

WJHRM

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Edited by Edward H. Hernandez, Ph.D

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Table of Contents - Spring 2009

**Disinformation strategies of human resources for
computer crime via email**

Panagiotis Petratos Ph.D, Sofia Gleni, Edward
Hernandez Ph.D, & Carsten Maple
pp. 5-11

**Teaching Evidence-Based Human Resource
Management**

Miguel R. Olivas-Luján, Ph.D & James G. Pesek,
Ph.D.
pp. 12-16

**Terminating an Employee: How to Navigate a
Contemptuous Goal**

Lee Tyner, Ed.D
pp. 17-23

**“Lights, camera, action!”: Experiencing Human
Resource Management through Film**

M. Suzanne Clinton, DBA, SPHR
pp. 24-28

**Using the LINE: Integrating Economic Indicators
in the Advanced Human Resource Management
Classroom**

Melody L. Wollan, PH.D PHR
pp. 29-33

HR Hotdish: Feeding Student Appetites

Philip Deger, MSIR
pp. 34-39

**Debate As a Teaching Tool (Human Resource
Management): Rational & Technique**

Parmila Rao, Ph.D
pp. 40-42

**Leading Motivated Employees: Six Areas of
Concern for Managers**

Randall B. Brown, Ph.D
pp. 43-54

Disinformation strategies of human resources for computer crime via email

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Abstract

Computer crime has significantly increased in the modern digital information era. The Internet has created, on the doorstep of all computer users, a virtual gate for phishing mongers, who can globally cast their phishing net to the far reaches of the electronically connected world spreading their bait like a pandemic. In our first pilot study presented at MIT ICIQ 2006 the analysis focused on a small subset of emails trafficked through the California State University, Stanislaus network denoted by the domain csustan.edu. These emails were characterised as spam, were meticulously collected from the authors' inbox and had one additional characteristic in common; they were all designed with a criminal intent as scam aimed to carry out financial crime. In this further study our scope is expanded from a single inbox to the whole campus email traffic through the California State University, Stanislaus network, in order to incorporate in the analysis all (and some not) identified spam emails including all email types of abuse, as well as emails aimed to carry out a variety of computer crimes.

Introduction

Advanced technological innovations in computer hardware and software, as well as continuous progress of optical telecommunications have made possible the global real-time communication of international computer users. Such significant technological advances generate numerous valuable benefits for the human-kind; unfortunately together with the fruits of progress the beneficiaries must also accept the bitter fruits of evil computer criminals as well as malicious abusers of these technologies.

Shifty imposters and unsavoury characters take advantage of the cloak of anonymity offered by the Internet to masquerade as lawful, respectful citizens and trustworthy organisations. Their disinformation methods include offering lottery winnings, hefty commissions for overseas bank transfers and for stocks ready to secretly take off, as well as all other imaginable economic rewards in order to lure their unsuspecting victims in their trap and carry out their computer crimes.

A general description of spam is undesired and unsolicited electronic communications [9]. Until recently email was the sole means of communication for computer criminals. However, the digital integration of the modern communications infrastructure has allowed these perpetrators to expand their reach by using instant messaging computer systems and mobile phone text messaging.

The disinformation strategies employed by computer criminals include phishing, where the phisher-men elicit sensitive information like credit card numbers and bank accounts from their victims in return for a mythical reward such as lottery winnings. A phrase used frequently among computer people is spam and ham to respectfully differentiate the unsolicited and the authentic email communications [10].

Shifty computer criminals have also invented new methods of generating profit from modern technologies such as electronic pyramid schemes, exploit multi-level marketing using zombie bots and bot armies stealing email addresses and bombarding mass-marketing offers to myriads victims.

The objectives of this work are to identify email spam messages trafficked through the California State University, Stanislaus, network denoted by the domain csustan.edu. To isolate, store and process the raw spam emails. To protect the innocent by removing the email headers which may include some identifiable characteristics such as destination addresses and receivers names in order to preserve the recipients' anonymity. To extract the emails' pure text messages in order to create a large corpus of texts. To analyze the pure text

messages with computational linguistics techniques to extract lexical statistics. To classify the spam emails according to categories, such as stocks, product marketing, financial crime, etc. To compute email traffic statistics, which may reveal patterns, utilization and the usual suspects?

Disinformation and spam defences

Currently the network of the University is connected to the outside world through a fibre optic line with an enhanced Gigabit circuit for a speed of 1Gb per second. Underground lines in the campus network serve as the campus backbone, which consists of fibre optic lines. The campus network encompasses many high-speed star, bus and wireless topologies interconnecting many heterogeneous hosts including Windows, Apples, Linux and Unix machines. The majority of the local area networks are constructed with Category 5-6 cables, which include four twisted pairs in a single cable jacket for a speed of 100Mb/s. Instead of having all computing facilities in a single location, in order to avoid the risk of leaving the site vulnerable to a hacker attack after a physical break-in, quite a few of the computer servers are dispersed in several buildings across campus. The following figure shows the various computer servers on campus and the distributed wireless access points.

The principal University email servers are all managed by the IT department. From the data we have meticulously gathered and the statistics computed the traffic of spam emails through the principal campus email servers for the csustan.edu domain is approximately 350MB per day, which is equivalent to 2.5GB per week or 10GB per month. This quantity of email traffic places a considerable strain on the IT staff, on the network itself and on the computer hardware and software, all of which in tandem offer these electronic communication services.

Furthermore, in addition to the primary campus email servers many departments elect to run their own individual email servers. A few examples are the College of Business Administration, Computer Science, Physics, Chemistry, Biology as well as other University Departments. Hence, if those additional email servers are taken into account our most conservative estimates lead us to believe that the total spam email traffic exceeds 400MB per day which is equivalent to 2.8GB per week or over 11.2GB per month. This is too much data to archive continuously.

The spam is separated from the authentic email messages and placed in the quarantine folder. The authentic email messages continue their journey and find their way to the recipients' inboxes. The anti-spam system is quite accurate; rarely an email message which is not spam will be labelled as spam, this condition is also known as false negative and a spam message will be labelled as authentic email this condition is also known as false positive.

Also, to support the optimum operation of the filter and its progress towards full accuracy there is a feedback mechanism which allows the user and the system administrator after periodical inspections of the emails to rectify the false conditions by correctly categorising the messages falling under the false conditions.

To preserve the freedom of speech and avert any of the false conditions from taking place the University IT department follows a policy which allows the individual the freedom to decide what action to take with his/her spam messages.

One option the user has is to delete the spam messages instantly on the server before they arrive at the user's inbox; another option is to allow everything to pass with a label on the suspicious email showing the likelihood of spam in percentage and then read messages and discard them as needed.

The software tools used in this work include various Python scripts to process the raw emails, Wordsmith tools and T-Lab for the computational linguistic processing and the Sophos Antispam and Antivirus suite of tools as defences against spam and viruses received. For the current work the traffic statistics have been collected at the primary servers and spam email messages have been collected from the respective quarantine folders.

A series of experiments

During the first pilot study the focus was solely on email messages intended for financial crime, falling under the category 90%-100% spam likelihood. Sophos utilizes a database with thousands of rules to compare and match the emails and categorize them as spam i.e. 40%, 80%, 90%, 99% certainty of spam. For this further study the scope is expanded to include all the categories of spam likelihood. For the purposes of this work all the emails trafficked through the University network are monitored, collected, stored and categorized. After the collection of email messages the parsing and processing of the texts must be completed.

Table 1. Work tasks and respective time of processing.

CPU: Pentium 4 Hyper-Threaded, Frequency: 3.40 GHz, Memory: 512 MB RAM

Task A: Open the compressed quarantine archive occupying size on disk 894 MB (937,492,480 bytes)

Time A: 1 minute and 20 seconds

Task B: Uncompress quarantine archive to input folder producing 232,757 files occupying size on disk 2.42 GB (2,598,455,210 bytes)

Time B: 32 minutes and 30 second

Task C: Open the uncompressed Input folder

Time C: 3 minutes and 10 seconds

Task D: Process with Python, AV all the input files to produce 65,534 clean email messages in output folder 76.4 MB (80,114,729 bytes)

Time D: 17401.41346 seconds or 4 hours, 50 minutes and 1.413456 seconds

Although the uncompressed input folder contains 232,757 files after processing with a potent anti-virus and the Python scripts the final result in the output folder is 65,534 clean email messages. The difference 167,223 is the total number of empty and poisonous email messages.

The empty emails are sent in an attempt to perform the “knock and listen” scheme through a simple but effective polling mechanism to verify which of the email addresses in the phisher-man’s long lists are still alive. In a brute-force attack a mass email bombardment of all the available addresses in the phisher-man’s long lists takes place.

If the server responds that this is not a valid email address then the phisher-man knows that this email address is dead and crosses it out from his list. At the end of this elimination process only the good valid and alive email addresses are left. However, if the server responds that the mailbox is full that also means that the message will not be delivered but the address is still alive. A tidy spammer should also remove those addresses from his list so that he will not receive back any unnecessary server email messages.

However, during a mass email bombardment of marketing adverts subsequently to the verification of the targets’ email addresses the spammer’s sending address is quite often masqueraded as a legitimate address but in reality it does not exist, so no responding messages will be successfully delivered.

All the remaining emails are attempts to infiltrate poisonous viruses, worms and malicious binary attachments into the University network. These poisoned email messages are eliminated after their processing with a potent anti-virus, which discards all poisonous viruses, worms and malicious binary attachments.

```
import os
import sys
import time
import email
```

```
file_read = open('C:\\spam_email_message.eml', 'r')
```

```

message = email.message_from_file(file_read
file_read.close()
for header in message.keys(
    del message[header
file_write = open('C:\\output.txt', 'w'
file_write.write(str(message.as_string()))
file_write.close(

```

Figure 3. A simple Python script using the email library to remove all the headers from the input email.

In the preceding figure one of the Python scripts is shown using the email library to strip all the headers from the input email and then extract and save the pure text of the email in output. Naturally, this process must be reiterated in a loop to complete the processing of all the input email files. The following figure shows the raw input file with all the headers and after Python processing the pure text output of the email.

Figure 4. On the left the input file with all the headers, on the right after Python processing the output file.
 Figure 5. Email infiltration attempts with visual spam messages in embedded images.

Naturally as the anti-spam technology progresses so does the evil fraud and malicious deceptions of scammers and spammers. The latest techniques of spammers for infiltrating all the current anti-spam email defences, in order to pass undetected spam disguised as regular legitimate email, are based on the actual operation of the anti-spam filters themselves. The anti-spam filters scan the content of the emails by operating on the actual text typically a few Kilobytes from the top which is equivalent to several pages i.e. 1 character = 1 byte, 2 pages ~ 1 kilobyte. Anti-spam filters start at the beginning of the message whilst they examine the phrases and combinations of words. If words and phrases are unusual the email will pass as legitimate. As a result quite a few scammers and spammers have invented various messages with a concoction of words which make absolutely no sense to the human reader but they make sense to the anti-spam filter which gives the green light to the email. The typical form of deception to bypass the anti-spam filter is to include the actual spam message in an image embedded or attached to the email with the strange concoction of text as shown in the above figure.

