



CURT

THE CONSTRUCTION USERS ROUNDTABLE

"THE OWNERS VOICE TO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY"



CURT Tripartite Initiative: Workplace Attitudes Survey, Summary of Results

**SS - 406
December 2006**

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CURT Tripartite Initiative Workplace Attitudes Survey, Summary of Results

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Notice:

The purpose of this training is to make available to industry the results of research and common owner practices. The information is provided solely for the individual consideration and education of The Construction Users Roundtable (CURT) members and the industry. The training and the materials used in the training do not necessarily represent the views of every CURT member company on this topic. This workbook and any related handouts are offered as informational materials only. CURT intends only to synthesize current thought and trends concerning the topic. Neither CURT nor its committees make any warranty as to the completeness regarding the materials. Readers are encouraged to further research the topic before relying exclusively on these materials. Each CURT member and other readers of these materials are free, acting in their own discretion and perception of business self-interest, to reject or adopt the recommendations in whole or in part. Adoption and/or reliance upon these recommendations is strictly voluntary.

The mission of CURT is to promote cost effectiveness for owners doing business in the United States by providing aggressive leadership on issues that will significantly improve project engineering, maintenance, and construction processes, thereby creating value for the owners.

1. Executive Summary

The CURT Survey on Workplace Attitude was initiated by the CURT Workforce Development and Industrial Relations Committee as part of the CURT Tripartite Initiative. The Tripartite Initiative is an ongoing, owner-led discussion among labor, contractors, and owners, designed to address and resolve issues of importance to the construction industry. This study of workplace attitude follows tripartite focus on eliminating work disruption, reducing absenteeism, and reducing the excessive use of overtime.

The CURT Workforce Committee developed the survey questions and forwarded them to a cross section of the construction industry including organized labor, contractors, and owners. The committee received almost 2,000 responses, from craftworkers and supervision as well as union, contractor, and owner leadership.

Survey responses indicate that employee morale influences productivity, which directly impacts on cost, schedule, and safety, resulting in an impact on competitiveness for both the contractor and organized labor.

Site logistics, leadership, and respect were the three project characteristics reported as most influential on workforce attitude. Site logistics, including the delivery of engineering, equipment, and materials as well as the availability of tools and construction equipment, was identified as critical. More than 80 percent of respondents cited effective project leadership, including established and understood common goals, an effective communication process, and consistent enforcement of work rules, as very important. Respect for owner property and interests, as well as the craftworker's pride in work, were also noted as important to workplace attitude.

Respondents reported that those project personnel located on the construction site have the greatest influence on workplace attitude. These include craftworkers and foremen, field supervision, and contractor on-site management. Individuals and entities that are remote from the site, such as unions, designers, contractor corporate management, and owners, are viewed as having less influence on workplace attitude.

Results of the Workplace Attitude Survey support the belief that workplace attitude impacts on project results, influencing direct owner interests such as project cost, schedule, and safety. Project logistics, communications, and work rules, as established and managed by on-site personnel, have the greatest impact on workplace attitude.

2. Respondent Demographics

The Workplace Attitudes Survey was developed by the CURT Workforce Committee and sent to a cross section of industry owners, contractors, and organized labor. A total of 1,749 responses were received: 95 from owners, 153 from contractors, and 1,501 from organized labor.

Most of the building trades were represented in responses received from organized labor. Responses were received from:

- ▲ Union leadership.....38%
- ▲ Craft workers and supervision.....62%

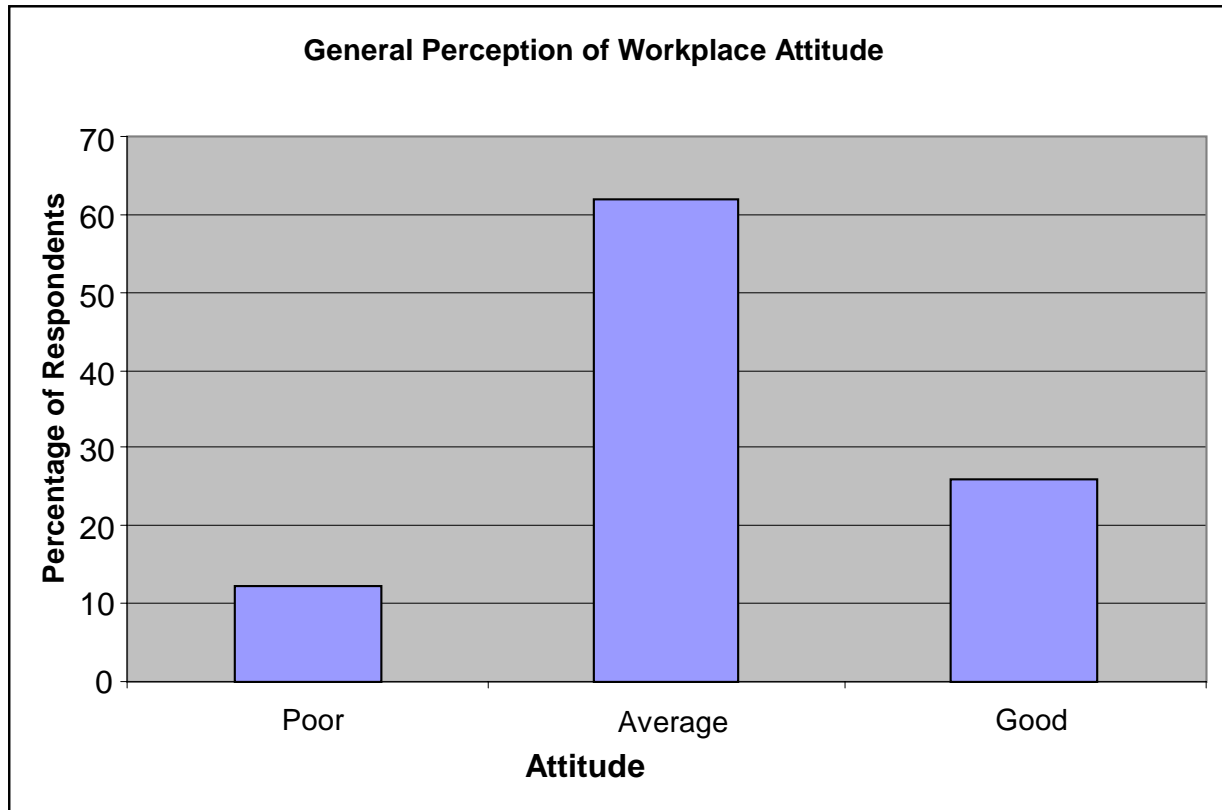
A mix of contractor types responded. Respondents included:

- ▲ Senior management.....70%
- ▲ Project supervision.....19%
- ▲ Others.....11%

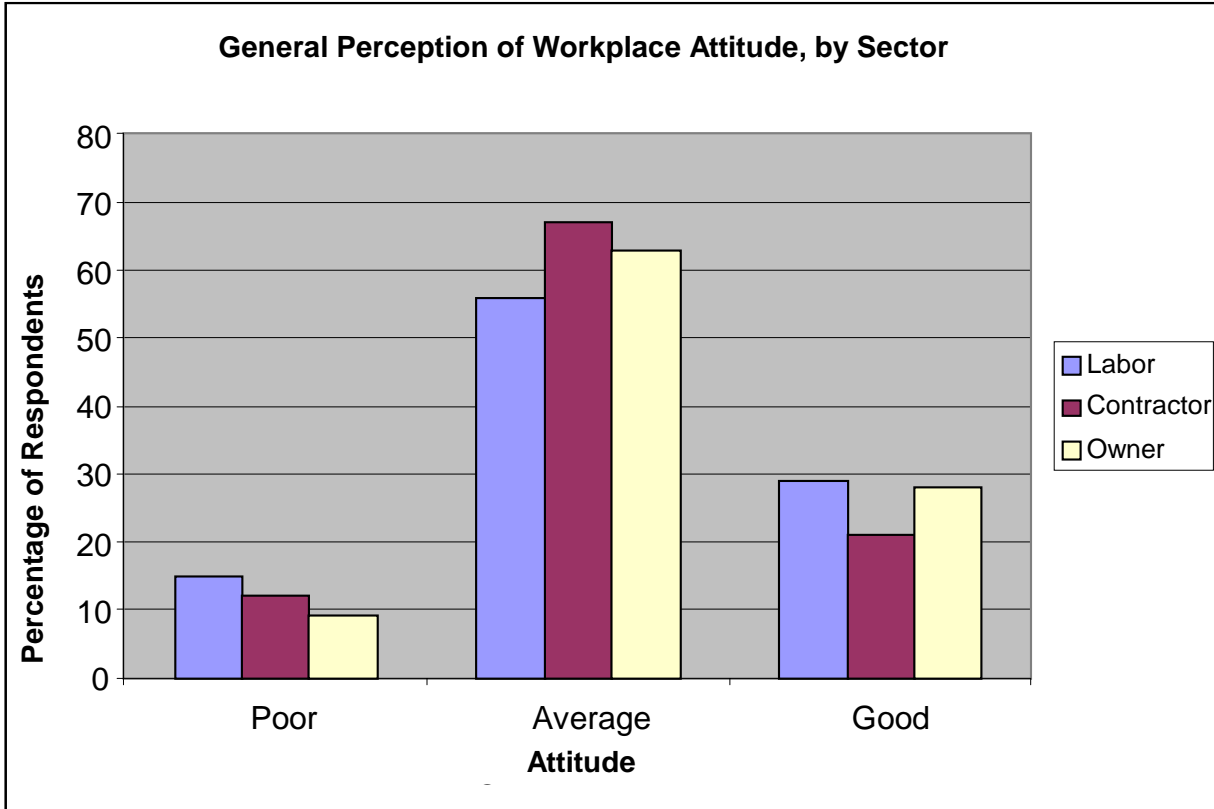
Owner responses were received from:

