new people everyday. Talking to the same people everyday.

PI: Do you like the freedom of being out on your own?

I: Yes, the freedom on my own is what I really have.

PI: Ok, so you can manage your accounts and structure your day?

I: Kinda, sometimes you run into things that hold you back.

PI: How many stops do you have an average?

I: On average about 19 per day. There is one day I have about 25 steps and that is once a month.

PI: So, when we talk about positive things in the work environment. The family atmosphere here, the autonomy of the job, what else? The pay and benefits. Anything else?

I: The freedom, Meeting new people.

PI: How about the company. What is positive about the company?

I: It's growing. It's looking to grow and buy other plants around. I've heard it wants to by Charlotte and others. So, wanting to expand and grow.

PI: Ok, good. If the positive things you talked about, does anyone of those influence you to use the knowledge or skills that you used in the pre-sale training back on the job?

I: Yes, all of them so I can keep my job.

PI: Give me an example like we learned this in pre-sale training so when I got back to my job because I have the freedom to do what I use this skill working with this mom and pop.

I: One of the things that stick out in my mind the most is “with our inventory, they have it when I come and they know that whenever the driver comes they will not have that much on the job.

PI: So, they trust you to manage their inventory.

I: Yes, they trust you not to overstock their store.

PI: Give me a couple of examples of how you were motivated to use your pre-sale training back on the job or opportunities you had to use those skills back on the job?

I: Yes, selling opportunities you run into but I don't get that much feedback. Some things I do but for the most part it is ok.

PI: How do you convince people to take in double shut? I am an independent store owner and you want to sell the case for $32 dollars.

I: One of the things is what we used at the end of the training. The role play. Telling the customer that we back them 100% and if it does not sell we will pick it up. So, the customer feel safer knowing that if it goes out of date or does not sell we will pick it up.

PI: Ok, does any of your customers or do you talk to any of your customers about penny profit, gross margins, etc.?

I: That is one of the things that I don't use.

PI: So, why is that? Are they not concerned about what they are making per bottle?
I: I have one account that sits down and says I have to have 36% margin on everything sold in the store. That is the only customer. The others I tell them what the average retail is and from there, they decide to take it or not.
P1: But in their minds that are still figuring the purchase price and what they will make from each sell.
I: I guess that is poor profit but I don’t go in with that approach. I don’t go in with a piece of paper and ask them to sit down and figure it out. I go in and review the numbers with the calculator based on the average retail and they will decide from there. If they go to high in a certain location I will tell them that they might want to consider bring in down.
P1: Well you are still using the skills. Just because you do not go in and use those exact terms you are still using the selling skills.
I: Yes, I really don’t look at it that way.
P1: How about the customer who is concerned about the 36% margin are you comfortable dealing with him?
I: Yes, I am comfortable dealing with him. If I have a new item he will let me bring it in. Even when we run on sales, he marks them down but maintains his 36%.
P1: OK, can you describe any evaluation procedures that let you know that what you learned in pre-sell training should be used back on the job? Does your manager audit or is it part of your performance evaluation? Any thing mentioned about pre-sell, or the use of the selling skills? Is there any kind of follow up reports or sales reporting?
P1: Every Monday.
P1: OK, tell me about them.
I: Every Monday they are on the door and the manager post them especially new items.
We are monitored against our wired and non-wired accounts.
P1: OK, what is the difference between wired and non-wired accounts?
I: The wired are the corporate accounts and non-wired are independents that are over 2000 cases.
P1: So the reports on Mondays are measuring you against what?
I: They are tracking our sales, distribution, and volume. We view it as a competition.
P1: So that is an evaluation tool to let you guys know how you are doing everyday.
I: Right. The new item is 12.1? Tapes we the reports tell us where to improve.
P1: OK, any other evaluation tools or is specifically related to pre-sell? Does your manager ever do routine rides with you?
I: He does not ride with me but if this is in the area he will stop in couple of the stores. He cannot ride with me all day but he does check the stores.
P1: OK, have you had opportunities where you called your manager to assist you and he came out and helped you by using some of the selling skills or a different approach?
I: Not yet, I have not had to do that. Now I do have a couple of local chain stores where he has had to call the manager on certain stuff but now he works directly with me.
P1: Can you give me an example of a time when you were actually prompted to use something that you learned in the pre-sell back on the job?
P1: How about at time when you were prompted not to use the selling skills taught in the training?
P1: Interviewee unable to answer the questions.
J: OK, when we have edge or other products come out you have accounts that you know you can put the barrels in.

P: What about those that might say, “I don’t know about that product”?

J: You just give them positive feedback and tell them we will pick the product up if it does not sell. That is one thing we use a lot. We back our product.

P: Of the positive aspects that you talked about, what ones are the most important to you? Remember we talked about the family atmosphere, benefits, and freedom of the job.

J: The family atmosphere is one, the benefits is two. I really don’t care that much about the pay as long as my benefits stay the same. Really, all of it.

