“Engstrom Auto Mirror Plant” Discussion Questions

1. Describe the Scanlon Plan from four perspectives -- that of the company, the managers, the union leaders, and the workers – in terms of pros and cons. What are the understood goals of the Plan from each viewpoint? What are the understood pitfalls?

2. What are the three components of the Scanlon Plan? How well were each of these executed? Where were opportunities missed to capitalize on the framework?

3. Why do you think enthusiasm waned and dissatisfaction grew at Engstrom? Is the root the Scanlon plan, or what other factors do you see as directly impacting the workers’ experience? Could the situation have been avoided or do you see it as the natural life cycle of an initiative?

4. From your textbook reading, what do you see as the probable and/or potential impact factors of these formerly extrinsically satisfied but now dissatisfied workers on the future of Engstrom? What type of behaviors do you consider as likely to be linked to employees’ dissatisfaction with the Scanlon plan?

5. What could Bent have done in answer to the employees’ grievances about Scanlon? Be specific in your recommendations.

6. How may the Scanlon plan’s bonus calculations have been streamlined for better employee understanding and/or communicated in a more transparent manner to increase the perception of equitability?

7. Drawing from the textbook and class, what are your recommendations for motivating a workforce such as Engstrom’s? Do you feel employee incentive plans work, and are they enough? What value do you place on extrinsic versus intrinsic motivators?

8. One of the troubling aspects to the consideration of continuing the Scanlon Plan is the decrease in employee engagement as evidenced by fewer employee suggestions. Describe the pros and cons of the current suggestion plan process. Do you see anything in the structure or implementation of the current suggestion plan process that may explain the drop off in suggestion rates, from an OB perspective, or do you see the decrease as indicative of another company problem altogether?

9. How does this conflict with or support what we have learned from the text about the key drivers of job satisfaction? What does this suggest in terms of increasing job satisfaction?