- ▲ Senior management.....33%
- ▲ Project and construction management.....46%
- ▲ Others.....21%

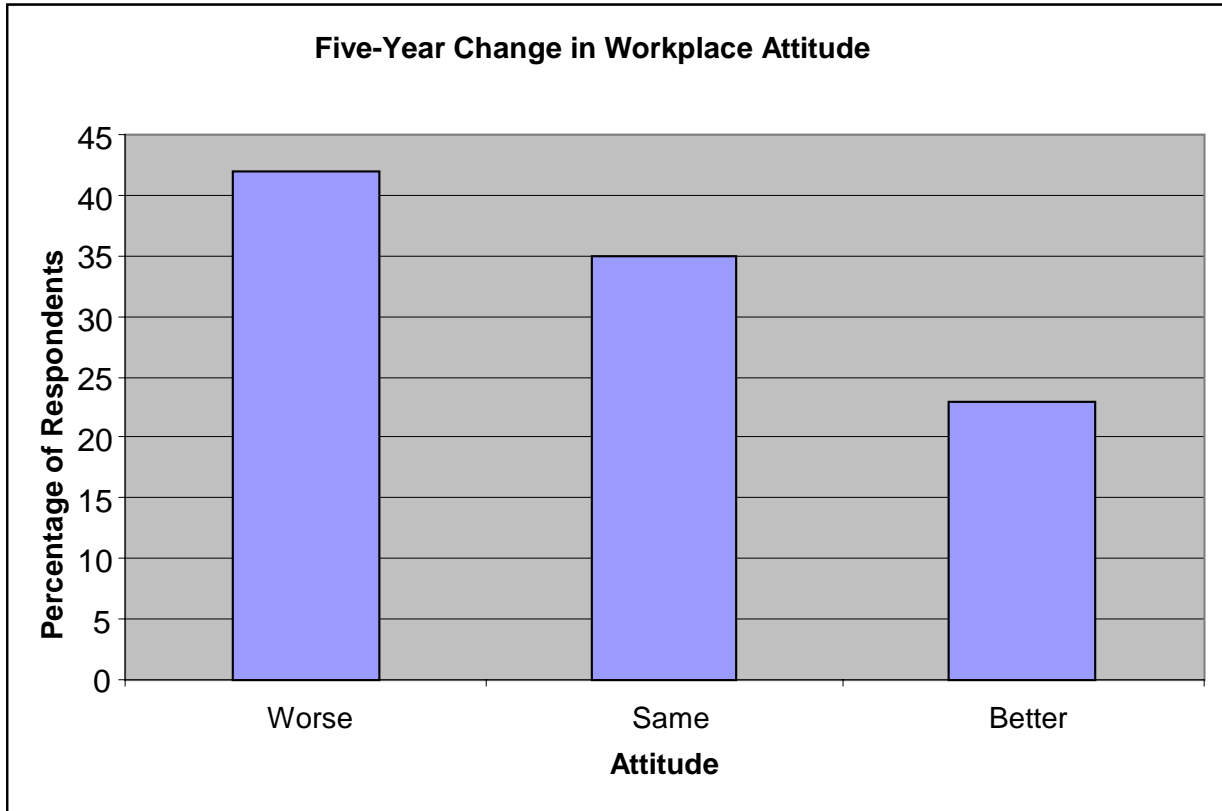
3. General Perception of Workplace Attitude



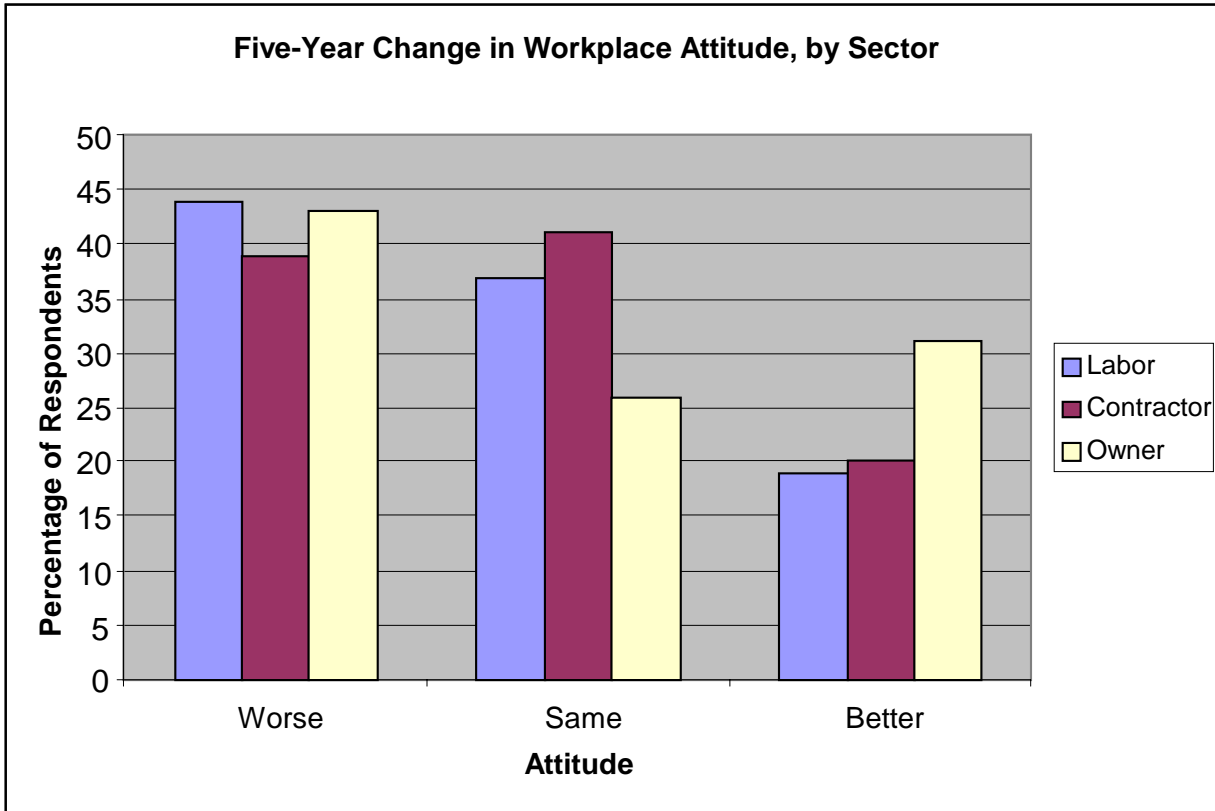
Twenty-six percent of respondents reported workplace attitudes were good, 12 percent reported attitudes were poor, and the remaining 62 percent thought workplace attitudes were average.



There was a fair amount of agreement among industry sectors, with only a few percentage points separating the three sectors in each characterization. Labor and owners generally tended to view workplace attitude as better more often than did contractors.

