# Creating the Company of Choice by Improving Employee Morale and Job Satisfaction: A Case Study on YZJY Company

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#### Abstract

This research was conducted to determine the levels of employee morale and job satisfaction in relation to creating a company of choice. This research was conducted using the action research model involving the company managers and employees. Survey, observations, and interviews were used for data collection. The study determined the current situation of the employees' job satisfaction and morale that affected the company as a "company of choice"; identified appropriate organization development interventions (ODI) that could facilitate the creation of the company of choice; identified the initial impact of the OD interventions on employees' job morale and satisfaction in creating the company of choice; and measured the difference between the pre-ODI and post-ODI data on employee satisfaction and morale that created the company of choice. The results showed that the OD interventions conducted on the job satisfaction and job morale improved the preference level for the company of choice.

Keywords: job morale, job satisfaction, company of choice, organization development interventions (ODI)

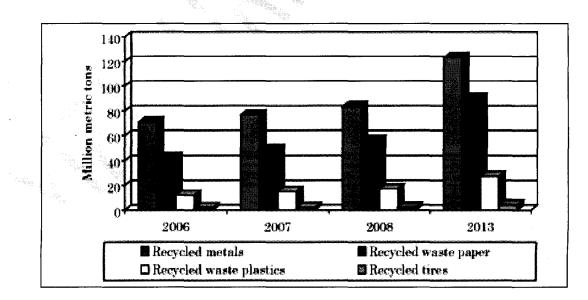
#### Introduction

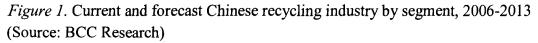
This is an action research project conducted in a recycling economy website company located in Beijing, China. The main focus of the study was to create the company of choice through participative OD interventions.

Today's technology and productivity level continues to improve in order respond to increasing needs of people. As a result, environmental problems accompany high production and consumption. The problem of global resource and sustainable development has attracted more people's attention especially on the issue of pollution and waste management. In 1992, The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development put forward the sustainable development path. After that, the European countries first advocated the circulation economic development strategy, thus the recycling industry got more government attention. Now the recycling industry is a key part in the development of the circular economy. In 2010, the global recycling industry has amounted to \$2.2 trillion, from 14.06% to 19% (Brown, T., 2013). The development of recycling industry is more mature in developed countries. In 2010, the recycling industry was to be found in 70 % of developed countries.

Many Asian countries also started to pay attention to the issue of environmental protection. They use varied ways of recycling based on the type of waste materials available. Since the 1990s, China has introduced a series of preferential policy supporting the recycling industry and it has developed rapidly. From 2006 to 2011, the gross industrial output value of the recycling industry in China has an average annual compound growth rate of 50.49%. In 2011, more than 995 scale recycling in the country's enterprises realized a total industrial output of 298.698 billion Yuan (Recycling Markets in China, 2008).

At present, the recovery rate of waste plastics in China is less than 25% and the renewable lead consumption rate is only 33%. However, the United States has reached to 82% (Recycling Markets in China, 2008). Because of this China has a strong advantage to develop the recycling industry further. With the variety of heavy metal industries in China, recycling has a big potential for waste product.





In China, the total number of materials recycled in 2007 was 142.3 million metric tons. In 2008, the number increased to 158.6 million metric tons and in 2013, it was up to 244.8 million metric tons, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.1%. Recycled metals are the largest segment at 76.8 million metric tons in 2007. This grew to 83.5 million metric tons in 2008 and 123.2 million metric tons in 2013, with a CAGR of 8.1%. The fastest growing segment is recycled tires and reclaimed rubber; 1.9 million metric tons were recycled in 2007, and an estimated 2.2 million metric tons in 2008. (Recycling Markets in China, 2008).

### **E-commerce industry**

As information technology developed and the use of the internet became more popular, connection between peoples and countries became more simple, convenient and fast. For multinational companies, e-commerce is a more convenient way to connect the company to other different countries. Comparing with the traditional economic markets, e-commerce has a very wide range of information volume and more advantages in terms of sales timelines.