Figure 6. Email message categories trafficked through the University domain csustan.edu during May 2007.

One possible solution to this problem is the following. In order for the anti-spam filter to effectively detect this new breed of spam all the embedded or attached images should be scanned with a robust pattern recognition algorithm and after that if they turn out to be text the appropriate language encoding scheme should be detected and next they can be converted to text and subsequently passed on to the content analysis filter. This procedure can be lengthy, CPU intensive, and also subject to automation difficulties. This is an interesting research subject worthy of contemplation which will have to be investigated further in a separate study. Next a *spam letters corpus* is generated from the 65,534 processed clean emails [2]. This is accomplished by a series of processing stages which take place to isolate and clean the pure text [1]. First the emails are stored as flat files including HTML tags. Next the HTML tags are removed and the plain text files are stored. Next the stop words which are the most common words in the English language are removed as they are simply background noise in the messages [3]. The Cornell University stop (noise) words list is utilized for this

processing stage. Subsequently the ensuing word list is created with the frequency for each word, the number of documents it was encountered in and the percentage it represents in the corpus [4]. The keywords of every given text are located and identified by comparison of the words in the text with a reference set of words which are taken from the entire spam letters corpus of texts [8, 9]. The words which are found to be outstanding in frequency are considered key and are presented in the order they were found to be outstanding [5, 6]. The distribution of key words can be plotted and the dispersion of selected terms is also plotted in the entire corpus. Selected terms from the word list such as offer, bank are specified as search words and are sought in all the text files selected from the corpus in order to generate concordances [7]. Each concordance is further used to compute terms mutual information, log likelihood and a word relation function of collocates of the search word [8]. The log likelihood is used along with a completed concordance of a search word in order to compute the mutual information between words and hence calculate the relation of collocates with the given search word [7].

Table 2. Lexical analysis data and detailed statistics of email spam for computer crime and other purposes.

Text files: 65,534
 File size: 22,818,562
 Tokens (running words) in text: 4,335,599
 Tokens used for word list: 3,700,726
 Types (distinct words): 32,150
 Type/token ratio (TTR): 0.868748486042022
 Standardised TTR: 35.4359970092773
 Standardised TTR std.dev.: 61.6645698547363
 Standardised TTR basis: 1,000
 Mean word length (in characters): 4.43247747421264
 Word length std.dev.: 2.77412009239196
 Sentences: 157,344
 Mean (in words): 23.5198516845703
 std.dev. 43.3639678955078
 Paragraphs: 14568
 Mean (in words): 254.031021118164
 std. dev.: 331.164245605468
 Sections: 14568
 Mean (in words): 254.03102111816
 std. dev.: 331.164245605468
 Numbers removed: 634,873
 Stop list tokens removed: 2,369,83
 Stop list types removed: 58

1-letter words: 343,904
 2-letter words: 637,954
 3-letter words: 657,09
 4-letter words: 661,773
 5-letter words: 311,352
 6-letter words: 271,241
 7-letter words: 340,194
 8-letter words: 179,333
 9-letter words: 120,133
 10-letter words: 70,10

11-letter words: 46,22

12-letter words: 23,580

13-letter words: 15,978

14-letter words: 6,78

15-letter words: 3,033

16-letter words: 2,38

17-letter words: 1,342

18-letter words: 2,047

19-letter words: 881

20-letter words: 618

Shown above are the detailed statistics which include: number of files involved in the word-list, file size (in bytes, i.e. characters), running words in the text (tokens), number of different words (types), type/token ratios, number of sentences in the text, mean sentence length (in words), standard deviation of sentence length (in words), number of paragraphs in the text, mean paragraph length (in words), standard deviation of paragraph length (in words), number of headings in the text, mean heading length (in words), number of sections in the text, mean section length (in words), standard deviation of heading length (in words), the number of 1-letter words and the number of n-letter words.

Conclusion

As a synopsis of what these collected email statistics reveal we can observe that the amount of spam trafficked through even legitimate servers such as Universities is significant. On the positive side the overall legitimate emails which have nothing to do with any sort of criminal or spam activities are still in higher quantity than the overall illegitimate emails. This is primarily due to the vigilance of the University security officers and system administrators and secondarily due to the anti-spam and anti-virus systems used at the University. As long as proper anti-spam and anti-hacker measures are taken by the security officers in charge the spam problem can be reasonably contained. The lexical computational analysis reveals that the reader should be very skeptical in case there is a sudden, unexpected and unconfirmed email promising immediate wealth in exchange for some private information. For instance, the recipient of an email should be very skeptical if the letter comes from a banker in Africa who is trying to transfer a fortune out of Africa and has selected the email recipient to assist him and receive a small fortune in return as long as she is ready to disclose confidential information such as social security numbers, mothers' maiden name, bank accounts and associated confidential financial information in order to receive the long lost African treasure. The lexical computational analysis further reveals that the criminals will use any means necessary to exploit their victims' weaknesses. Criminals often exploit the innate human greed but a few select may appeal to the humane nature, personal feelings or religious beliefs of their victims. For instance, in the lexical analysis unexpected words appeared as key words such as *hope, faith, children, refugee, pet*, or a religious figure of importance such as *God, Almighty, and Imam* (in law and theology, the caliph who is successor to Muhammad as the lawful temporal leader of the Islamic community).

The preferred method of attack is email as it is a gratis communication method and the infrastructure of the Internet guaranties anonymity and a limitless source of targets to provide endless wealth and riches.

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(please email Dr. Panagiotis Petratos for the complete listing of tables @ ppetratos@csustan.edu)

Teaching Evidence-Based Human Resource Management

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A truly compelling case for Evidence-Based Management (EBMgmt) in general, and for Evidence-Based Human Resource Management (EBHRM) in particular has been made (Conference Board, 2006; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006a, 2006b; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). Too much money is being “left at the table” when managers do not incorporate the best available scientific evidence in their business decisions. Organizations and careers are endangered—or as a minimum sub-optimized—when decision makers do not consult the extant knowledge base and rely excessively on subjective experiences or on other non-scientific basis to make their choices (Olivas-Lujan, 2008).

What is Evidence-Based (HR) Management?

The EBMgmt movement acknowledges Sackett et al.’s (2000) work on Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) as a major source of its genesis (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006a; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). For Sackett and his colleagues, EBM is “the integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values” (p. 1) in making decisions. Three major components are easily identified: (a) the practicing professional (the physician for EBM, the manager for EBMgmt), (b) the scientific or “best research evidence” informing the profession, and (c) the entity in which the professional practices the discipline (mostly patients for EBM, employees and their organizations for EBMgmt). It is also worth mentioning that parallel movements have developed in the fields of Education, Policing, and Psychology (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). A great deal of emphasis is placed in the second component—the best available research evidence—as this component seems to be the most neglected in the professions above, as well as in management.

While the problem of neglecting the existing knowledge evidence may occur in many disciplines, the HR literature has taken an early lead at identifying some of the areas in which this may occur. A research report

by the Conference Board (2007) explicitly calls for the use of business performance measures and scientific standards for the HR profession. Cohen (2007), Latham (2007), Lawler (2007), Rousseau (2007), along with Rynes, Giluk, and Brown (2007) have recently added their perspectives on the existing gap between HR research and practice and offer suggestions to narrow such gap. Several of these pieces—particularly Rousseau & McCarthy’s (2007)—highlight the crucial role that business education plays in making EBMgmt a reality. The six principles listed on Table 1 were inspired by the work that has developed in other fields, and are expected to improve the status quo by narrowing the research-practice gap and by making students more familiar with the evidence and how to find it and use it in their training.

Table 1. Principles for Teaching Management from an Evidence-Based Perspective

Source: Rousseau & McCarthy (2007).

1. Focus on principles where the science is clear
2. Develop decision awareness in professional practice
3. Diagnose underlying factor relating to decisions
4. Contextualize knowledge related to evidence use
5. Develop evidence-based decision supports
6. Prepare to access new evidence

Teaching Evidence-Based HRM

Clearly, business schools, especially those that offer Human Resources majors, have a fundamental responsibility to include Evidence-Based Human Resource Management in the curriculum. Supporting this point, several of the most outlandish examples of how the extant research evidence is ignored fall squarely within the HRM discipline. To illustrate, Pfeffer and Sutton (2006a, 2006b) denounce the fascination that HR conferences seem to have with “Best Practices,” when it is highly unlikely that a successful business practice—for example, 360° performance appraisals or forced rankings—that was carefully developed by and for a particular organization may be successfully applied by their competitors that have a very different business culture, history, size, etc. They also dedicate several chapters in their influential book to describe how poorly implemented many reward systems are, in addition to lamenting the widespread neglect of research findings in areas that are an important part of the HR manager’s job such as recruitment, work-life balance, leadership, talent and change management.

In addition to providing the context for EBHRM above, our contribution to this special issue consists of describing an activity that may be used in the classrooms to share with HRM students the importance of incorporating the best-available evidence in their professional practice. While teaching a human resource management course for MBA students, one of the authors requires his students to read the Rynes, Brown, and Colbert (2002) article “Seven Common Misconceptions about Human Resource Practices: Research Findings versus Practitioner Beliefs.” In their study of 959 respondents who were members of the Society for Human Resource Management, Rynes et al. (2002) found seven human resource management research findings that generally were not known, much less utilized, by human resource practitioners. In brief, those misconceptions pertained to issues of selection and effective performance management. In areas that are crucial to HR, such as performance appraisals, goal setting, or how strongly predictive of performance intelligence or conscientiousness are, as many as 83% of their respondents responded in ways that are counter to extant research findings. The article serves as an excellent vehicle for discussing the gap between research and practice, and for highlighting the need to incorporate EBHRM as a main tool for their professional practice.

As noted by Guest (2007) and advocated by Rousseau and McCarthy (2007), HR managers and professionals need to develop a critical and inquiring capacity for proper diagnosis. HR professionals need to be able to evaluate information. So, simply having the students read and then discuss the research findings cited in the article is unlikely to be sufficient. HRM students are expected to further develop their analytical abilities and decision-making skills in a way that will enable them to apply their knowledge after they are done with their formal training. With that in mind and in keeping with suggestions for practicing and teaching evidence-based management (Guest, 2007; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007; Olivas-Lujan, 2008), the students are required to critically analyze the Rynes et al. article using a framework found in Elder and Paul (2003). Specifically, students are expected to address the following items: 1. What is the main purpose of the article? Is the question well-stated (or clearly implied)? 2. What is the most important information in the article? Does the author cite relevant evidence, experiences, and/or information essential to the issue? Is the information accurate and relevant? 3. What are the main inferences in the article? 4. What are the main assumptions underlying the author's thinking (what is the author taking for granted that might be questioned)? 5. Identify the implications (does the author display sensitivity to the implications and consequences to the position he/she is taking?). 6. Lastly, students are asked to try to make connections between the article and their personal or professional experiences, and explain how they would apply the knowledge from the article in a professional setting.