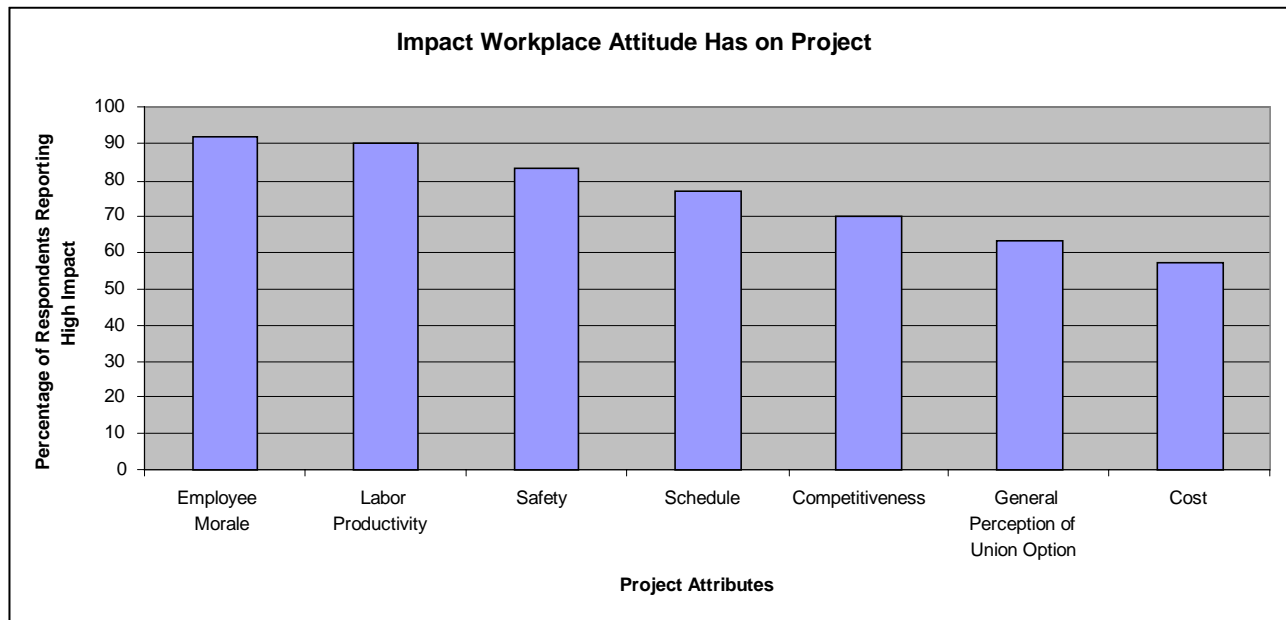


More than 40 percent of respondents, however, thought that workplace attitude had gotten worse over the last five years. Thirty-five percent thought it was about the same. Only 23 percent thought workplace attitude had gotten better. This is illustrated in the chart above, **Five-Year Change in Workplace Attitude**.

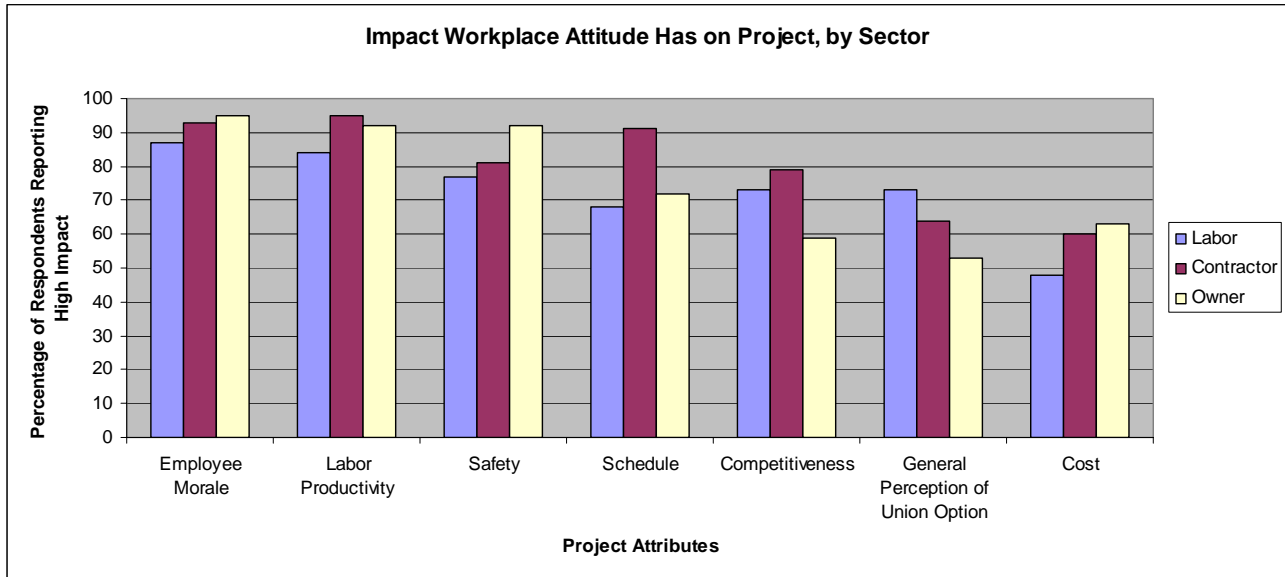


Again, there was a fair amount of agreement among the sectors. Owners did perceive more of an improvement over the last five years than did either contractors or labor. See the chart above, **Five-Year Change in Workplace Attitude, by Sector**.

4. Impact on Project Attributes



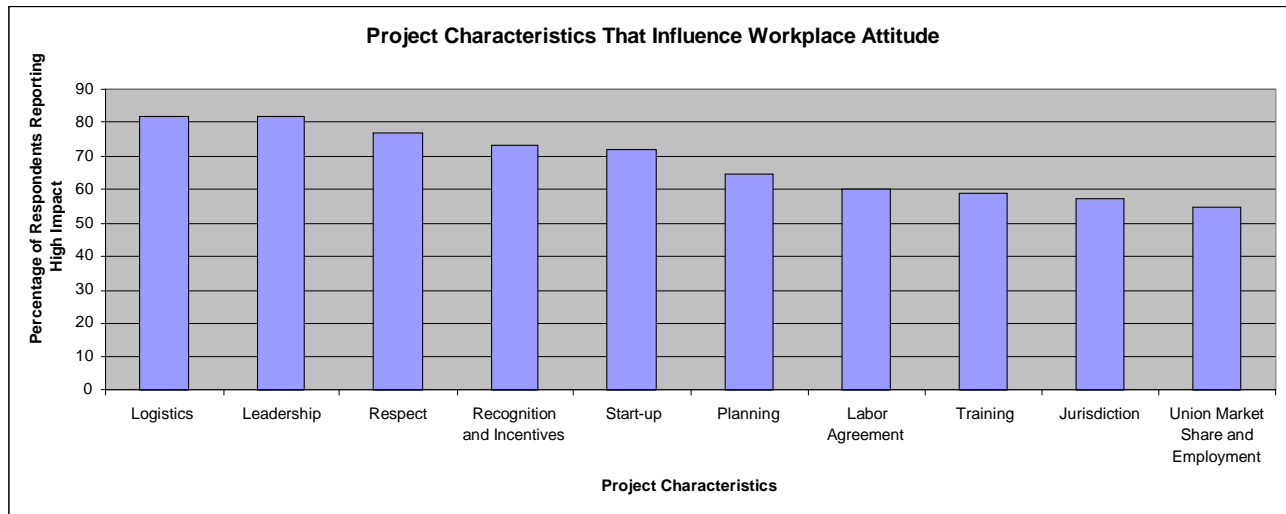
There was general agreement from all respondents that workplace attitude has a dramatic impact on project attributes and results. As shown in the chart, **Impact Workplace Attitude Has on Project**, more than 80 percent of respondents reported that workplace attitude has a direct influence on employee morale, labor productivity, and safety. Impact on these leading indicators results in influence on project cost and schedule, leading to an impact on competitiveness and influencing perception of union construction as a desirable option.



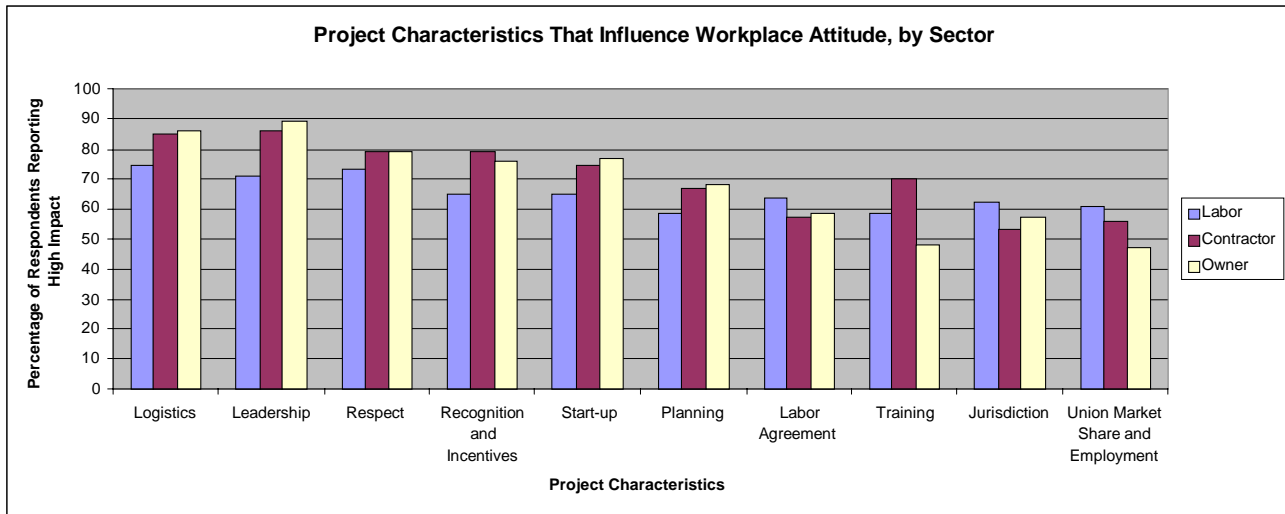
There was, again, a striking similarity in responses from the labor, contractor, and owner sectors. The chart above, **Impact Workplace Attitude Has on Project, by Sector**, highlights responses from each sector.