In 2014, the Asia-Pacific took the e-commerce lead at \$502 billion. The gap will widen even further by 2016, with the Asia-Pacific expected to spend \$708 billion. (B2C Ecommerce Could Top \$1.2 Trillion, Driven by Asia-Pacific Growth, 2013). China alone boasted 269.4 million digital buyers in 2013, the age of the internet users starting at 14 years old. These people made at least one purchase via any digital channel during the calendar year. The penetration will increase in China, from 40 percent last year to a projected 71 percent of internet users by 2017 (B2C Ecommerce could top \$1.2 Trillion, Driven by Asia-Pacific Growth, 2013).

### **Profile of the Company**

The YZJY Company was founded in January 4, 2013. This is an industry that serves the recycle economy to provide business information and has a comprehensive website as a value-added service. The YZJY Company is the only recycle economy online trade platform with recognition from the ministries and commissions of the state of China and the Goods Rebirth Association of China.

The YZJY Company combines e-commerce industry and the recycling industry, which is a new form of business in China. The market discipline of recycle industry in China is not perfect. YZJY Company wants to be the leader of this industry, to build market order and to unify market price of some main recyclable resource. In such manner they can attain a market-friendly competition.

The company wants to improve itself to build a good brand image, to build good relationships with its customers, and to improve work efficiency in order to get more of the market share of the second hand of car parts. The company has a good relationship with government. Employees perform multiple-jobs since the number of its employees is not enough to do the large number of tasks in the company.

The Chinese people have less environmental awareness; not many understand the recycling industry and many employees do not feel that their job is very meaningful. Some of the people who work in the YZJY Company do not love their job. When the company recruits employees for large projects, many employees do not stay for a long time. They change jobs during the probationary period which results into high turnover rate.

Since the market specification of recycling industry in China is not mature, the company does not have enough experience to solve every problem it faces in running the business. It can only learn from the success models from other countries.

The Company is seeking a way to improve the enthusiasm of the employees and to strengthen the teamwork between the employees. The Company wants to attract their employees and to know that they are a "first of a kind" e-commerce in the recycling industry. They want to make a change in China through this industry, and let them feel pride and love for their work, so that they can make progress together with the company.

### **Conceptual Framework**

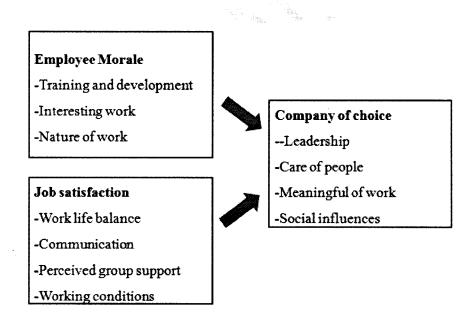


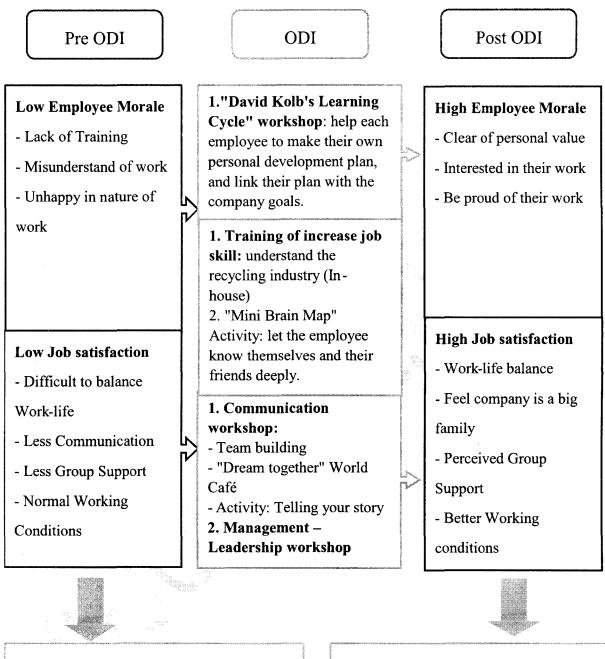
Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

After analysis of the current situation of the YZJY Company and information research of other materials, the conceptual framework (Figure 2) was designed, where:

1) Employee morale: employees know their abilities and potentials, make them love their work, challenges them to creatively solve the problems, and find work-life balance.