Given the concerns expressed by several authors (e.g., Skapinker, 2008; Rynes et al., 2002; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Van de Ven & Johnson, 2008; Lawler, 2007) regarding how business research is used in practice, requiring students (future managers and HR professionals) to think about how they would use the research findings in actual practice is a first and significant step toward reducing the gap between research and practice over time. In addition to textbook readings and assigned cases, more than twenty articles are assigned each semester so that the students have ample opportunities to hone their analytical abilities and apply the acquired knowledge to practice. Rynes, Giluk and Brown (2007) note that while aspiring managers can learn about management-related evidence through the acquisition of master's or bachelor's degree in business, one should not assume that the student has learned evidence-based principles. Why not? Among other reasons, some textbooks do not cover important research findings, and some even include theories that have not received empirical support (e.g., Maslow's hierarchy). Also, due to a serious shortage of Ph.D.s in business, some students are being instructed by faculty without Ph.D.'s. Their practical and anecdotal contributions to the classrooms are much helpful and welcome, but a number of them do not know enough about the scientific evidence in their fields of instruction or where to find it, unless they make a very explicit effort to train themselves in the scientific method and keep abreast of the state of the art.

In summary, we suggest that instructors provide their students with an exposure to EBHRM, while simultaneously providing a space to systematically examine the assumptions that the authors are making. In turn, this may lead them to question their own assumptions before making important future decisions. EBM is certainly not the end all, but provides an important foundation for HR managers and practitioners in making decisions and as key contributors to high performing work systems.

The Importance of “Local” Evidence

When covering strategic issues in recruiting, including how organizations establish recruiting goals and priorities and organizational recruiting philosophies, students are asked to read an empirical study on recruitment source, applicant quality and job performance (see Kirnan et al., 1989). Given that future HR managers will need to make choices regarding which recruitment methods and sources are best aligned with the organization's recruiting goals—for example, hiring workers who will perform at high levels and remain with the organization—, students are given an opportunity to analyze an evidence-based study on recruitment source effectiveness.

To supplement the discussion of recruitment source effectiveness and the Kirnan et al. (1989) article, the instructor shares with his students a study he and another colleague conducted several years ago for three

regional hospitals/medical centers on the effectiveness of their recruitment methods. Interestingly, prior to the actual collection and analysis of the data, two of the three HR directors claimed that recruiting walk-ins was the most effective method. However, in analyzing almost four years' worth of data for 375 hires, they discovered that employees hired through walk-ins had significantly higher quit rates, determined by counting a hire as a "quit" if he/she was no longer employed by the hospital 12 months after his/her initial date of hire, and lower performance ratings than employee referrals. In particular, clerks/secretaries that entered the organization as "walk-ins" experienced a quit rate of 38.1 percent, considerably higher than the overall quit rate of 26.1 percent for all three hospitals/medical centers. It is also worth noting that one of the HR directors stated that clerks/secretaries and housekeeping staff hired through the public employment agency yielded good results for the medical center. Yet, an analysis of the data revealed that those hired via the public employment agency were inferior in performance to employees recruited via all other sources. Evidence-based HR management was nowhere to be found; these HR directors were not aware of the existing research on recruitment source effectiveness nor had they conducted any systematic recruitment studies in their respective organizations, thus completely neglecting the local evidence. It was business as usual.

Concluding Thoughts

The key point that we try to drive home is that HR professionals have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the best available evidence, so that they place themselves in a position to make optimal HR policies and practices. It is our hope that this article has drawn attention to the importance of incorporating the best evidence not just in management in general, but in HR and in its education.

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Terminating an Employee: How to Navigate a Contemptuous Goal

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Abstract

“You’re fired.” This term is often the ignition to lawsuits, stress, confrontation, embarrassment, and torment. According to Funk (1995) the three most stressful situations for humans are “death of a family member, divorce, and being fired.” In other words, the aftermath is a powder keg of emotions with the actual act of termination serving as ignition. Yet, few managers receive adequate training on how to conduct a termination. That is, they receive guidance on employment law, reasons to terminate, advice on what not to say, but typically aren’t taught the actual act of terminating. Thus, an exercise was developed to train participants how to conduct a termination. This exercise and advice is based on the culmination of professional human resource experience and legal training by the author and contains two episodes for participants: conducting a termination with no guidance, and conducting a termination using a well crafted script.

Terminating an Employee: How to Navigate a Contemptuous Goal

Proposed Session: An experiential learning based workshop that teaches supervisors and managers how to terminate an employee, word-for-word, step-by-step.

Participants: Students enrolled in an introductory management course or human resource management course. However, this exercise has also been used with while training attorneys and working adults in a “train the trainer” format.

Roles: Without providing much information, students are asked to form two parallel lines that are facing each other. This will ensure that each participant has a partner. In the event that the group has an odd number of participants, one of them can pair off with the instructor.

Optional: When the students are asked to “pair off” you may ask them to have one Line form from tallest to shortest, and the other from shortest to tallest. This ties in with the discussion which occurs later.

CASE # "Case"

You are the HR Manager of a company with 125 workers and have been asked to terminate an employee.

You have been with the company for one year yet "Know_EE" know the employee fairly well

Although terminations are normally performed by supervisors, that person is on vacation and thus you (the HR Manager) have been instructed to perform the termination.

The Issue

The employee has been having problems with: "Category"

Due to: "Issue"

It is time for you to perform your first termination. *Welcome to HR...*

There are actually ten different cases that are provided to Line A. (The cases can be created and varied quickly by using the above script and creating a mail merge in MS Work using Appendix A as the database.) Each participant receives one case, and it is important that the cases are provided in numerical order, from 1 to 10. If there are more than ten participants, provide the eleventh participant with case 1, etc. Each case involves termination for a different reason and involves different issues.

Meanwhile, the participants in Line B each receive a document that corresponds with the document that their partner in Line A received. For example, participant #1 in Line B will receive:

CASE # "Case"

You are an employee about to be fired. You have been with the company for 2 years yet "Know_HR_Mgr" know the HR manager very well. Use the following as your response and as a guideline of how you are supposed to act. Make it challenging for the HR Mgr. Act as though your grade depended on it and Oscars were going to be awarded.

You are being fired for: "Category"

Specifically for: "Issue"

Your response should be that this (is due to): "Response"

Your emotion / reaction should be: "Emotion"

At the end, your closing comments should be based on: "Result"

Good luck!

Step Two: At this point, tell the two lines to get about ten feet from each other. Thi will allow you to approach each line and see if any participants have questions. Note: The other line will attempt to listen. It is recommended that you do not provide advice on how to

conduct the termination. Rather, let the participants flounder. It is also recommended that you approach line B and remind the participants to act as though their grade depended on it. After answering questions about the directions, tell the participants to meet with their

counterpart as directed

As the terminations are taking place, walk through the room and listen for various comments. Remember, there are ten different cases and reasons for termination. For example, Case 2 involves attendance issue due to an employee that leaves work early. The participant from Line B who is being fired has been instructed to respond that the absences are due to doctor's appointments, to act very nervous, and argue that he or she will have children who will go hungry if he or she is unemployed. Meanwhile, in Case 10 the participant from Line A is conducting a termination due to performance issues. In this case, the participant from Line B has been instructed to argue that the issue has never been mentioned before today, to act outraged, and then stare at the participant from Line A. Allow about five minutes for this exercise and take note of what you heard during the terminations such as apologies, blaming someone else such as the CEO, or claiming that it was a layoff.

Step Three: At this point, gain the participant's attention and randomly select a participant from Line A and ask him or her how it went. After listening to the answer, ask the corresponding participant from Line B how it went, how he or she was supposed to act, and if he or she thinks the counterpart did a good job at conducting the termination. Continue the discussion with other pairs and target participants who you heard making comments such as apologies, blaming others, or providing other reasons such as layoffs.

Some of the students will bring up concern that he or she may have been conducting an illegal termination. For example, in the case involving an employee who missed work due to excessive tardiness, did this violate FMLA? Notify the students that they can trust that all of the terminations had been approved by in-house legal counsel. However, remind the students that when he or she apologizes or blame it on someone else or something else, that he or she had done something that the attorney did not authorize: being deceitful, being dishonest, and/ or providing and embellished reason. Otherwise, it is recommended that you do not provide much guidance during this discussion. Rather, ask questions about stress levels, confidence, fear of being assaulted, or empathy for the person being fired.

Step Four: Have the participants form lines again and to pair with the same person as the last time. This step is similar to what was done previously except that participants from Line B will serve as the HR Managers and Line A will represent the employees being fired.

Provide each participant in Line B with a case, in order of one through ten. Each participant receives one case; repeat the process beginning with the eleventh participant. This time, the participants will receive a similar version of what the counterparts received in the previous role plays. However, this time the participants are provided with a script identifying exactly what to say, and how to say it. For example, the first participant in Line B will receive the following:

CASE # "Case"

You are the HR Manager of a company with 125 workers and have been asked to terminate an employee.

You have been with the company for one year, yet "Know_EE" know the employee fairly well.

Although terminations are normally performed by supervisors, that person is on vacation and thus you (the HR Manager) have been instructed to perform the termination.

The Issue

The employee has been having problems with: "Category"

Due to: "Issue"

This time, use the following script to conduct your termination:

A decision has been made to end your employment. I realize this may be upsetting, but the decision is final. If any paperwork is needed regarding your insurance or 401K, someone from HR will contact you. Otherwise, I need you to gather your things and leave

If the employee argues, challenges, or won't leave until you say more, use the following script:

I will provide the reason if you will give me your word that once I tell you, you will leave and there will be no further discussion or argument. Do I have your word that you will honor this? (make sure employee agrees). Repeat that he or she will need to leave when you tell them the reason and then continue with the following script:

All decisions of employment, including terminations should stem from one of the following three categories: attendance, performance, or conduct. In this situation, it is:

"Category" . I need for you to gather your things and leave.

If the employee attempts to further argue, put your hand up and say, "I have your word."

Most employees will leave at this point. If he or she does not, do not discuss anything further AT ALL. Alternate the following softly and politely after allowing an uncomfortable silence:

I need you to gather your things and leave. (pause) You gave me your word.

Meanwhile, the participants in Line A will receive one of ten cases similar to the following:

CASE # "Case"

You are an employee about to be fired. You have been with the company for 2 years yet "Know_HR_Mgr" know the HR manager very well. Use the following as your response and as a guideline of how you are supposed to act. Make it challenging for the HR Mgr. Act as though your grade depended on it and Oscars were going to be awarded

You are being fired for: "Category"

Specifically for: "Issue"

Your response should be that this (is due to): "Response"

Your emotion / reaction should be: "Emotion"

At the end, your closing comments should be based on: "Result"

Like before, have the lines get about ten feet apart and ask if they have questions. It is important that the other line does not listen to your answers. Also, it is critical that you meet with Line B for the following (you may want to take them into the hall for a private mini-workshop). Notify that for this to be successful; they need to read the script numerous times until they can perform the task without having it in their hand. Furthermore, if they read the script to the participant in Line A it will sound very inhumane, monotone, and is less likely to work. Rather, they need to be able to recite and perform the scrip without holding the document. Spot check two or three people to see if they can recite the script. This encourages all of the participants to memorize it quickly.

Also, you may want to meet with participants from Line A and tell them that now is there time for revenge. That is, make sure the participants provide challenges similar to what they received in the previous exercise.