5. Project Characteristics That Influence Workplace Attitude

Summary

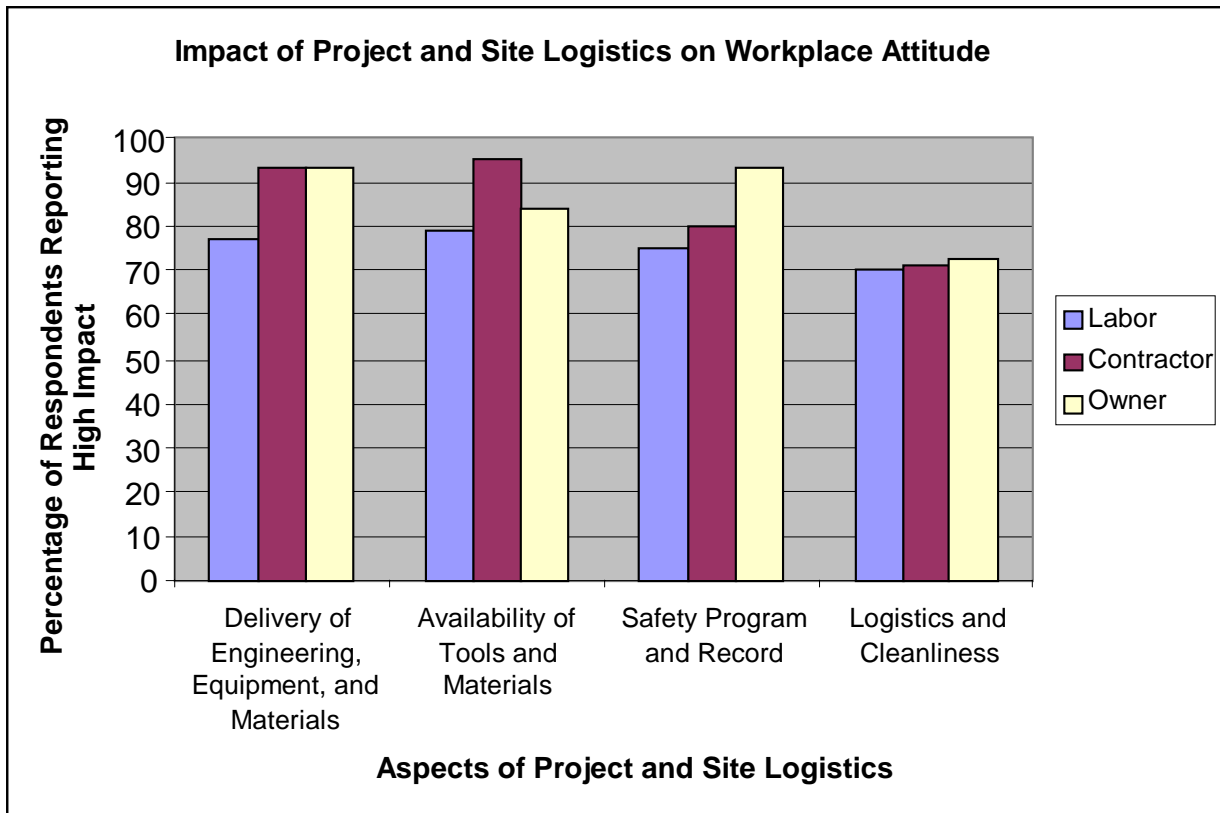


Respondents were asked to rate the influence of a series of project characteristics on workplace attitude. More than 80 percent highlighted site logistics and project leadership as the two characteristics having the highest influence on workplace attitude. More than 60 percent of respondents said that respect, recognition and incentives, start-up issues, and pre-project planning were critical as well. Labor agreement, training, jurisdiction and work assignment, and union market share and employment were identified as important by more than 50 percent of respondents. Responses are highlighted in the chart above, **Project Characteristics That Influence Workplace Attitude**.



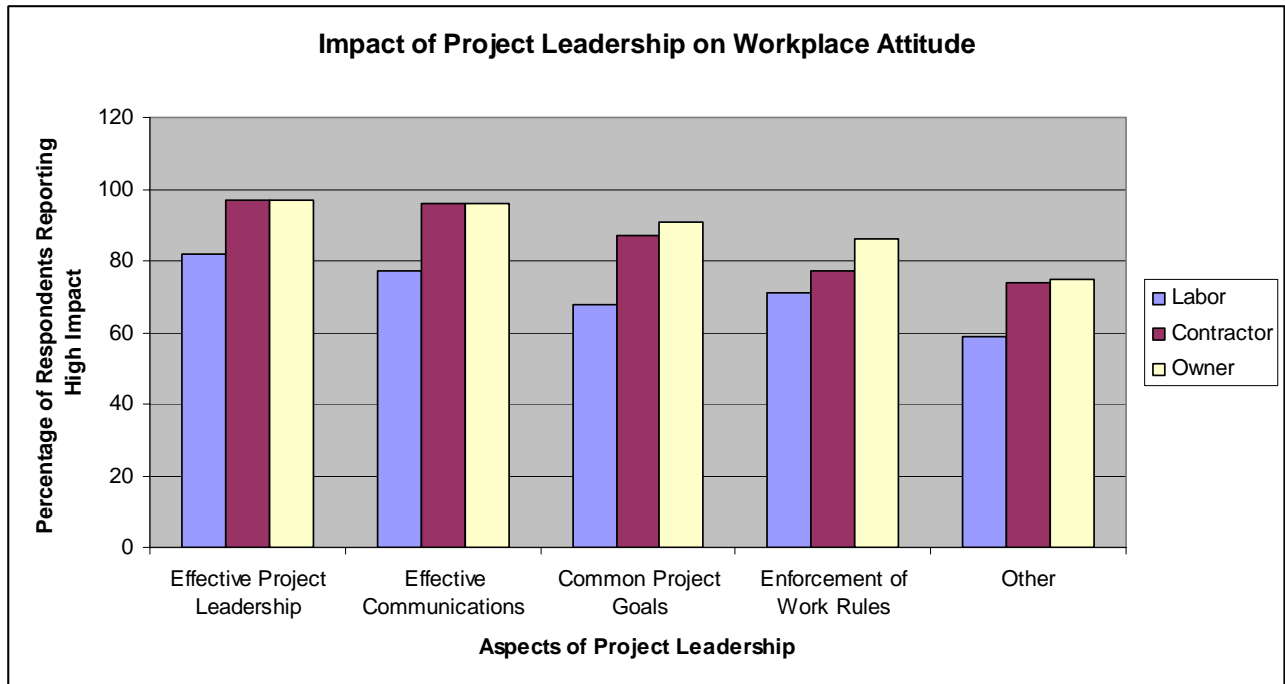
There was a striking level of agreement among labor, contractor, and owner responses, as can be seen in the chart, **Project Characteristics That Influence Workplace Attitude, by Sector**. Union respondents tended to highlight those issues having direct impact on field work: project and site logistics, project leadership, respect, jurisdiction and work assignment, and union market share and employment. Owner and contractor responses were closely aligned, with the exception of training. Contractor respondents thought training had more influence on workplace attitude than did either labor or owners. Each of these project characteristics is discussed separately below.

Project and Site Logistics



All respondents highlighted project and site logistics as critically important to workplace attitude. Again, there was relative agreement among all sectors of the industry, as shown in the chart, **Impact of Project and Site Logistics on Workplace Attitude**. Union respondents emphasized availability of tools and materials and delivery of engineering, equipment, and materials as most important. Contractors and owners agreed with these priorities. Owners tended to emphasize the influence of a safe site. All respondents agreed that site logistics and cleanliness were important.