2) Job satisfaction of the employees: employees find meaningful work, build good relationships with their colleagues and managers, involve in teamwork and make the group feels like a big family where the members can help each other, and find good working conditions.

3) Create a company of choice: when the leaders have good leadership skills, take care of employees as in a big family, let them know and feel that their work is very meaningful, and has a great social contribution for the society and environment.



# Not a Company of Choice

- Employees don't want to follow the leader
- Employees feel less care
- Employees don't love their work
- Employees think they work with waste is lose face

Figure 3. Action Research Framework

# **Company of Choice**

- Employees want to follow the leader
- Employees feel the managers take care of their people
- Employees love their work
- Employees feel pride of their work

Figure 3 shows the action research framework which includes the different phases of the action research. The Pre ODI was the data collection phase from company's website, observations, survey, and interviews with both the employees and managers. The data gathered showed the current situation of employee morale, job satisfaction and company of choice of YZJY Company.

The researcher designed the workshops and activities (OD Interventions) based on the data gathered from the Pre-ODI Phase. The workshops and activities included "David Kolb's Learning Cycle" workshop, training activity, communication workshop, and leadership workshop.

The Post-ODI phase involved gathering data using interviews, survey and observation after the ODI, using the same data gathering tools used in the Pre-ODI phase.

### Research Methodology

The data collection was done in two phases, namely (1) Collection of the information from the company website, and (2) collection by observation, survey, interview and questionnaire.

The data collected from the website, observation, survey, and interview was used to analyze the current situation of the company and to design the OD Interventions. Secondary data such as rate of absenteeism, turnover rate, number of customers served, suppliers served were

The researcher conducted 30-50 minute group interviews for both the managers group and employees group. The researcher conducted the OD Interventions using the designed activities, workshop and meetings such as "Learning Cycle" workshop, training, "Mini Brain Map" study, "Dream together" workshop, Leadership workshop. Observations were done for every activity of ODI and participants did the feedback evaluation after each ODI.

After all the activities were conducted, the same questionnaires used in the Pre-ODI phase were administered to measure the effects of the ODI.

### **Data Gathering**

There were 30 participants which included the president, 7 managers, 15 staff and 7 other employees. The instruments used in research were the observation guide, interview guide, questionnaires, and logbook.

#### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative Analysis using categories sorting was used to analyze the results of

observation and interview. Quantitative analysis was used in the analysis of the questionnaire results. The researcher used descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and percentage, and the t-test.

#### **Research Findings**

### **Pre-ODI Results**

#### **Employee Morale**

Table 1 shows the obtained means from the responses of the employee morale in the pre-ODI stage. The data shows that the highest score for mean value is 5.65 on "This Company cares about its people". Four other questions got high scores, namely: No.14 (5.45), No.17 (5.41), No.8 (5.35), and No.7 (5.25). The results show that the employees feel good at work environment, feel treated equally, that the company cares about its people, and that they are optimistic about their future with this company. The lowest score is question no.12 and shows that the respondents did not like the place of their company due to the distance from work and home (reason obtained from interview)

Table 1.