Step Five: Have the participants pair off with his or her partner and conduct the termination. Walk through the room and listen to the discussions. After about five minutes gain the participants' attention and lead another discussion. Target the participants who handled it well and ask for his or her insight. Also, ask his or her counterpart how it went. Expect some comments such as "I couldn't say the script. It's too cheesy" or perhaps "The person still sat there crying." Respond by acknowledging that this is a classroom environment and the participants are acting. Also point out however, that by following the script for the second part of the exercise, the HR Managers did not introduce new elements to the legal minefield as before. Finally, using the odd numbered participant or someone else, act out the termination for the class. That is, as the facilitator recite the script to someone in a calm, confident voice.

On a very rare occasion, during the class discussion a participant who is being fired in round two will claim, "I would never give the HR Manager my word." Use this participant for you to role play with and again use the script. When the participant refuses to give his or her word state the following, "I am clocking you out immediately. If you choose not to leave, I will contact security and/or the local police. However, the best thing is for you to gather your things and leave."

This situation points to a potential hurdle of the exercise. That is, sometimes a student will focus on breaking the exercise rather than learning from it. If so, confide your agreement that the classroom does not perfectly reflect the real world. However, ask participants who have experience with terminations how they like the instructions and script. The responses will be overwhelmingly positive. Also, remind participants that a significant portion of the success is based on how smoothly the HR Manager can recite the script. It should be stated in an almost passive, slow manner.

Step 6: Discuss other issues related to termination such as physical size and stature. Acknowledge that it can be intimidating to terminate and employee twice your size, but rather than sitting straight up with broad shoulders, and strong confidence that when the employee argues to squat a little in the chair, and lean back. You may want to ask participants who were of opposite height if it created a challenge. Choose a participant to role play with and provide this example of you leaning back and sinking in the chair as the other person becomes angry.

Point out that when an employee is being terminated that emotions are running very strong and it is often better to back off so that the employee does not feel threatened. Also, discuss terminations and popular myth versus research. For example, a popular myth exists that the worst day to terminate is Friday because the terminated employee will spend the weekend “stewing” and has limited opportunities to apply for jobs in person. Thus, the separated employee is more likely to file a lawsuit. However, research by Karl and Hancock (1999) indicate that Friday terminations have fewer lawsuits. Likewise, a myth exists that an HR Manager should always have security present when available. This belief is based on the notion that an employee being fired is less likely to erupt if security is present. However, the research by Karl and Hancock again dispels the myth. That is, the likelihood of assault is higher when security is present.

Step 7: Provide participants with a handout on terminations that includes the script (Appendix B) and advice on terminations in general.

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Appendix A

Emotion	Result	___ claim to know	___ claim to know HR
outrage	File lawsuit	do	do not
very nervous	Kid groes angry	do	do not
silence	6 mos. of unemployment	do	do not
outrage	You haven't heard the last	do	do not
silence	Took me 3 years to find	do	do not
cry	Will contact president of	do not	do
outrage	Will contact president of	do not	do
cry	File lawsuit	do not	do
cry	Stare at the person as	do not	do
outrage	Stare at the person as	do not	do

Appendix B

Termination Scripts and Tips

In the unfortunate event that you have to terminate someone’s employment, the following script will often decrease the likelihood of lawsuits. Many acts of termination actually further damage the relationship and increase the likelihood of employment claims because the employer’s representative will often apologize or say things like, “I know you have a tough life at home and are a good worker; if it were up to me I wouldn’t do this.” Or perhaps worse, the employer’s representative will tell the employee that he or she is being “laid off”

when the separation decision was actually due to attendance, performance, or conduct.

Also, some companies choose to provide no reason and simply have security “walk the employee out” along with a box of his or her belongings. Instead, I posit that you should use the following. If you read it as a script, it will sound sterile and inhumane. Rather, memorize it and practice voice inflection that softens and has many pauses.

Bring the person to your office, offer a seat, and use the following without introduction or fear.

A decision has been made to end your employment. I realize this may come as a surprise. (pause) If any paperwork is needed regarding your insurance or 401K, someone from HR will contact you. (pause) However, the decision is final. (pause) I need you to gather your things and leave. **(STOP TALKING!)** If the employee argues, challenges, or entices you for debate or commentary, you might consider using the following. However, this is the **ONLY** other thing to say:

I will provide the reason if you will give me your word that once I tell you, you will leave and there will be no further discussion or argument. (pause) Do I have your word that you will honor this? (make sure employee agrees). *If the employee ho-hums about it or won't agree, repeat the offer of “I will discuss this if you give me your word there will be no argument and then you will leave.” If the employee refuses, sit quietly, count to five and softly say “I need you to gather your things and leave.” Alternate between “I need you to gather your things and leave” and requesting his or her “word,” always after a five second pause. Always be soft spoken. Most employees will give you their word. A few will simply leave. If the employee gives you his or her “word,” use the following script:*

All decisions of employment, including terminations should stem from one of the following three categories: attendance, performance, or conduct. (pause) In this situation, it is: _____ (insert the reason(s) among those three categories, such as “attendance”). Pause and say, “I need for you to gather your things and leave.”

If the employee attempts to further argue, put your hand up and say, “I have your word. I need you to gather your things and leave.” If they still argue, pause and reply “I have your word.”

This will work fairly well during your first few terminations. By the third or fourth time, you will be able to have some employees actually shake your hand before leaving. And of course, always have someone shut down the employee's computer and block the password(s) while the termination is taking place. Always.

“Lights, camera, action!”: Experiencing Human Resource Management through Film

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Introduction

The study of experiential learning was popularized in the mid-1970s. Kolb' and Frye's (1975) Experiential Learning Model consisted of four elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts and testing in new situations. Unlike didactic education, in which the professor's role is to provide or give students information or knowledge and to dictate exercises that transmit the same, the goal of experiential education is to provide students experience with a topic, the ultimate intent being to provide meaningful, lasting learning. Gunn (1983, p.23) states that “students must experience a situation to truly learn. Merely being told how to do something through a lecture is no substitute for actually doing it.” The author proposes that classic and contemporary popular films can be utilized to successfully teach students Human Resource Management. Support for the use of this technique is found in the literature (Champoux, 2007; Schein, 2004; Champoux, 2001; Champoux, 1999a; Champoux, 1999b; Pandy, 1967).

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to provide students experiential learning of human resource management by illustrating topics through the use of classic and contemporary popular films. When students watch actors in scenes depicting human resource topics from the text, the topics come to life. When all students in the class watch the same film illustrating the same HR topics, the film gives students a common foundation for discussion of HR topics.

Description of Activity

After discussion of a specific HRM topic, the author shows a portion of popular movie, or assigns students to watch a movie that illustrates the topic the students have recently studied in class. In addition to providing the students essay questions to answer individually after the film, the author sets aside class time for discussion of the film topics and/or related academic articles. The experience connects the topic from the text, film and academic articles, and gives students personal experience with the material that they can remember. Sample movies and HR topics are illustrated in the following table.

Table One: Sample Movies and HR Topics Addressed

	<u>Human Resource Topics Addressed</u>
The North Country	sexual discrimination, sexual harassment (quid pro quo and hostile environment), disparate treatment, bona fide occupational qualifications, gender stereotypes, class action sexual harassment suits
The Contender	ethics, male/female leadership, gender bias, sexual harassment, gender stereotypes, ethics, mentoring
12 O'Clock High	Selection, placement, training, performance appraisal, mentoring, goal setting, power/authority, norms
12 Angry Men	participative leadership, racial bias, group dynamics, power/authority, decision making, diversity, group think
Apollo 13	human resource planning, selection, training, crisis management

Sample Questions for *The North Country* and *Apollo 13**The North Country*

1. There are two main types of sexual harassment. Name and define the two main types of sexual harassment. Provide three specific examples of each type of sexual harassment from the movie.
2. Discuss the disparate treatment that transpired in *The North Country*. Cite specific examples from the movie.
3. Discuss the relevance or lack thereof of BFOQs (bona fide occupational qualifications) in *The North Country*. Cite specific examples from the movie.
4. In spite of all the legislation that exists to prevent sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, we know it still occurs. Put yourself in the place of one of the men/women who witnessed the transgressions in *The North Country*. In all honesty, which would you leave behind--red or yellow ice? Explain your answer fully.
5. Explain in detail what you would do as a manager who discovered any one of the events depicted in the movie. Briefly describe the event and then detail the specific actions you, as a Human Resource Manager, would take to address and rectify the situation.
6. Using each of the five functions of Human Resource Management (recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal and compensation), describe what you would do to prevent and address sexual discrimination and sexual harassment in your organization.
7. Evaluate the value-added to the course of watching the movie and completing the movie assignments.

Apollo 13:

1. Describe the extensive training that the astronauts receive prior to the mission. Why is training of this type mission essential?
2. How is the team selected for the mission? Should Mattingly have been allowed on the mission? Why or why not?
3. Discuss the effectiveness of the astronaut's teamwork. Cite specific examples from the movie.
4. Do the personalities of the astronauts add to or detract from the success of the mission? Why or why not? How? Cite specific examples from the movie.
5. Briefly discuss the role of each of the following concepts in Apollo 13: Conflict, Stress, and Power/influence.
5. Briefly discuss the role of each of the following concepts in Apollo 13: Conflict, Stress, and Power/influence.

Benefits of Activity

This technique breathes life into inanimate topics in the text. Students are easily able to identify the portrayal of specific theories we discussed. Students are amazed as they watch the events of the movie unfold to reveal the characters' use of the theories. The movie cases help students to put into practice, though identification, analysis and evaluation, the concepts the course addresses.

Value Added

The final essay question for each film is, "Evaluate the value-added to the course of watching the movie and completing the movie assignment." Student responses are amazing both concerning what they have learned, and the importance they place on experiencing HR topics through film.

The following are actual quotes from students about the exercise:

"[*Apollo 13*] is an excellent example of what leadership is all about; how important it is to have the right people for the jobs they fill; and how great it can be if things work together as they were intended. This gives a real-life example of what it means to be a leader."

"I thought the value-added to the course by watching the movie *North Country* was it was a way for me to see and interpret specific examples of the two main types of sexual harassment and apply knowledge that I have obtained in our class to what possible corrective measures should be taken should I encounter this type of behavior should I become management at a company in the future. My understanding of the concepts we covered in class in the sexual harassment section has been enhanced with the visual representation this movie has provided."

"[*The North Country*] provided insight to both sides of discrimination in the workplace. I could place myself in the place of a manager wondering what I would do in that particular situation. It seems so easy, but without these policies put into place by legislation our working environment would be complete chaos as it was in *North Country*. The movie provided value because it helped to further understand the impact and importance of these policies."

"The value-added to the course for me is tremendous after watching [*The North Country*]. The movie has opened my eyes to the inconsistency within companies and their equality towards employees. This proves to me the EEOC was put in place for a very good reason."

“I think that watching [*The North Country*] and doing the assignment has really helped to show the relevance of the class to a real life situation. It made me think about what I would do in this situation if I were the manager and all the other steps required to handle the situation properly. I thought the movie was very educational in the sense that it showed many examples to disparate impact, sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and BFOQ.”