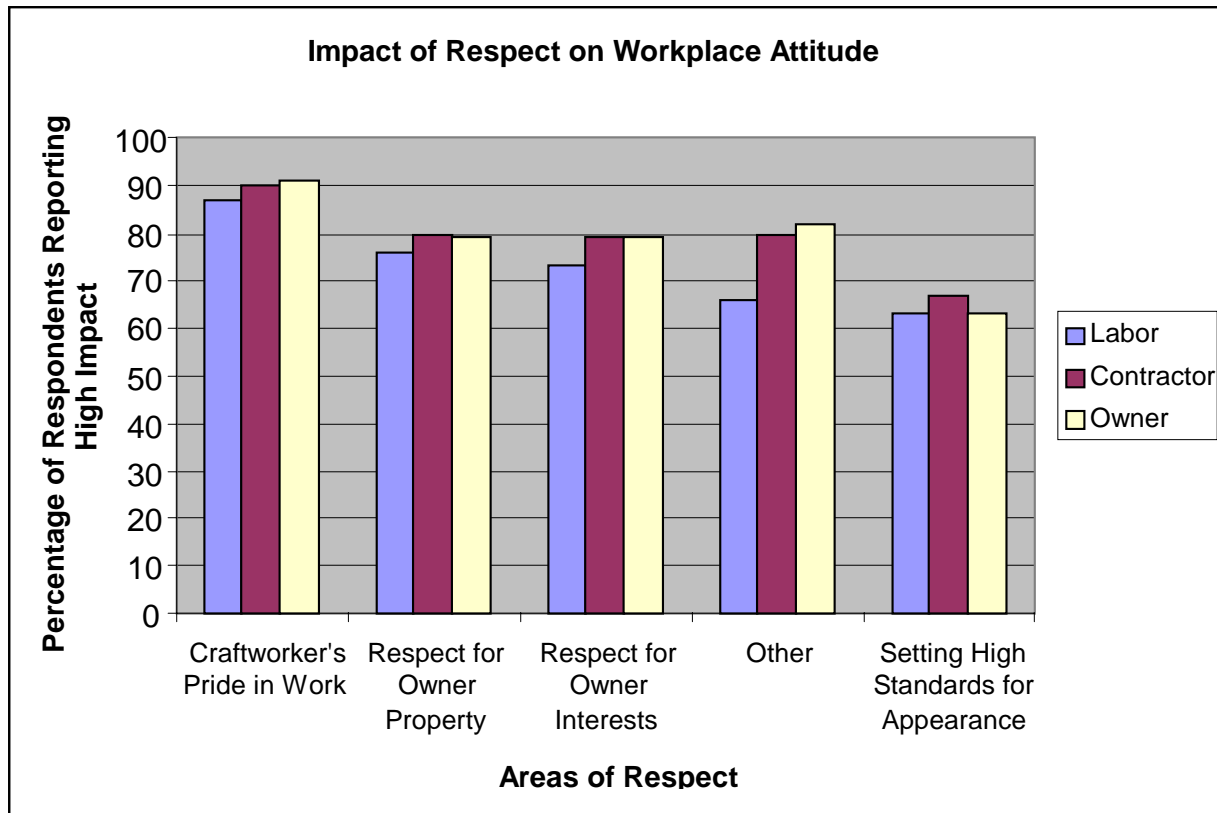
Project Leadership



The importance of project leadership was emphasized by both contractors and owners and recognized by union respondents as well. This is illustrated in the chart, **Impact of Project Leadership on Workplace Attitude**. Effective project leadership and communications were reported as critical by almost all contractor and owner respondents and by about 80 percent of union reporters. Common project goals, understood and accepted by all project stakeholders, were identified as highly influential by the majority of respondents. Consistent enforcement of work rules was highlighted as important by all three sectors.

(“Other” comments, although reported by a majority of respondents, tended to be a scattering of personal concerns. No significant patterns of response were found in the “Other” comments. Many tended to be a repetition of one of the alternate answers, in the respondents own words. A complete listing of “Other” comments can be provided for review. Contact the Construction Users Roundtable office at construction-users@curt.com or 513-563-4131.)

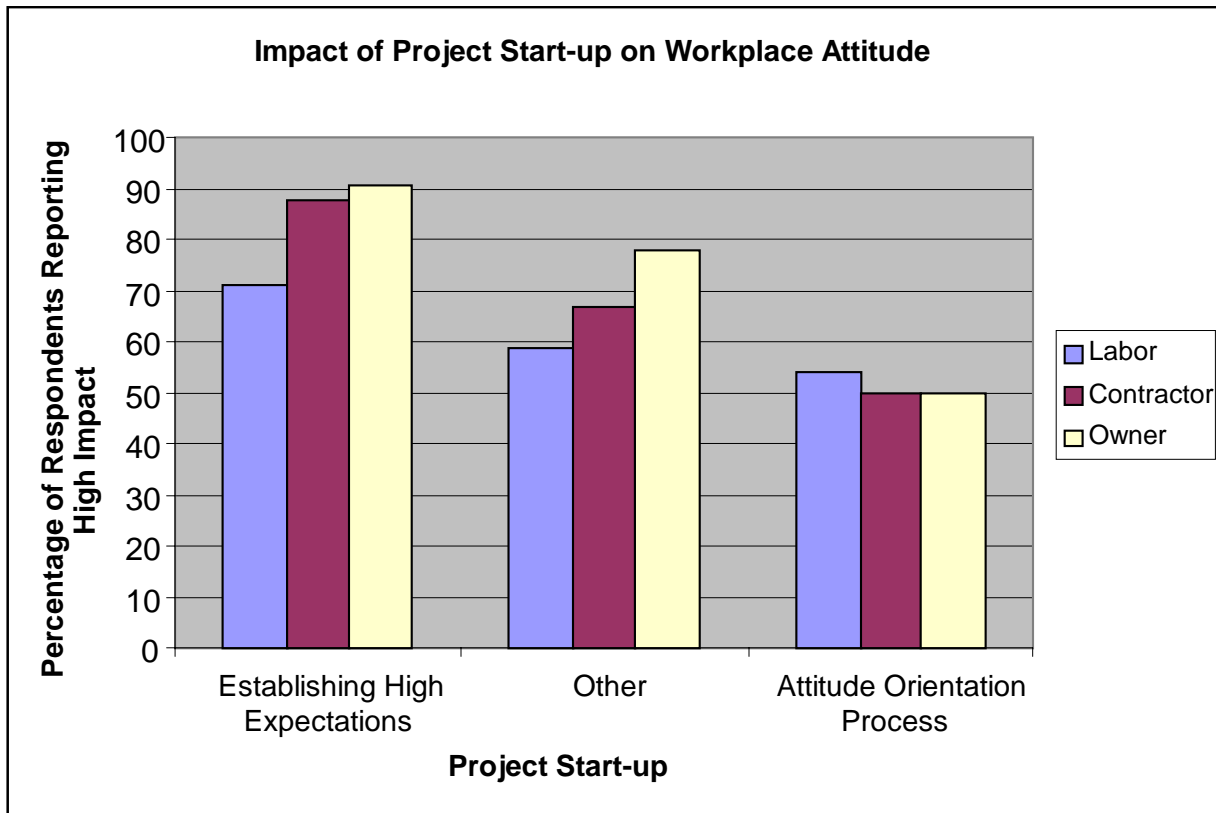
Respect, Recognition, and Incentives



All three sectors highlighted the craftworker's pride in work as having great influence on workplace attitude. This is highlighted in the chart, **Impact of Respect on Workplace Attitude**. Respect for owner property and owner interests was recognized by over 70 percent of union, contractor, and owner respondents as an important influence. Setting high standards for personal appearance was identified as important as well, but not as critical as pride and respect.