	Employee Morale (Source: Bottom Line Impact Inc., 2009)	Mean (Pre ODI)		
		Pre	Means	
1	I receive appropriate recognition for my contributions	5	Agree	
2	My work gives me feelings of accomplishment and pride.	5.06	Agree	
3	I receive regular and helpful feedback on my performance.	5.12	Agree	
4	My company is supportive.	5.06	Agree	
5	I enjoy the work that I do.	5.18	Agree	
6	There is good team spirit at work.	4.94	Agree	
7	My work environment is positive.	5.24	Strongly Agree	
8	We are all treated equally and with respect.	5.35	Strongly Agree	
9	There is good morale at work.	4.82	Agree	
10	I feel comfortable at work.	5.06	Agree	

The Obtained Mean of the Employee Morale during the Pre-ODI.

11	I am happy to come to work every day.	4.88	Agree
12	My company is a good place to work.	4.29	Slightly Agree
13	I am proud of my company.	5.18	Agree
14	This company cares about its people.	5.45	Strongly Agree
15	My work is meaningful and has an impact on the success of the company.	4.94	Agree
16	Everyone in this company is treated fairly.	5.18	Agree
17	I am optimistic about my future with this company.	5.41	Strongly Agree
Ove	rall	4.88	Agree

### Job satisfaction

Table 2 shows that most employees strongly agree with 4 questions, namely: No.5 (5.53), No.2 (5.47), No.13 (5.41), No.18 (5.35) and No.17 (5.29). It means that the employees felt that they have opportunities at work to learn and grow; that their leaders were positive role models; that they have good career opportunities with this company; and that they have enough control over how they do their job.

However, the response to question no.13 shows that many employees did not have enough clear knowledge about the direction and goals of their company and they want to know more about it.

Table 2.

The responses obtained mean for job satisfaction at the Pre-ODI.

	Job satisfaction (Source: Bottom Line Impact Inc, 2009)	I	Mean	
	<b>Job satisfaction</b> (Source. Dottom Eme impact me, 2007)		Means	
1	My work responsibilities are reasonable.	5.06	Agree	
2	My leaders are positive role models.	5.47	Strongly Agree	
3	I have the materials and/or equipment to do my job well.	4.59	Agree	

4	I am satisfied with my job	4.82	Agree
5	I have opportunities at work to learn and grow.	5.53	Strongly Agree
6	I know how my job fits and why it's important.	4.82	Agree
7	My duties and responsibilities are clearly defined.	5.06	Agree
8	I am able to maintain a good balance between my work life and my family life.	5	Agree
9	I know what is expected of me in my job.	4.94	Agree
10	My views and participation are valued.	5.12	Agree
11	We have fair opportunities to air our grievances without fear of retaliation.	5.18	Agree
12	People in my company get ahead based on the merits of their work.	5.18	Agree
13	I want to know more direction and goals of my company.	5.41	Strongl y Agree
14	I know how my goals are linked to the company's goals.	5	Agree
15	I am given sufficient responsibility in my job.	5.12	Agree
16	The company's leadership is positive and supportive.	5.12	Agree
17	I have good career opportunities with this company.	5.29	Strongly Agree
18	I have enough control over how I do my job.	5.35	Strongly Agree
Ove	erall	5.11	Agree

### **Company of choice**

Table 3 shows the responses on the **Company of Choice**. There were nine questions asked from employees about their sense of pride and positive image of the company they work with, their feeling of their work, the meaningfulness of their work and its social influences. Data shows that the employees had high positive feelings for this company. However, questions No.5 to No.8 reveal that they would also consider changing change their jobs if they find a better company.

### Table 3

# The responses obtained mean for company of choice at the Pre-ODI.

С	ompany of Choice (Source: Bottom Line Impact Inc,	M	lean Means	
	2009)	Pre		
1	I am someone who wants to have a steady relationship with this company.	5.41	Strongly Agree	
2	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this company.	5.35	Strongly Agree	
3	I say positive things about my company to other people.	5.47	Strongly Agree	
4	I recommend the company to someone who seeks my advice.	5.47	Strongly Agree	
5	I consider this company my first choice.	5.12	Agree	
6	I intend to stay with this company for the next few years.	5.12	Agree	
7	I would easily accept a job from an alternative employer that offers a better salary.	4.35	Agree	
8	I would easily accept an offer from an alternative employer that offers better fringe benefits.	4.47	Agree	
9	If my work meet some problem, I will try to fix it.	5.47	Strongly Agree	
Ō	verall	5,14	Agree	

In Summary the level of **Employee Morale** is at the Agree level (Mean=4.88); the level of **Job Satisfaction** is at the Agree level (Mean=5.11); and the level of **Company of Choice** is at the **Agree** level (Mean=5.14).