“I felt [*The North Country*] was a great depiction of subjects we studied in the course, especially dealing with sexual harassment issues. It was good example of how important HR managers are for an organization. It was also a good example for the legal issues that organizations can face if they are letting sexual harassment happen in the workplace. I found this movie to be very inspiring for women.”

“The amount of value added to the understanding of this course I got from watching [*The North Country*] was substantial. It is one thing to read amount cases of laws that have been created in order to prevent certain acts from occurring at the workplace, however it is quite another to see the stories behind why these laws and regulations exist. I would highly recommend this movie in the future classes as a requirement in order to obtain the understanding behind why certain laws exist.”

“I believe watching [*The North Country*] helped to give real life examples to the issue of sexual harassment. It makes it real and helps to deepen the understanding that I have about sexual harassment. I really thought more about what if that was me? What would I do? How would I handle the situations that the women went through in the movie?”

Additional Faculty Resources

Hartwick Humanities in Management Institute is a great resource for faculty who prefer ready-to-use material (<http://www.hartwickinstitute.org/index.htm> (<http://www.hartwickinstitute.org/index.htm>)). The Hartwick Leadership Case System includes a movie, participant guide and teaching notes.

Clean Flicks (<http://cleanflicks.com/index.html> (<http://cleanflicks.com/index.html>)), in conjunction with Clear Play (<http://www.clearplay.com/> (<http://www.clearplay.com/>)), offer edited movies in accordance with the Family Entertainment and Copyright Act of 2005 (<http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/pl109-9.html> (<http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/pl109-9.html>)). Any inappropriate material is removed, so one can incorporate practically any movie into the classroom.

The author has consulted with university counsel to develop the following agreement for student signature prior to the showing of R-rated movies. The professor should complete portions in bold before disseminating to students.

I, _____, have chosen to watch the movie, ***North Country***. Professor _____ C has informed me that the movie is rated R for sequences involving **sexual harassment including violence and dialogue, and for graphic language**. I have voluntarily agreed to watch ***North Country*** rather than to complete an optional assignment.

Student Signature

Student ID Number

Conclusion

Student quotes convey the author's successful use of classic and contemporary popular films to teach students Human Resource Management. The movies illustrate and bring to life the course material. The students' experiential learning far surpasses that provided by any traditional lecture. Experiencing human resource management through film provides the student meaningful, long-lasting learning.

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Using the LINE (R): Integrating Economic Indicators in the Advanced Human Resource Classroom

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Abstract

An analytical assignment, from an advanced (senior-level) undergraduate HRM course, using the SHRM/Rutgers LINE® and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) employment data is presented. The assignment addresses the quantitative analysis competency recommended by SHRM guidelines for an HR curriculum and provides an interesting activity in the area of workforce planning and staffing. Finally, the role of the assignment in assessing departmental-level management major objectives is mentioned.

Introduction

As interest and curriculum are enhanced for specialists in human resource management, such as the effort by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) producing the “SHRM Human Resource Curriculum Guidebook and Templates for Undergraduate and Graduate Programs” (2006), advanced courses and modules are becoming more common. With those, there are more opportunities to move beyond the lecture-format common in an introductory, principles or fundamental format (normally found at the junior undergraduate level). Activities, discussions, and hands-on experiences placing students in the role of understanding, applying and acting out human resource activities with faculty oversight will make them more effective managers once removed from the classroom environment.

The SHRM curriculum guidelines (2006) place quantitative analysis as one of the ten personal competencies in which students should demonstrate proficiency. Anecdotally, when “math” problems are initially announced in human resource management classes with reminders to bring calculators, or to meet in the computer lab for class to set up spreadsheet models, students often audibly sigh or demonstrate their anxiety, with some noting that in fact, they are not finance or accounting majors but rather management majors. This usually leads to an important discussion about the role of “number crunchers” versus the management student’s future role as a manager, the importance of managerial interpretation of data, the ability to understand budgets, make sound judgments in a business setting, and being observant for trends and outliers amongst financial and economic data. Students are also seemingly proficient at silo-learning (what is learned in one class is promptly discarded in the next class), and the integration of statistical information with managerial scenarios is a worthwhile exercise that more closely resembles a functional work environment.

Context of the Economic Indicators Assignment

A discussion of workforce planning, including forecasting and assessing internal and external environmental factors affecting HRM, can be found in most human resource management texts that are at the principles or fundamentals level (i.e., Bernandin, 2007, Bohlander & Snell, 2007, Mathis & Jackson, 2008), as well as those with a more targeted audience (i.e., Heneman & Judge, 2009, Walker, 1995). But it is rare to find class activities, discussions of interpretation, or actual economic data that evaluates these environmental factors and their business implications. Most textbook authors discuss the idea and what type of environmental factors to consider, but even in advanced textbooks the focus is on the statistical technique and not on using the information to improve managerial decision-making. Yet students have awareness, through economic courses or personal awareness in the media, that this information could be used.

Economic data related to human resource management is reported daily in the popular news reports and the expansion of business and financial television networks and shows. Data such as unemployment rates, job loss statistics, new job creation reports, general economic well-being and direction (healthy and expanding, weak and retracting), and outsourcing and layoff announcements combine with stock market indicators to provide both students and human resource managers with multitudes of information to interpret. The U.S. Department of Commerce provides links and a calendar to fifteen leading economic indicators (<http://www.economicindicators.gov/> (<http://www.economicindicators.gov/>)). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is an oft-cited and warranted source of employment indicators like unemployment rates (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.) and their Job Opening and Labor Turnover Survey or JOLTS (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). In November 2004, SHRM and Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations began producing the Leading Indicator of National Employment (LINE®), tracking (and reporting by sector) monthly responses from human resource professionals in 500 manufacturing and 500 service sector firms (Bates, 2004). Among the indicators collected are (SHRM/LINE, n.d.):

- Total Employment (examines both exempt and non-exempt)
- Total Vacancies (examines both exempt and non-exempt)
- Recruiting Difficulty
- New Hire Compensation
- Employment Expectations.

The LINE® web-site is free, has open access to the public, has a direct and simple format, and is user-friendly. SHRM/LINE® provides methodological information including a copy of the actual survey sent to these managers, monthly analytical reports that are brief (about 4 pages, including graphs and tables) and written for the professional manager, and current and historical data are reported since its inception. This data set allows for faculty to develop additional analyses and “what if” scenarios to the assignment or in class discussion to prepare the students for the assignment. Because the LINE® data is a sampling of actual employment data and activities in staffing and compensation, it is not a forecast, but does allow faculty to use the data to compare the results to the BLS results (see assignment, question 5).

It will be helpful to provide an overview of the data, what the index measures, and where the numbers are reflected in the historical data to the students prior or while they work on this assignment. A powerpoint has been included as a teaching tool for this purpose.

Utilization for Management Major Assessment

This assignment is also utilized for assessment within our department. The assignment is one of many activity based assignments in a senior-level staffing and development course that is required for management majors with a concentration in human resource management. The course is an elective option for general management majors as well, and by permission to those outside of the major. Thus, it has appealed to the departmental faculty as an assignment that helps us assess our senior level class and graduating students’ skills and abilities.

There are three departmental management major objectives that are assessed with this assignment: (1) “Objective 2: Evaluate the functions of management using appropriate ethical, problem-solving, and decision-making models”, (2) “Objective 3: Formulate strategies for the development and management of human resources at the individual, group and organizational levels”, and (3) “Objective 6: Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills, critical thinking, and teamwork skills” (Eastern Illinois University, Management Major Objectives). A grading rubric is provided to the students with the assignment’s instructions and is provided in the appendix. This grading rubric is utilized by the instructor to provide grading feedback to students as well as being tracked for assessment reports to identify progress made towards departmental goals from year to year and to report differences and progress in the competencies of freshman through senior levels of students.

The first and second objectives are assessed with the scores of “analytical elements: uses appropriate data and identifies fundamental issues to understand the underlying patterns in the set of data” and “content: accurate,

logical, valid and specific details and support; effectively uses outside sources”. Questions 1, 2, and 3 (see assignment in appendix) are focused on managerial understanding, interpretation, and application of economic indicators to aid problem-solving and decision-making. The next objective which is “formulating strategies for the development and management of human resources” is rated on the performance of questions 4 and 5 of the assignment. Students are asked to integrate and evaluate other sources of economic indicators, develop a strategy for their staffing and human resource practices, and include a discussion of stakeholders (generally at the individual and organizational level). The third objective examines the written communication skills by assessing organization (organizes ideas, focus, structured paragraphs, ideas linked with effective transitions), style (awareness of audience and purpose, appropriate terminology) and mechanics (grammar, punctuation, spelling; correct citation to document references).

Conclusion

In summary, being able to utilize economic indicators in the advanced human resource classroom meets several objectives. First, it addresses the content needed to provide additional exposure to students of information that managers have available in making staffing decisions (planning, external environments, forecasting, recruitment, hiring difficulties and compensation trends for new hires). Second, it provides for a hands-on activity with live data from multiple sources, thereby increasing the interest level of the student, as well as the habit of seeking out this type of resource in their professional career. Third, it meets the suggested guidelines of both a quantitative analysis competency and the need to address workforce planning in a SHRM curriculum, a goal of our faculty, department, and the HR concentration that is offered. Fourth, it has provided an opportunity for a rigorous analytical assignment that addresses multiple management major objectives and provides us with data for the senior management student assessment of performance report.

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Economic Indicators Assignment

The Society for Human Resource Management's Research department and Rutgers University produces the monthly "LINE®: Leading Indicators of National Employment". As future Human Resource Professionals, this assignment will help influence your knowledge about this type of staffing data, and you will be able to develop skills related to analyzing and using this and other similar indices in your future. The current data utilizes a survey of 500 manufacturing and 500 service firms. The SHRM/Rutgers LINE® index is released on the first Friday of each month at 8:30 am EST.

Your responses to the following questions should be provided in a memorandum addressed to your professor as if you were reporting to your supervisor in a work-related project. The memo may be single or double-spaced, with clearly defined sections to correspond with questions, and graphs inserted as helpful to your analysis.

To begin this project, you should visit the LINE® web-site: <http://www.shrm.org/Research/MonthlyEmploymentIndices/Pages/default.aspx> (<http://www.shrm.org/Research/MonthlyEmploymentIndices/Pages/default.aspx>). On the home page, you'll see the current summary analysis and sets of numbers (an index) for the two industry sectors (manufacturing and service). Record these numbers and note the date. On the right hand side, you'll find a link for the current month's summary report "Employment Expectations". Download/print and read this report which contains the current and past months of data in addition to annual comparisons. It might also be helpful to read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for understanding the report and its data, including the specific survey questions and participants.

Evaluation of points will be assessed by examining the quality and thoroughness of your evaluation of the following questions. In some questions, there is a single right answer, and as such, your ability to explain and justify (using the text, your research, this data, and your own interpretations) are more critical to assessing your level of comprehension and ability to apply this type of material to management decision-making.