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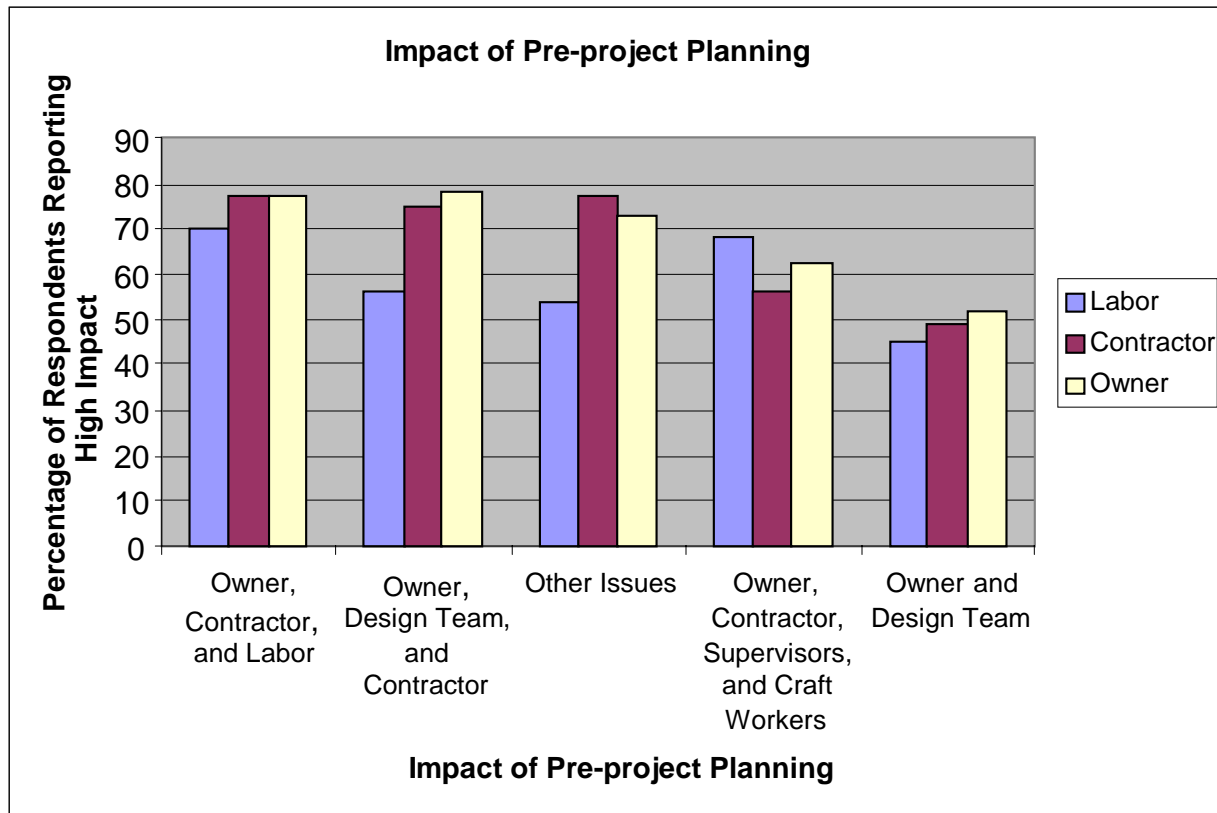
Project Start-up



Establishing high expectations was seen as important to workplace attitude by a majority of respondents, especially the owners and contractors. Attitude orientation was seen as having a high impact on workplace attitude by only about half of all respondents. This is illustrated in the chart, **Impact of Project Start-up on Workplace Attitude**.

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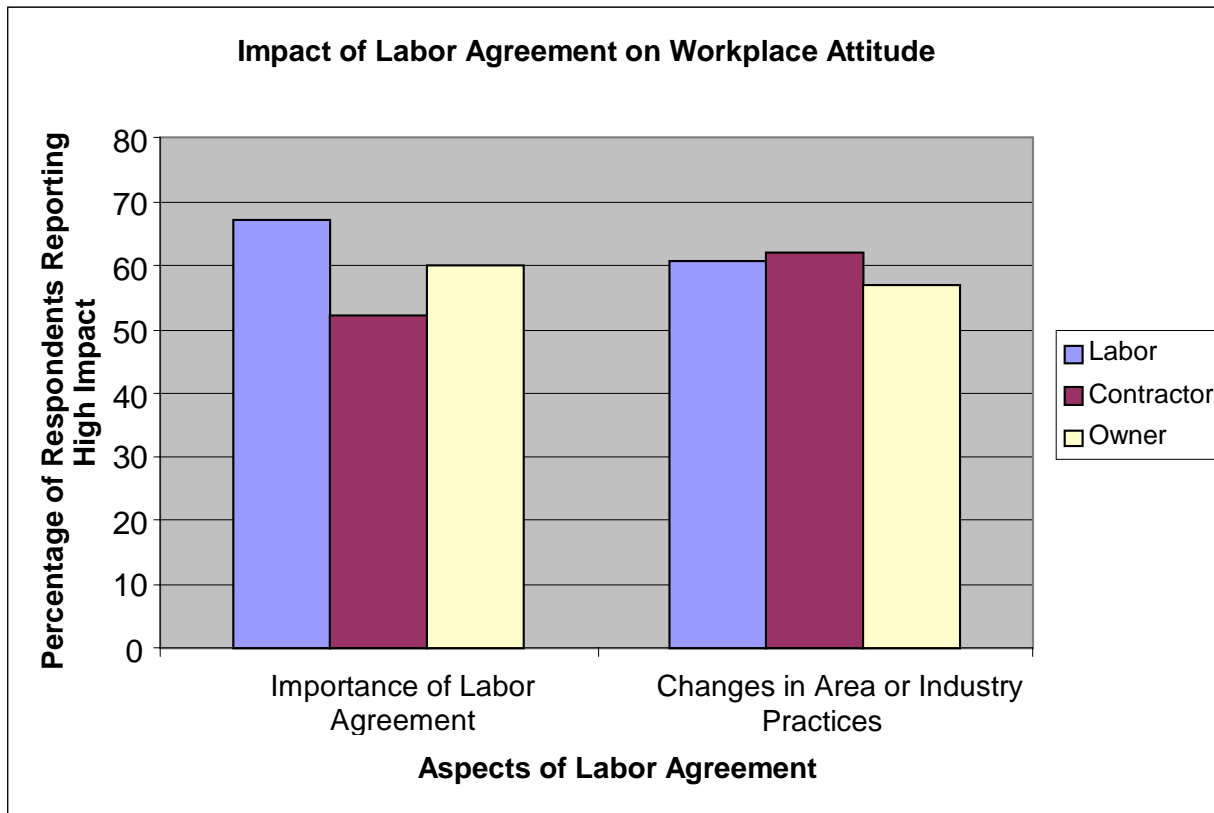
Pre-project Planning



All sectors viewed pre-project planning as important to workplace attitude. Union respondents noted that it was critically important for labor representatives to be involved in this planning process. Owner and contractor respondents tended to place emphasis on owner, design team, and contractor involvement in pre-project planning. See the chart, **Impact of Pre-project Planning**.

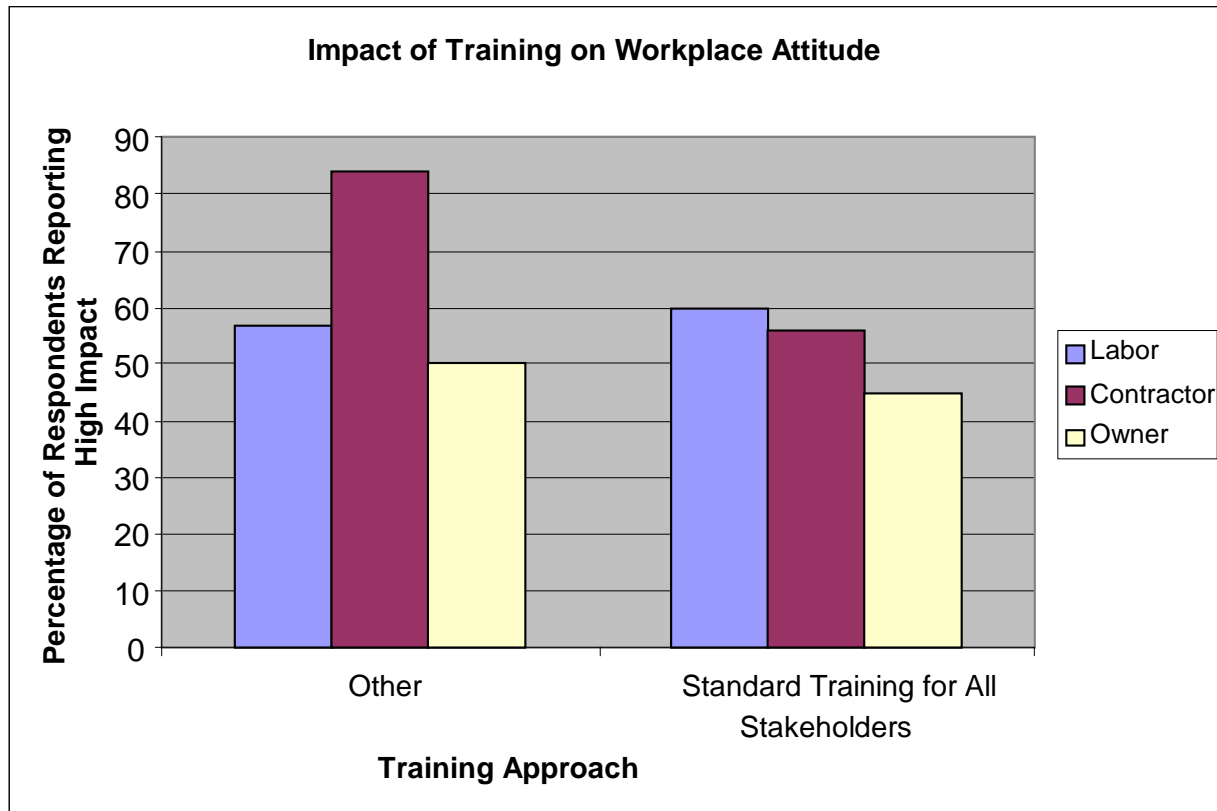
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Labor Agreement



About two-thirds of union respondents noted the high impact of the labor agreement on workplace attitude, while only 50 percent of contractors and 60 percent of owners thought this factor was highly influential. All industry sectors recognized that changes to standard area, union, or industry practices would have a high impact on workplace attitude. These labor agreement issues are highlighted in the chart, **Impact of Labor Agreement on Workplace Attitude**.