### **Results of the Group Interviews**

The Pre-ODI group interview shows that most employees' paid attention on the points which concerned their personal life like salaries and benefits but the managers focus on the bigger picture of the company. The managers considered that they needed more employees; they found it easy to work with each other but needed more communication; they have many business trips; they believed that company has a good future; and that their work is meaningful.

The group interview (Post ODI) shows that most employees' perceived that there was more communication with each other; they started to pay attention on self-growth; they build good relationships with their team members; and they felt more motivated with their work.

### Comparison between the Pre and Post ODI Data

Tables 4 and 5 show the survey results on Employee Morale conducted during the pre and post-ODI. There are 2 questions at the post ODI that obtained better feedback; namely: No.9, "There is good morale at work", increased 0.12; No.13, "I am proud of my company", increased by 0.23.

### Table 4.

Survey results on Employee Morale conducted during the Pre and Post-ODI.

Select *				
	Employee Morale		ean	
	(Source: Bottom Line Impact Inc., 2009)	Pre	Post	Difference
1	I receive appropriate recognition for my contributions	5	4.94	0.06
2	My work gives me feelings of accomplishment and pride.	5.06	4.71	0.35
3	I receive regular and helpful feedback on my performance.	5.12	4.76	0.36
4	My company is supportive.	5.06	4.82	0.24
5	I enjoy the work that I do.	5.18	4.88	0.3
6	There is good team spirit at work.	4.94	4.76	0.18
7	My work environment is positive.	5.24	5.00	0.24
8	We are all treated equally and with respect.	5.35	4.82	0.53
9	There is good morale at work.	4.82	4.94	0.12
10	I feel comfortable at work.	5.06	4.76	0.3
11	I am happy to come to work every day.	4.88	4.82	0.06
12	My company is a good place to work.	4.29	4.41	0.12
13	I am proud of my company.	5.18	5.41	0.23
14	This company cares about its people.	5.45	5.41	0.04

15	My work is meaningful and has an impact on the success of the company.	4.94	4.53	0.41
16	Everyone in this company is treated fairly.	5.18	4.82	0.36
17	I am optimistic about my future with this company.	5.41	5.29	0.12
Ove	erall	4.88	4.89	0.01

### Table 5.

Survey results on Employee Morale conducted during the Pre and Post-ODI.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
EM-Pre ODI	17	4.88	.857	High
EM-Post ODI	17	4.89	.485	Very High

Tables 6 and 7 on Job Satisfaction shows the questions that obtained better feedback in the Post –ODI, namely: No.3 "I have the materials and/or equipment to do my job well", increased 0.59; No.6" I know how my job fits and why it's important", increased 0.42; No7" My duties and responsibilities are clearly defined", increased 0.35.

Table 6.

Survey results on Job Satisfaction conducted during the Pre and Post-ODI.

Jol	o satisfaction (Source: Bottom Line Impact Inc, 2009)	Mean			
ou suisieren (Source Benshi Ene impact me, 2009)		Pre	Post	Difference	
1	My work responsibilities are reasonable.	5.06	5.06	0	
2	My leaders are positive role models.	5.47	5.47	0	
3	I have the materials and/or equipment to do my job well.	4.59	5.18	0.59	
4	I am satisfied with my job	4.82	4.71	0.11	
5	I have opportunities at work to learn and grow.	5.53	5.29	0.24	
6	I know how my job fits and why it's important.	4.82	5.24	0.42	
7	My duties and responsibilities are clearly defined.	5.06	5.41	0.35	