The factors for determining your grade will be assessed with the following categories (the assignment is calculated out of 40 possible points):

Analytical Elements 37.5% (Range from 1-15 pts)	Uses appropriate data and identifies issues to understand underlying problem
Content 37.5% (Range from 1-15 pts)	Accurate, logical, valid and specific details & support; effect uses outside sources
Organization 7.5% (Range from 1-15 pts)	Organizes ideas, focus, structured paragraphs, ideas linked w/effective transitions
Style 7.5% (Range from 1-15 pts)	Awareness of audience and purpose; appropriate terminology
Mechanics 10% (Range from 1-15 pts)	Grammar, punctuation, spelling; correct citation to document references

- 1) What components make up the LINE® index? Describe each component and its importance to staffing decision-making.
- 2) What questions are asked and who is the typical respondent of the survey? What are the limitations (or concerns) of using this survey and this group of respondents?
- 3) Look up the historical data records by going to “LINE Data”, “Historical Data”. You can select either manufacturing or service (a backup Excel file with both sets of data is available on WebCT).
 - a. Select two columns, and identify the trend (seasonal, cyclical, ups and downs in patterns) for each column in the past two years. It may be helpful to create a graph and include the graph of your selected columns in your analysis.
 - b. If the components, do you feel any one component is more significant in making predictions of the future of staffing in an industry?
 - c. Is there a particular component that appears to be more volatile to changes in the economy?
 - d. Is there a particularly volatile component that changes with seasons?
- 4) Discuss the key findings for the current report (past three months compared to one year ago). This does not mean simply replicating those sections of the reports, but would mean drawing conclusions given the data and summaries. As a guide, review the types of conclusions drawn in the introduction section of the monthly report and emulate that style of analysis in your report.
- 5) There are other indices that can be used to assess employment statistics. One of the most commonly discussed is the unemployment rate (see the BLS’ site on local unemployment statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/LAU/> (<http://www.bls.gov/LAU/>)). Another source is the BLS’ Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS): <http://www.bls.gov/jlt/> (<http://www.bls.gov/jlt/>) .__

On page 1 of the May 2008 report, the LINE® report states:

“The LINE report released on December 24, 2007, showed that service sector employment growth expectations for January 2008 were at the lowest level since that index was initiated in the spring of 2005. The BLS *Employment Situation Report* released on February 1, 2008, confirmed that January service sector employment had fallen, on a not seasonally adjusted basis, by the largest amount in the last 10 years.”

- a. What is the BLS? How does the BLS data compare to the LINE® index? Are they compatible? Should an HR manager look at one versus the other? Under what circumstances? Is one source superior over the other? Are there other such indices, or reporting statistics that an HR manager could review on a regular basis?
- b. If you read that the BLS or LINE® report found an increase of 30,000 jobs (say from 46,000 in May to 76,000 in June), would that be significant? How do you know?
- c. Identify at least four stakeholders that would be interested in such monthly data. Describe how each stakeholder group might respond to this type of monthly data.

HR Hotdish: Feeding Student Appetites

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“In a barrel of odds and ends, it is different... Things get mixed up, and the juice kind of swaps around, and the things go better”.

-Huck Finn, in Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain

What Huck Finn is describing is a stew meal, which has evolved into what is now known as a **hotdish**, “a casserole-like food common in the Midwest, normally consisting of a starch, a meat, and a vegetable, mixed together with a sauce, often canned soup”. (Cassidy, 1991). A plethora of possible ingredients is “placed in the oven to be brought out as one complete meal”. (Millang, 1999). The resulting creation utilizes stimulation of all five primary senses (vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch).

Likewise, the 21st century HRIR classroom, either by means of onsite or online delivery, can and should make use of all five senses in order to enhance comprehension and understanding. This presentation will describe and discuss several such sensory interventions useful in HRIR classes.

HR hotdish: gathering the ingredients

The hotdish preparer may select fresh meat and vegetables at the grocer, but is more likely to gather ingredients from what is already available at home. Also required are housewares and utensils such as the casserole dish, measuring cups and spoons, can opener (for the creamed soup), stirring and serving spoons, and hot mitts and pads.

Ecological psychologist Kurt Lewin (as cited in Banning, 2001) has suggested the formula $B = f(P, E)$, in which learning (B) is the behavior that is the function of persons (P) interacting with the classroom environment (E). Although there are limitations in the creation and maintenance of the physical learning environment, both faculty and students can conduct an ecological audit of their learning spaces, in both classroom and online settings, to optimize the following variables:

Lighting: “Perhaps it is no accident that we refer to an intelligent person as ‘bright’ and an unintelligent person as ‘dull’ ” (Meier, 2000). Natural, full spectrum light is preferable to artificial, fluorescent lighting in classrooms or in an online home office. If such choices are limited, move around and seek out natural or incandescent lighting during study breaks.

Room temperature: In a classroom full of students, there are bound to be numerous opinions as to the “right” room temperature. Warmer brain temperatures arouse, while cooler temperatures tend to relax. (Howard, 2006). Students should dress in several lightweight layers and adjust as desired. (My online “classroom” includes a space heater and desk fan).

Noise: The brain responds to organized and unorganized sounds. The first we call music; the second, noise. Of course, someone’s music is another person’s noise. As a rule, neither music nor noise should distract from mental activity. However, background music during class and study breaks stimulates the brain. So-called white

noise, such as the sound of an overhead projector fan, may help concentration. (Howard, 2006).

Space: Proxemics is the study of how people physically distance themselves from each other. Research has identified both cultural and gender differences in spatial comfort. Closely related is the study of ergonomics, how people interact safely and comfortably with furniture and furnishing. Classroom students often complain about desks and chairs; use of “stadium seats” and regular “stretch” breaks can accommodate extended sitting. Ergonomically correct computer workstation adjustments are essential for the online student to minimize eye and “mouse-hand” fatigue.

Interruptions: Both the classroom and online office need to be insulated from unnecessary distractions. This is a challenge for the online student who may be interrupted by children, pets, telephones, etc.

HR hotdish: measuring and mixing; season to taste

The hotdish becomes more than the mere sum of its parts: “things get mixed up”. The result is something “to die for”. (Dennis, 2000).

Contemporary brain/mind/memory research suggests an often mysterious interconnection between the five various senses. (e.g. Ackerman, 1990; Calvert, et al., 2004; Foer, 2007; Howard, 2006). (In fact, it appears that there is a positive relationship between sensory stimulation and optimal physical health (Roizen and Oz, 2005). Combining the “right” proportion of each sense enhances the physical learning environment (“E”, in the equation above), and should improve learning results (“B”). Of course, there are typical individual differences, both in the brick-and-mortar classroom and the online home office, that need to be identified and scrutinized.

These examples from my personal experience, in both classroom and online contexts, demonstrate a variety of ways to enhance sensory involvement while learning:

Vision: The course text (e.g. Bohlander and Snell, 2007), in class or online, should provide a rich variety of visual learning aids (e.g. charts, diagrams, tables, timelines, pictures, etc.) “to help students with diverse learning styles connect with the material.” (Budd, 2008).

Examples of **artwork**, such as the “working” scenes created by the Depression era Federal Artists Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), can enhance classroom walls or online course webpages.

Students, either in the classroom or at home, can have voice to decorate their learning space in a variety of colors and shapes (e.g. posters, collages.) Power Point presentations of text material, in the classroom and online, are utilized to preview and review key concepts.

Adaptations of popular TV game shows, such as **HR Jeopardy** and “**Do you want to be an (HR) Millionaire?**”, make learning fun. (After all, do not young animals and small children actually “learn” by playing, under the supervision of older (and wiser) adults?)

Hearing:

The contemporary adult learning audience grew up being entertained by radio, television, computer games, and live performances, and expects this, by varying degrees, in school, too. The now commonplace classroom video, however, must have purpose and direction. (Ornstein and Lasley, 2004). Students are more likely to remember what they see and hear. Online video simulations and case studies provide the individual with

someone to listen to, and respond to (if only one way).

Music peripherals in the classroom and online have already been discussed, above, as an alternative to environmental noise. In my online Labor Relations course, I added music from Union & Working Songs, a collection of American folk music performed by Keith and Rusty McNeil, with their written permission. The songs provide students entry into the rich culture of American labor history. (McNeil, 1989).

Small group discussions add the variety and volume of student voice, much more stimulating than the drone of this instructor. Chat room discussions with online students seldom have teleconference audio hookups, yet I have learned how to “hear” students through their word choice “footprints” over time. This becomes a partial substitute for lack of so-important nonverbal communication in distance learning.

Smell: “Pleasant” odors may enhance the learning process, while “toxic” odors may inhibit it. This is a case, again, where “one man’s (or woman’s) ceiling is another’s floor.” Research has indicated that certain fragrances (e.g. jasmine, peppermint, lavender) improve work productivity or promote relaxation. On the other hand, the use of petrochemicals in many perfumes may result in adverse reactions. So, caution is advised if introducing a fragrance in a group classroom setting. However, an individual online student can experiment and customize their learning space with a pleasing fragrance of choice (e.g. scented candles). (Howard, 2006; Meier, 2000).

Taste: “Chocolate is the great motivator of adult learners” (Deger).

Closely related to the sense of smell is the taste of food. Certainly, **snacks** and treats can be introduced in the college classroom, as a sign of welcoming hospitality. The same caveats about individual differences (e.g. peanut allergies) do apply.

I have had students hold a last class **potluck** to celebrate their course accomplishments and provide closure. At UM-Morris, I hosted a bratwurst cookout after the final exam for students to enjoy lunch while socializing with classmates.

The online student can and should incorporate healthy snacks (fresh fruits, vegetables) and drinks (water, noncaffeine) into their virtual classroom.

Touch: An often overlooked sense in the classroom and workplace is touch. What (physical objects) one feels may have an effect on how one feels (emotionally). Do students have opportunity to utilize tactile learning ?

Handouts give them opportunity to use their hands. Online students can print out a “hard copy” of documents (I wonder if use of eBooks in online courses robs students of the chance to actually hold a textbook). What materials and textures exist ?

(In a Human Relations course, my instructor had students create a three dimensional sculpture depicting a course theme, in lieu of a traditional written final exam).

In regards to human touch, there exists, for many good reasons, a taboo on any teacher and/or student physical contact. Yet, to completely veto any touch is to deprive the multisensory system of one of its key ingredients. Dudley Flood (as cited in Howard, 2006) writes about appropriate touching of the “hard areas”, that is, “top of the shoulder, the elbow, the kneecap, the top of the head, or the hands”. Touching other, “softer areas” is not appropriate in business (including school) situations.

Welcoming students to the first class with handshakes can be “business appropriate”. “High-fiving” a classmate to celebrate passing an assignment seems okay.

(In a management course, while studying stress reduction, I invited a professional massage therapist to provide 5 minute neck and shoulder massages to students during the class for a nominal fee (\$5). This change to the normal classroom routine was welcomed by these working adults).

Finally, another advantage of online learning is the ability to customize the learning environment. Invite your family or friends to “rub your back” while studying online, or as a welcome study break.

(I take an extended online study break by swimming laps at the YMCA, experiencing all the senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, and even taste- if I swallow some water!). While I exercise, I mentally review course material away from a computer screen).