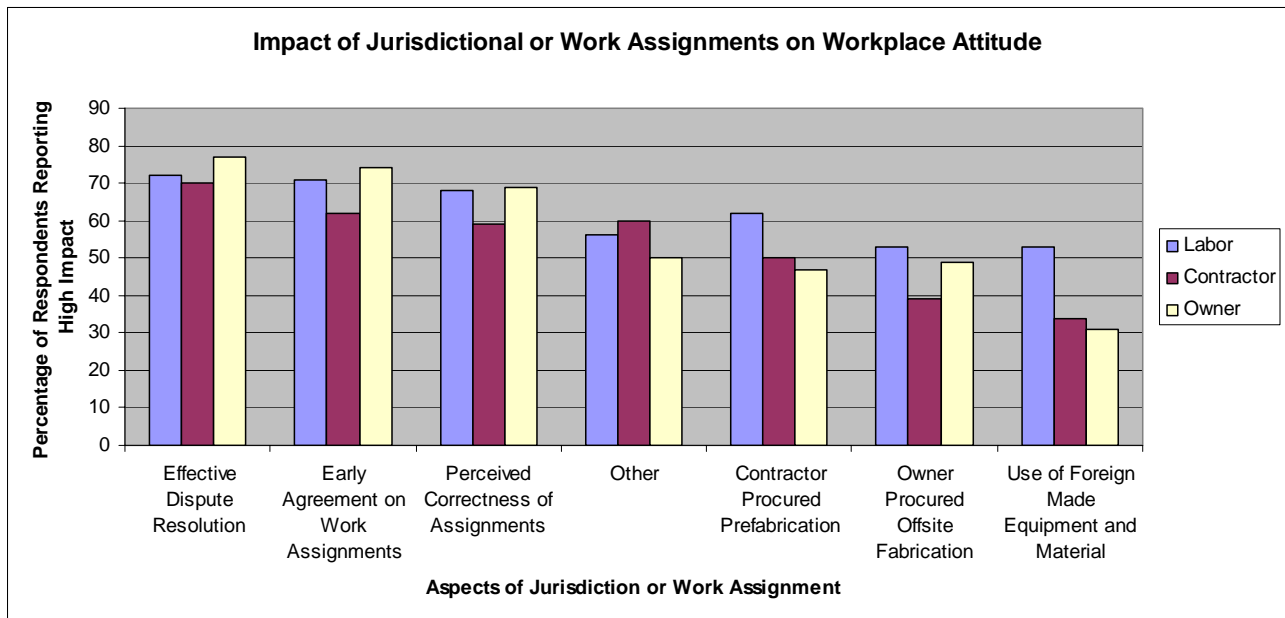
Training



Only about one-half of all respondents thought that standardized training for all stakeholders would have a high impact on workplace attitude. See the chart, **Impact of Training on Workplace Attitude**.

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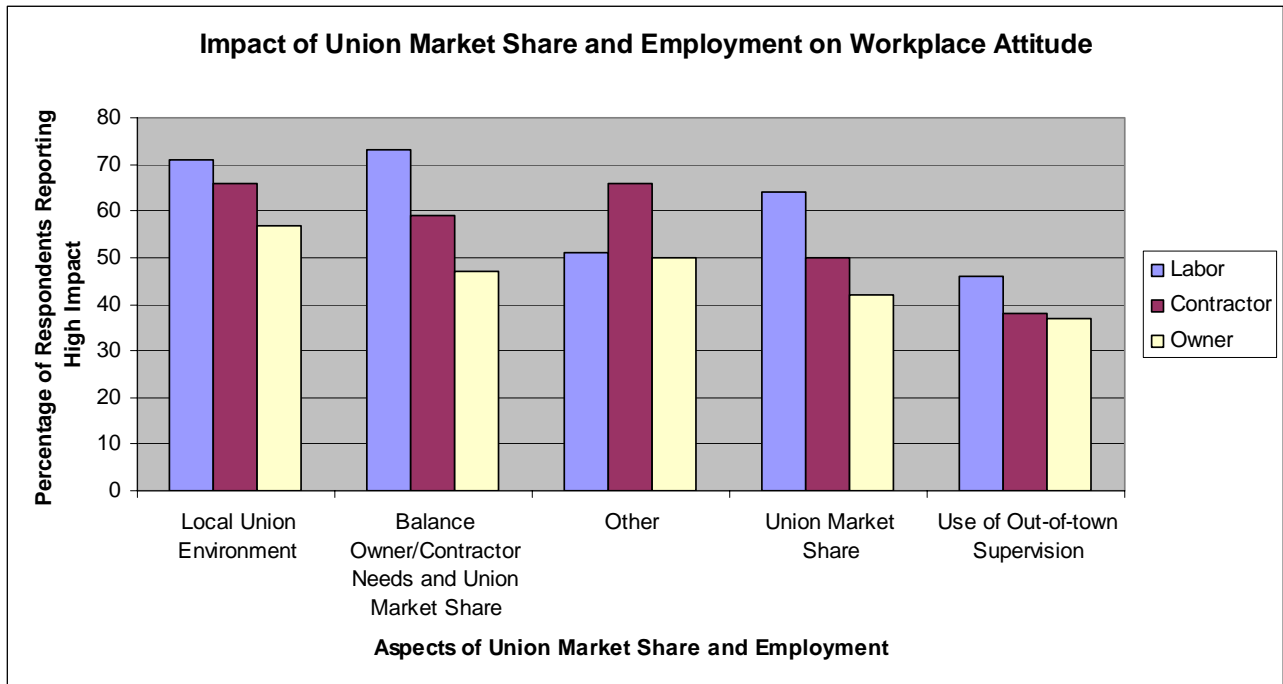
Jurisdiction



All sectors recognized the high impact of early agreement on work assignments, the perceived correctness of the assignments, and effective dispute resolution. Union respondents highlighted the workplace attitude impact of contractor-procured, off-site prefabrication that is in conflict with the labor agreement. Owner-procured, off-site prefabrication and use of foreign-sourced equipment and material were also highlighted as issues by union respondents. This is illustrated in the chart, **Impact of Jurisdictional or Work Assignments on Workplace Attitude**.

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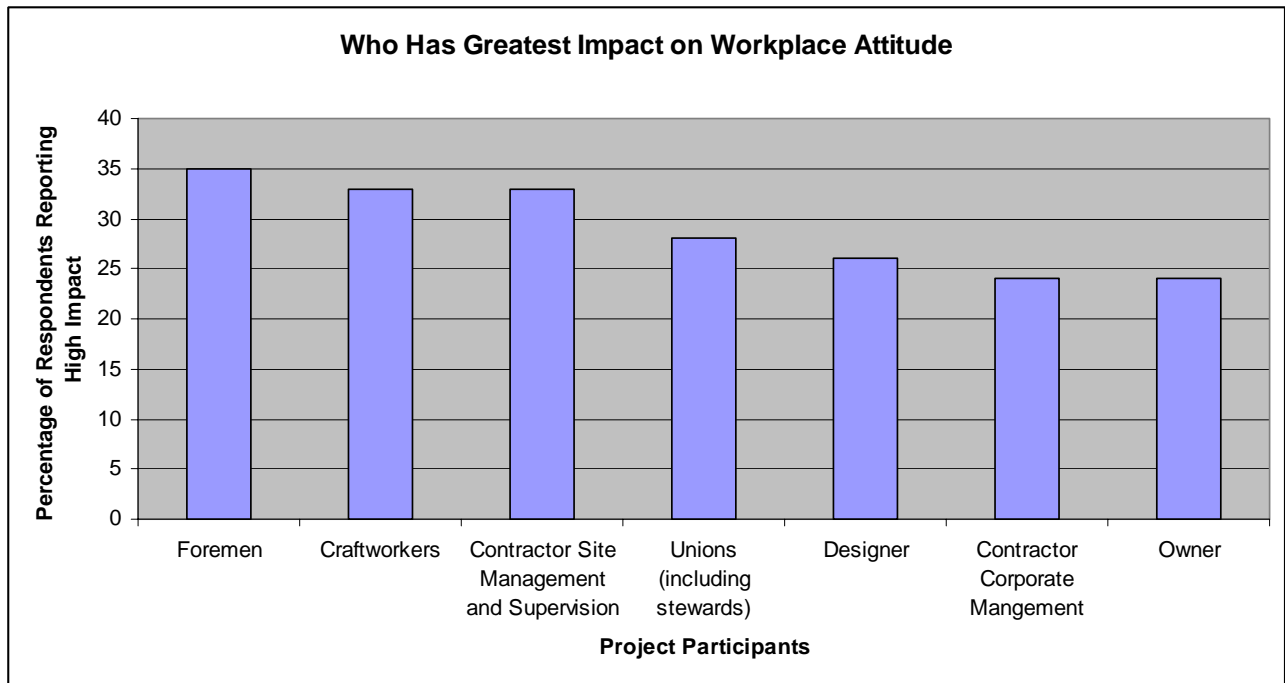
Union Market Share and Employment