8	I am able to maintain a good balance between my work	5	5.06	0.06
	life and my family life.			
9	I know what is expected of me in my job.	4.94	5.12	0.18
10	My views and participation are valued.	5.12	4.71	0.41
11	We have fair opportunities to air our grievances without fear of retaliation.	5.18	4.76	0.42
12	People in my company get ahead based on the merits of their work.	5.18	5.24	0.06
13	I want to know more direction and goals of my company.	5.41	5.41	0
14	I know how my goals are linked to the company's goals.	5	5.06	0.06
15	I am given sufficient responsibility in my job.	5.12	5.35	0.23
16	The company's leadership is positive and supportive.	5.12	5.24	0.12
17	I have good career opportunities with this company.	5.29	5.24	0.05
18	I have enough control over how I do my job.	5.35	5.29	0.06
Ove	erall	4.82	5.12	0.3

### Table 7

Job satisfaction conducted during the Pre and Post-ODI.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levels
JS-Pre ODI	17	4.82	.809	High
JS-Post ODI	17	5.12	.332	Very High

Table 7 illustrates that the mean of pre ODI is 4.82, while the mean of Post ODI is 5.12. After the ODI, the mean of job satisfaction **increased** 0.3. The Standard Deviation in the Pre-ODI was 0.809, and Standard Deviation of the Post-ODI was 0.332.

### Table 8.

Survey results on Company of Choice conducted during the Pre and Post-ODI.

	Company of Choice	Mean			
	(Source: Bottom Line Impact Inc, 2009)	Pre	Post	Different	
1	I am someone who wants to have a steady relationship with this company.	5.41	5.35	0.06	
2	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this company.	5.35	5.29	0.06	
3	I say positive things about my company to other people.	5.47	5.35	0.12	
4	I recommend the company to someone who seeks my advice.	5.47	5.47	0	
5	I consider this company my first choice.	5.12	5.18	0.06	
6	I intend to stay with this company for the next few years.	5.12	5.18	0.06	
7	I would easily accept a job from an alternative employer that offers a better salary.	4.35	4.12	0.23	
8	I would easily accept an offer from an alternative employer that offers better fringe benefits.	4.47	4.29	0.18	
9	If my work meet some problem, I will try to fix it.	5.47	5.65	0.18	
0	verall	4.88	5.06	0.18	

Table 8 shows the questions that obtained higher value on feedback in the Post-ODI, namely: No.5 "I consider this company my first choice", increased by 0.06; No.6 "I intend to stay with this company for the next few years", increased by 0.06; and No.9 "If my work meet some problem, I will try to fix it", increased by 0.18.

Table 9.

Company of choice conducted during the Pre and Post-ODI.

CC-Per ODI	N 17	Mean 4.88	Std. Deviation .781	Level High

Table 9 illustrates the mean of pre ODI is 4.88, mean of post ODI is 5.06. After ODI, the mean of company of choice **increased** 0.18. The standard deviation of Pre-ODI is 0.781, and Standard Deviation of Post-ODI is 0.243.

#### Conclusions

After ODI, the mean of variable increased from 4.88 to 4.89, the employee morale level improved from high to very high. There is a significant difference between pre-and post –employee morale after ODI. Therefore, accept the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between pre- and post-employee morale after the organizational development intervention

After the ODI, the mean of variable job satisfaction increased from 4.82 to 5.12, from high to very high. There is a significant difference between pre and post job satisfaction after ODI. Therefore, accept the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between pre and post job satisfaction after organizational development intervention

After ODI, the mean of variable increased from 4.88 to 5.06, the company of choice level from high to very high. There is a significant difference between pre- and post- company of choice after ODI. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected because the results show that there is a significant difference between pre and post Company of Choice.

Based on the following results it can be concluded that the OD interventions improved the employees' job satisfaction and morale to create YZJY Company as a company of choice.

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