Some appetizers; may be served in the classroom or online

- 1) **This day in labor history:** see <http://workdayminnesota.org>
- 1) **HR trivia:** can be used in the classroom or online to “jumpstart” a topic/chapter/theme.
- 1) **HR online polls:** another method to engage students and collect meaningful class data.
- 1) **HR in the news:** have students bring in clippings or printouts of current events; have a posting board in the classroom; provides opportunities for online students to “show-and-tell”.
- 1) **Movement:** Physical activity moves oxygen to the brain. Encourage classroom students to get up from their seats and move around the classroom; encourage online students to get away from their computer workstation.
- 1) **HR movie review:** Students choose and watch a film (see attachment). They write a review, linking the movie to HRIR class topics. They also critique the film as entertainment (“thumbs up or down”).

A complete meal: My first classroom at UM-Morris had an actual relic of education past- a chalkboard. Oh, how I delighted using it, bringing back memories of classrooms and people long forgotten. The sights of words inscribed in various colors on its rustic black slate panes, the tap-tap-tapping of the chalk touching the board, the feel of the chalk residue on my hands (and on my clothing, if not careful). Alas, the antique has been replaced by a sterile, technofancy whiteboard, whose newest customers won’t cherish any such romance, with learning, decades from now!

Summary: Huck Finn was right; in a hotdish, “things get better”. Likewise, by experimenting with using all five senses in a group classroom or at home in an online office, HRIR students can enhance their group and individual learning outcomes. Don’t be afraid to try new recipes (methods), and share the ones that succeed. Let’s eat!

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Possible sensory inputs for HRIR presentation:

- 1) Welcoming handshakes (touch)
- 2) Aromatherapy (smell)
- 3) Background music (sound)
- 4) Introductory video as advance organizer (sight, sound)
- 5) Power Point presentation (sight)
- 6) Presentation handout (sight, touch)
- 7) Food TBA (sight, smell, taste, touch)

Debate as a Teaching Tool for HRM (Human Resource Management): Rationale and Technique

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Introduction

A learner-centered teaching recommends that students take complete responsibility for their own learning. Therefore in such an approach students are self-directed, construct their own knowledge, develop conceptual positions, and collaboratively augment their subject knowledge. While this method of teaching might seem to make the burden of learning squarely on students, the outcome of such independent learning is immense (Weimer, 2002).

Several methods have been identified to engage in a learner-centered teaching approach. Among such approaches, debates are considered an engaging learning method that allows students to adopt an independent self-directed collaborative learning style (Bain, 2004; Weimer, 2002). Scholars also suggest that debates develop higher-order thinking skills, such as establishing a viewpoint and defending it (Bain, 2004; Herreid, & DeRei, 2007; Yurgelun, 2007).

Debates have been used as a teaching method since the early times of Greek philosophers (Matsaganis, & Weingarten, 2001; Vo, & Morris, 2006). The Greek philosopher, Protagoras, is considered the pioneer of debates having discussions on profound questions such as the role of man in the universe (Matsaganis, & Weingarten, 2001). The word debate originated in the thirteenth century from the French word *debattre*, which means to beat down (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=debate> (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=debate>)).

Specifically, in the United States, debates have their origins in the well-known Presidential debates (Herreid, & DeRei, 2007). While such political discussions began in the nineteenth century during the Lincoln's era, it was the first televised debates between the charismatic John Kennedy and Richard Nixon that set the stage for the widely publicized televised shows that we see today (Matsaganis, & Weingarten, 2001).

Rationale for using debates

Debates have been identified as an important learning tool for several reasons. They allow students to develop critical thinking skills, become active learners, build their own knowledge, participate collaboratively, to think quickly (for rebuttals), develop oratory and listening skills (Bain, 2004; Vo, & Morris, 2006; Weimer, 2002).

Critical thinking usually involves analyzing, combining, and evaluating information- which debates provide an opportunity for. Debaters have to find relevant information, integrate the research, and assess the relevant information (Vo & Morris, 2006). Students also have to proactively seek information making them active participants in the learning process. They are augmenting their own knowledge by researching and integrating different research sources (Herreid, & DeRei, 2007; Weimer, 2002).

Students also have to work collaboratively to present their information coherently. Such collaboration includes a threefold participation that requires participants to work with their own team members, participate with the opponent team, and act as mediators (when they are judges for the debate). The rebuttal session provides an excellent chance for participants to think and respond quickly- an important skill in today's dynamic

business environment. It definitely allows extempore speakers to sharpen their rhetoric and offers passive speakers an opportunity to develop their oratory skills (Bain, 2004; Vo, & Morris, 2006; Weimer, 2002). Debates also require participants to be active listeners and helps in improving listening skills (Weimer, 2002). The next section discusses the technique adopted both in graduate and undergraduate human resource management class. While the same technique is used for both the levels, the undergraduate class receives more verbal directions on the rules and expectations for the debate.

Technique used

The method proposed revolves primarily around three steps.

Step 1: Identification of topic and participants

First, identify any controversial topic in human resource management (Appendix 1 has a topic that been debated in class). Debates usually elicit a lot of discussion if they are on controversial national or international topics (Vo, & Morris, 2006). Students are usually assigned in groups of 4 (pros and con), which scholars recommend as the average size to get maximum participation from team members (Vo, & Morris, 2006; Herreid, & DeRei, 2007; Yurgelun, 2007).

This information on debate is communicated to students a week prior to the actual debate, to ensure maximum participation. Further, the topic also is discussed in class through chapter readings and relevant articles. In this initial information on the debate posted on Blackboard, students are actively encouraged to conduct their own independent research and support their arguments with solid facts. An HR debate topic is provided in Appendix 1.

Step 2: Before the debate

Students are allowed to collaborate with their team buddies for ten minutes in class, thus integrating and organizing their main points for discussion. The instructor provides the rules of the debate (Appendix 2). A note sheet is also provided with (Appendix 3) to encourage students to write down the main points of the opposing team so as to provide the best rebuttals.

Step 3: The debate begins

The opposing teams face each other with the mediators and the professor facing both the teams. The rest of the class is also provided with the debate rules and note sheets. The class is strongly encouraged to take notes as they have specific time to cross-examine both the teams. Each team has five minutes to present their main points (a total of 10 minutes). This is followed by a rebuttal session with each team having five minutes to rebut the main points presented in the introduction. The mediators (role played by students) play an important role in hearing the debate, taking down relevant notes, and making sure that team members have a fair chance to talk. The debate is concluded with the entire class cross-examining both the teams. The mediators provide an outcome for the debate with clear rationalization for their outcomes. An emphasis is given to participants who have supported their answers with solid research.

Conclusion

Debates provide an excellent learning method for students. The positive characteristics associated with this technique are that that the students develop their own knowledge, collaborate to augment knowledge, and showcase their knowledge to their peers. The onus of learning on the subject is completely on the students. Such learning methods also provide students an opportunity to take a stand and support their viewpoint- an important step in policy making- and definitely in business. Controversial topics provide a wonderful learning opportunity for students to be involved and engaged as students usually have different opinions on such topics (Herreid, & DeRei, 2007 Vo, & Morris, 2006). On the flip side, this could be a challenging learning method for the reticent students, unrhretorical students, and students with language barriers (Jones, Connolly, Gear, Read, 2006).

Scholars suggest such engaging learning methods might be very relevant to “digital students,” (students who have used computers throughout their lives). Underwood, (2007) states that the average American undergraduate students use approximately about 10,000 hours in some electronic method of communication (personal computers, videogames, MP3 players, or cell-phone), while they have spend only 5000 hours in formal learning (such as reading, writing and presenting) (Underwood, 2007)- an important statistic for educators. Therefore, it would be an excellent and engaging learning technique to get them actively involved in the learning process.

My personal observations are that debates create a tremendous excitement in the learning process. It is an undeniable learning advantage when students are actively involved seeking their own knowledge. My students also are eager to showcase their knowledge in front of their peers. In the cross-examination by the entire class, students seem their enthusiastic to support their view point. Finally, as emphasis is given to supporting arguments with solid facts, students usually bring articles from top tier journals to defend their arguments. Such collaborative learning allows classmates to get to know each other on a different learning level.

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Leading Motivated Employees: Six Areas of Concerns for Managers

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Abstract

Why is it that certain motivated, skilled, and well-placed individuals don't perform effectively or efficiently; or do so in a way that negatively affects other workers? This article looks at six patterns of behavior ("concerns", from a manager's perspective) that may provide insight on this question. The article builds on work related to motivation theory and job design in examining these six patterns, which often occur in spite of favorable organizational factors (well-designed jobs, fair reward systems, good environment, etc.). Because individual behavior at work is heavily influenced by personal values, habits, and beliefs, people sometimes act in ways that detract from expected contributions. This article focuses on six tendencies, or behavior patterns, that detract from contributions primarily because the patterns are in conflict with organizational expectations. In addition to an in-depth analysis of each pattern of behavior, this article suggests tactics for managers in dealing with employees who manifest such tendencies.

Introduction

In a knowledge-based economy, organizations need people who can perform complex jobs often with little or no direct supervision. Consequently, much effort and care typically go into screening and selecting individuals to help ensure that the organization starts with competent, educated, motivated, and socially-adept employees. Yet even persons who initially "fit the bill" do not always perform up to par, or in ways that maximize their potential to the organization.

Much organizational research has been devoted to the topic of job motivation and satisfaction on the general premise that if organizational factors like job design, training, working conditions, and rewards systems, are in place, most employees will be able and motivated to perform well, and consequently will do so to the benefit of the organization. For example, in "One more time, How do you Motivate Employees", Herzberg (1968) re-emphasized the difference between "motivator factors" in job design, that contribute to motivation, and "hygiene factors" that ward off dissatisfaction but do little to inspire. His message suggests that to the extent that a job can be properly designed with motivator and hygiene factors in place, a person in that job will be motivated to apply effort and skill at the job to good end. That is to say that an average, well-balanced person, placed in a job properly designed to fit that person's skills, abilities, and interests and provided reasonable working conditions, support, and rewards, will prove to be a self-motivated and self-managed worker, for the most part. Hackman and Oldman (1976), along with Herzberg (1968), provide guidelines for creating work and job conditions under which employees could find motivation and fulfill a prediction by McGregor (1985) that "people tend to behave pretty much as you expect them to behave."

Herzberg's theory and guidance is based on a premise that people are motivated to perform activities that bring reward and satisfaction; or, people do things that they get rewarded for doing (Richlin, 1970). Rewards may be both intrinsic and extrinsic, and they can occur both in the initiation and performance of tasks, as well as after a task is completed. Herzberg's rewards (motivators) include achievement, recognition, the work itself,

responsibility, advancement, and growth.

From this theory then, a manager might draw the following conclusion: design tasks intelligently with motivator and hygiene factors in place, select and match people according to what is required by the tasks, provide training and support when necessary and you will have a work force that is both motivated and able to provide good service to their organization with little external guidance or oversight. And in the case of many employees this conclusion would be correct. However, people's behavior is also heavily influenced by internal factors: values, beliefs (including biases), habits, and acquired skills. And because of these powerful internal factors, people's behavior is not so easily predictable as Herzberg's model suggests. Even those people known as conscientious, able employees.