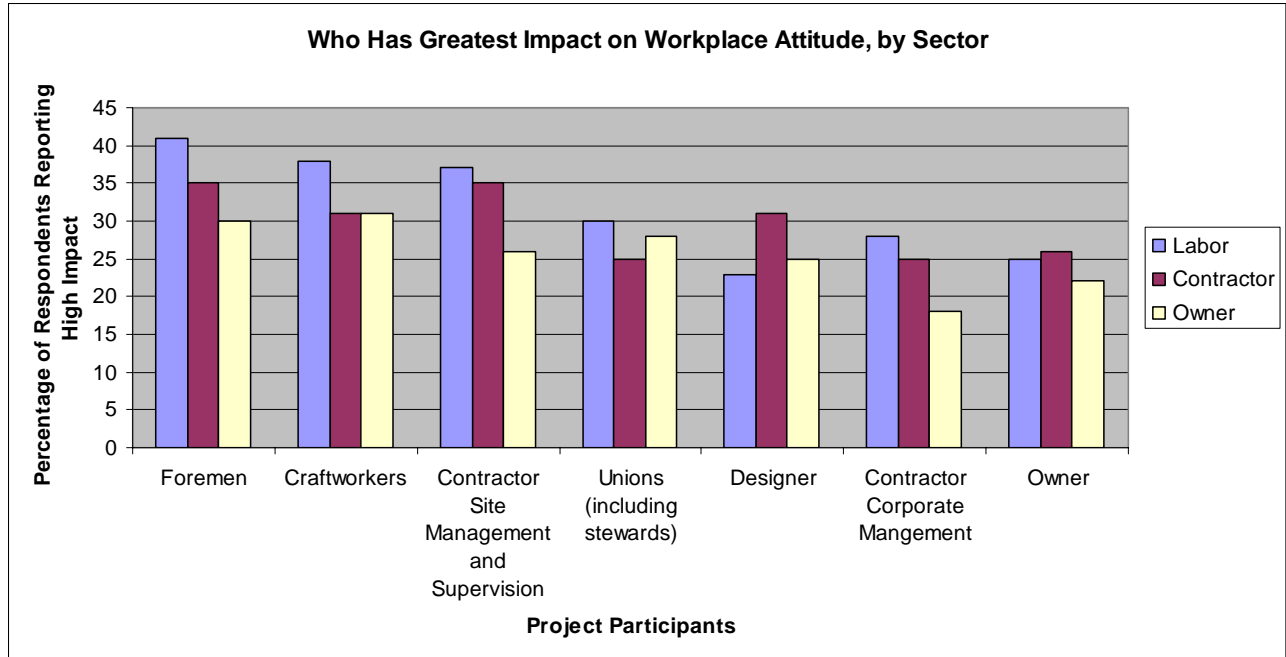
As might be expected, union market share and employment was of particular importance to the labor sector. Contractors and owners responded that this was less important. However, their answers reflect a fair amount of sensitivity to these issues. Areas of concern included the local union environment, the balance of owner/contractor needs with union market share, and the union market share itself. This is illustrated in the chart, **Impact of Union Market Share and Employment on Workplace Attitude**.

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6. Project Participants Who Influence Workplace Attitude



Those individuals located at the site — foremen, craftworkers, and contractor supervision — were identified as having the greatest influence on workplace attitude. Those further removed from the site, including unions, designers, contractor corporate management, and owners, were reported to have less influence on workplace attitude. See the chart, **Who Has Greatest Impact on Workplace Attitude**.



Union respondents heavily emphasized those on-site individuals (foremen, craftworkers, and contractor site supervision) as having greatest influence on workplace attitude. Union respondents also recognized influence from the union organization. Contractor respondents noted that on-site supervision, including foremen, have most impact on attitude. Interestingly, owners thought that owners themselves had less influence than either union or contractor respondents.

Construction User Roundtable Publications

The purpose of developing Construction User Roundtable (CURT) publications is to disseminate recommendations, guidelines, and reports developed by the Construction Users Roundtable. CURT is focused on improving the cost effectiveness of the U.S. construction industry. These publications have been developed from the point of view of owners or users of construction services. Efforts by all segments of the industry, however, are vital if major improvement is to be the result.

This publication is one of a series from committees or study teams addressing a problem area.

Findings and recommendations of The Construction Users Roundtable are included in publication series classified as White Papers (WP), Reports (R), or User Practices (UP). In addition to these classifications, CURT publications are numbered based on the category of the topic:

Category	Number Code
Constructability	011 to 099
Contractor Management	101 to 199
Cost	201 to 299
Interface Management	301 to 399
Workforce/Industrial Relations	401 to 499
Material Control	501 to 599
Purchasing	601 to 699
Quality	701 to 799
Safety	801 to 899
Security	901 to 999
Strategy	1001 to 1009
Work Planning and Scheduling	1101 to 1199
Technology/E-Sourcing	1201 to 1299
Special Projects	2001 to 2099

Examples:

- WP-1201: A CURT White Paper on Reverse Auction
- R-402: A CURT Report on Tripartite Initiatives
- UP -801: A CURT User Practice on Construction Safety in Contractor Prequalification

Available CURT Publications

White Papers

- WP 401 Confronting the Skilled Workforce Shortage
- WP 1003 Construction Strategy: Optimizing the Construction Process
- WP 1201 Guidelines on the Use of Reverse Auction Technology
- WP 1202 Collaboration, Integrated Information and the Project Life Cycle in Building Design, Construction and Operation

Reports

- R 402 CURT Tripartite Initiative Executive Summary
- R 402A CURT Tripartite Study on Extended overtime on Construction Projects
- R 402B Reducing Absenteeism Report
- R-402C Tripartite Initiative Report: Eliminating Work Disruptions and Jurisdictional Disputes
- R-405 CURT Tripartite Initiative Report: Project Stakeholder Responsibilities
- R 807 CURT Owner Safety Blueprint

User Practices

- UP 101 Construction Measures: Key Performance Indicators
- UP 201 Construction Project Controls: Cost, Schedule, and Change Management
- UP 403 Construction Labor: Managing the Construction Workforce
- UP 601 Construction Purchasing: Capital Purchasing & Contracting
- UP 701 Construction Quality: Achieving Quality on Capital Projects and Craft Worker Prequalification
- UP 801 Construction Safety: Contractor and Craft Worker Prequalification
- UP 802 Construction Safety: The Owner's Role
- UP 803 Construction Safety: Pre-Bid and Bid Clarification Meetings
- UP 804 Construction Safety: Contract Terms and Conditions
- UP 805 Construction Safety: Monitoring Performance
- UP 806 Construction Safety: Improving Safety Programs
- UP 1001 Construction Strategy: Selecting Contracting Strategies
- UP 1002 Construction Strategy: Selecting the Right Contractor

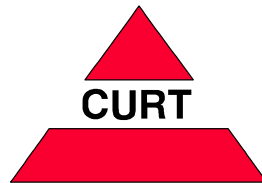
Tools

- T 404 Construction Labor: Craft Employee Training Evaluation Tool
- T 808 Construction Safety: Owner Safety Blueprint Assessment Tool

Training Modules

- TM 809 Construction Owners' Safety Blueprint Training Module

Visit the CURT publications website
http://www.curt.org/14_0_curt_publications.html
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