P: Does any of those things motivate you to use what you learned in training back on the job? Does one motivate you more than the others?

J: I guess going out and talking to the people, I used to be shy and working with the company has caused me to be less and less shy.

P: Would you say the organization has a positive work environment that encourages not only people like yourself but others to use what they learned in training back on the job?

J: Yes.

P: If you could change two things in the work environment that would make a better connection between what was taught in the training and what you actually do on the job; what would they be?

J: Could that be anything?

P: Yes.

J: One thing might be that some accounts are going to Walmart to buy NRs 24 oz. I think the company should have a contract that we stock the store.

P: What would be the single most important change in the work environment that would cause you or your other FSAMs to freely use what you learned in pre-sell training back on the job?

J: I don’t know.

P: OK, let me ask you this question and less flip the coin. What are some negative factors in the work environment in your opinion?

J: Some guys have problems with drivers and vice versa.

P: So, poor working relationships?

J: Right.

P: In what ways?

J: The pre-salesman complain that the drivers are not rotating. The drivers complain that the boxes are not full or the pre-salesman orders too much. I don’t have that problem in the beginning the Friday to Monday time span caused some problems. Not being able to predict the orders.

P: If you could list three negative characteristics that appear to be the most prevalent in the work environment what would they be?

J: What we just talked about would be one: communication, loading, and I really don’t have a third one.

P: OK, tell me about night loading? What is the issue with night loading?
I: Basically, wrong orders placed on the truck. Which can be fixed by counting the trucks at night.

PI: Would you say that the opportunity to perform the new skills and knowledge that was learned in the classroom is available in the work environment?

I: Yes, I could use it everyday if I needed to. Like today I said in Prapicchio into an account but I did not think I would get it. So, we went with the lowest cost because of the location of the account. You can use it everyday.

PI: So, the opportunity is there.

I: Yes.

PI: Now you have a lot of retail accounts (mu & pops)?

I: Yes, more mu & pops but mostly local chain.

PI: So, because you have long-term relationship with the account owners a lot of the opportunity to sell is taking away because of the relationships.

I: Yes, I can get most of what I want.

PI: So, it sound like you are comfortable dealing with customer and selling is you have in?

I: Yes.

PI: Ok, good that ends it. Thanks
## Appendix D: Constant Comparative Method

### Data Collection:

**Category: Transfer Climate Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Sell Manager One</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolutely, Ah, like I said earlier the company has invested a lot of money and when you take people off site to do training it lets employees know they have invested time and money to make sure the new structure we are going to; we are really going to make it work.</td>
<td>Positive Influence</td>
<td>Investment in training Commitment to training initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Sell Representative Two</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh, yes everyone wants the cola and the cola displays. They want the cola displays because they know it is going to sell.</td>
<td>Brand recognition</td>
<td>Immediate use of selling skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think we’ve got it easier than a lot of other companies because we sell the number two cola in the nation. It is something they want to sell.</td>
<td>Influence to Sell</td>
<td>Brand power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Sell Manager Three</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Store checks and follow-up is the biggest thing for me with my PSAMs. Like today, I am out delivering to schools and I am delivering coolers. When in reality, I need to be out in the market.</td>
<td>Negative Influence</td>
<td>Task Constraints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Pre-Sell Representative Four</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
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</table>
Peer relationships. It is so key to this job. One is the case of the drivers. If you have a good relationship with the drivers they will go above and beyond.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Sell Representative Five</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well, in the position that I am in now, I can definitely speak highly of management because management is very comfortable as long as you show them that you can do your job and get it accomplished. I mean they trust you can perform your job without having to have someone looking over your shoulder.</td>
<td>Positive Influence</td>
<td>Supervisor Support</td>
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<tr>
<th>Pre-Sell Manager Seven</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
<th>Researcher’s Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the fact that we are a growing company and we have grown from a small mom &amp; pop operation to now a very large corporation acquiring other people and we are all here on the ground floor of our delivery system that is probably going to lead the company through the next big thing.</td>
<td>Sense of Pride/Part of the change initiative</td>
<td>Job Security/ Growth with the company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Comprehensiveness Rating Form

Interviewee Name: ____________________________________

Instructions:

After careful review of the interview transcript, choose the option that you believe most accurately reflects your opinion of the interview transcript.

Option 1

If you believe the transcript of the interview accurately represented the content relevance of the interview questions and your responses, respond with option 1- Yes, it is ok. Choosing option 1, you are indicating that the transcript accurately represented the content relevance of the interview questions and your responses.

Option 2

If you believe the transcript of the interview did not accurately represent the content relevance of the interview questions and your responses, respond with option 2- it is ok, except. Choosing option 2, you are indicating the transcript represented the content relevance of the interview questions and your responses but it is not entirely accurate.

Option 1- Yes, it is ok


Option 2- It is ok, except

A. I want to change some of the language to more accurately reflect the interview discussion.


B. I don’t want to comment.