Typically, when managers deal with motivational issues with employees, their attention is taken up by "problem" employees – under-performers and/or "difficult people" who are not well suited to the job that they are in. Because they are "squeaky wheels", they often get the lion's share of a manager's attention and energy, often with little in the way of return. If we allow that they may be the "bottom" 20% (according to the 80-20 rule), and that the top 20% are people who work well with very little guidance or supervision, then that leaves roughly 60% of a typical workforce made up of people who are motivated and reasonably well-suited to their positions, but who for one reason or another need astute leadership and guidance to help them blend their "styles" of work (personality issues) to the needs and demands of the organization.

These people are producers – critical "engine components" that make the organization run successfully. A critical management task, therefore, is to keep them aligned or "in tune" so to speak. This article examines six common behavioral tendencies that can cause such people to be unaligned in some fashion to the goals and purposes of their jobs and have negative effect on organizational outcomes. The purpose of the article is twofold: (1) to examine the most prevalent and problematic behavioral tendencies, and (2) to suggest approaches that managers can take to help fine tune the behavior of such people to better align their behavior to organizational needs.

Leading Motivated Employees: Six Prevailing Concerns

The six most common behavioral tendencies – or behavioral concerns, from a manager's perspective – are: (1) Job/task preference: Most job positions have multiple requirements. Motivated people sometimes become overly enthusiastic about certain components a job, and in the process, neglectful of others. (2) Quality versus quantity in outcomes: Most organizations seek a balance between the quality and the quantity of what people produce. However, good employees sometimes deviate to one side or the other of the desired balance depending upon their internal values as well as their perceptions of which is more valued or rewarded by others in the organization. (3) Cooperation versus competition: Some goal-oriented, hard-working individuals achieve their objectives by constantly pushing or lobbying for priority attention to their needs. This behavior can detract from both the morale and productivity of other employees. (4) Focus on profession versus organization (or here today, gone tomorrow): Some employees, with a strong profession focus, often perceive their career goals to be best served by moving between organizations. This focus, and willingness to leave, not only affects their choice of work while at an organization, it is especially costly when investments in training and company knowledge are involved. (5) Employee burn-out: Most organizations have their share of "type A" personalities for whom work and accomplishment is everything. While generally positive for the organization, they can have an uneasy effect on fellow employees and there is always the likelihood that they overwork themselves to the point of mental/physical "burn out" or worse: serious illness. (6) Ethical behavior and responsibility: Motivated persons generally want to play fair, but in many organizations, the "rules of the game" are vaguely defined or reinforced. It is true that most organizations have stated ethical guidelines, but in practice these are often bent or quietly ignored which in turn sends mixed signals to employees. Problem

behavior arises when a motivated constantly looks for ethical shortcuts in the quest for noteworthy performance. All six concerns described above pertain to people who could be highly valuable to an organization, if the person manifesting them is properly led and managed. All six present significant management challenges to those in charge. Left to their own devices, people manifesting one or more of these behaviors may cause more harm than benefit to the organization, but skillfully managed, they can develop into highly productive employees. The short answer in confronting people with these issues is simply attentive, prescient management by the person in charge – management that is proactive, imaginative, and most important, persistent in reinforcing the desired norms and standards of behavior and performance. Lacking such, even the best designed systems will fail to produce the kinds of behaviors and outputs described by an organization.

Good managers and leaders begin with the belief – innate or instilled – that virtually all people perform at their best with the aid some form of well-reasoned guidance, feedback, pressure, or intervention in carrying out their assigned tasks. No comprehensive system of job design, policies and procedures, reward, and evaluation has been created that will consistently produce desired results in the absence of capable and attentive management. There is no magic formula. This belief is critically true in the case of employee who manifest any of these six behavioral tendencies.

Concern 1. The issue of job/task preference is complex and relates to many nuances of motivation. People naturally have preferences for certain tasks over others. What ensures that all employees will necessarily attend to less appealing tasks – those with less intrinsic appeal or ones that are less recognized and rewarded – while

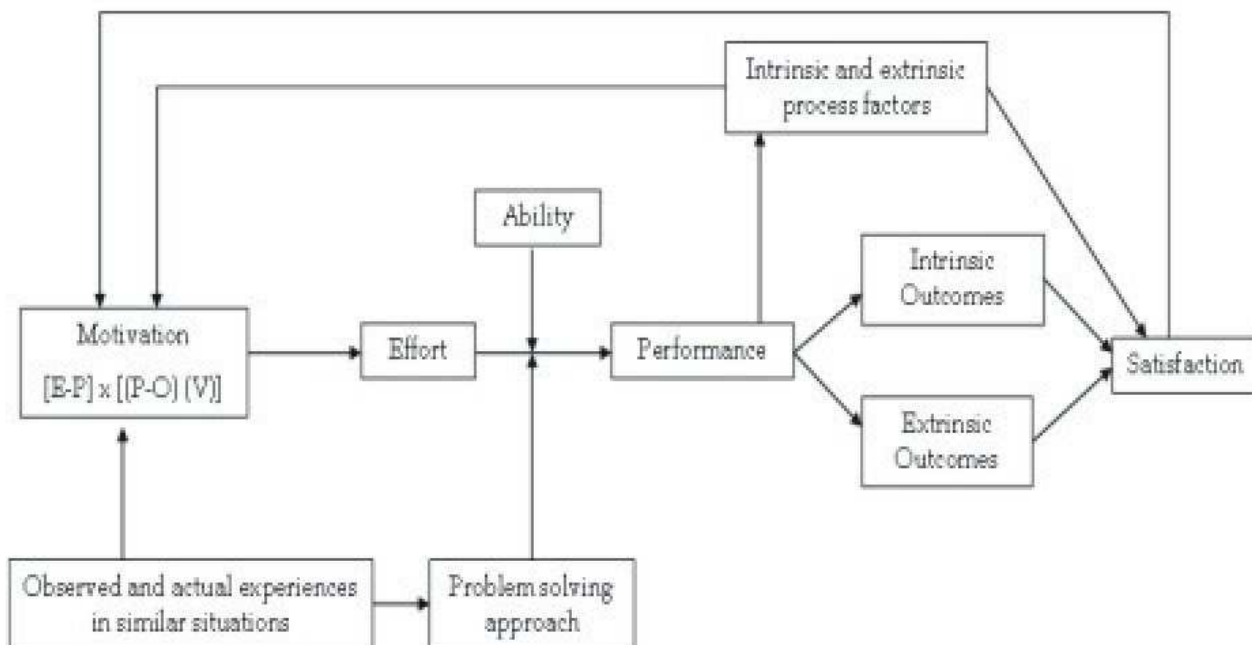


Figure 1. Revised Expectancy Theory Model of Behavior

they accomplish, often exemplarily, the tasks with high appeal or reward?

In addressing this “choice-of-task” issue, it is useful to take a close look at the basic concept of motivation. “Motivation” has been defined as, “the arousal, direction, and persistence of a behavior” – a definition that includes thought (or stimulation) to engage in a certain action, a decision to pursue a particular action (or do something else), and how much attention and effort to apply to the action. The issue of task preference involves the “direction” component of motivation. Complex jobs, such as ones Hertzberg (1968) would describe as “enriched”, typically involve multiple tasks and therefore an element of task choice. Under the Hackman and Oldman “job characteristics model”, autonomy in planning and carrying out tasks is considered a key factor in job design for motivation (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). So persons in complex job decide both how to prioritize their work as well as the degree of effort and persistence to apply.

Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) includes both the decision and effort component in its model. An expanded model of expectancy theory (Figure 1) shows that a person’s task choice and task effort is based largely on that person expectations of their ability to perform a task successfully and the various rewards associated with successful performance. It predicts, therefore, that in a complex job, a person will prefer those tasks that have greater reward potential (both intrinsic and extrinsic) over others, provided the person also has reasonable expectations of being able to perform the tasks successfully. The expanded model indicates that a person’s expectancies pertain to real-time work rewards as well as rewards that follow a task (outcomes). And this is an important distinction, for it suggests that real-time, intrinsic rewards associated with performing a task have an influence on choice-of-task just as do rewards that ensue later on.

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The model predicts that persons will favor certain task over others both for intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. An organization may structure jobs in such a way as to extrinsically reward all components of a person’s job, but the intrinsic appeal of certain tasks over others will remain. Self-disciplined and conscientious individuals will for the most part attend to less desirable tasks as well as favored ones. But persons less so may over-emphasize certain ones and neglect the ones that: (1) provide less intrinsic reward, (2) bring less recognition or extrinsic reward, or (3) are perceived to be too challenging to accomplish in an exemplary manner. One might argue that such a “gratification-based” theory, applied to a workplace, runs counter to the idea of “deferred gratification” associated with rewards gained after the completion of challenging tasks. However, the very act of being “at work” encompasses, by definition, a degree of “deferred gratification” which is experienced each time a person engages in a prescribed task. So it is unlikely that an employee will feel any particular guilt about working on something that is relatively more engaging than some other dull task that just “has to get done” eventually.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described optimal experience in an activity as “flow – the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter;” (p. 4). “Flow” in his words is an experience “...so enjoyable that people will do it at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it”. In “flow” at work (as in other locales), the concept is linked almost exclusively to experience and feeling during the activity. In a study of people at work, those self-described in as being in a flow-like mode, meaning sufficiently challenged and concentrated in some task, reported feeling “strong”, “active”, “creative”, “concentrated”, and “motivated”. (p. 158). When people’s challenges and skills were both reported as “high”, they felt, “...happier, more cheerful, stronger, more active; they concentrated more; they felt more creative and satisfied” (p. 159). Accepting that most people in a work situation would prefer these kinds of feelings to lesser ones, at least for a majority of their time, it follows that given a certain degree of autonomy over what they will engage in, many will tend towards the job aspects that offer more flow opportunities. At the extreme of this tendency is an employee who goes outside the bounds of a job description altogether in pursuit of some novel, appealing task or project which may

or may not be of benefit to the organization.

Management Tactics: The most direct way for a manager to address this concern is apply the revised expectancy model to the issue: increase extrinsic rewards for the less desirable aspects of a person's job, and consider decreasing or withholding extrinsic rewards (such as recognition or praise) for the more desirable aspects of the job. Managerial attention should focus mainly on the increase of recognition, praise, and other post-job reward for the less desirable job aspects, at the same time re-iterating the importance of these tasks to the overall mission of the unit.

Over time, a soft, yet persistent approach should normally suffice – one in which the individual is reminded of the importance of “other work” to co-workers and to the unit. If necessary, the manager can sit with the employee and help that person work out a plan or schedule that encompasses all aspects of the person's job, and be sure to give positive feedback, when deserved, directed to the “other work”. A performance review is another opportunity to reinforce the issue, but should be used to reinforce and not first address the issue, for by then it is likely that behavior will be instilled and comments to change behavior will likely soon be dismissed.

Another option is to re-define the person's job description to eliminate the tasks that the person doesn't attend to well in order to give that person greater opportunity to excel. However, this runs the risk of offending others who must pick up the less-desirable work. If an employee is particularly creative, a manager might want to allocate that person some time to work outside of their regular job.

Concern 2. Quality versus quantity in outcomes and satisficing versus optimizing: This issue pertains in large part to individual standards and values. By nature, some people are more quality conscious and some more quantity conscious. Problems occur when a quality-conscious type optimizes on all tasks regardless of the need to do so. In busy, complex jobs, the old adage “anything worth doing, is worth doing well” doesn't always apply. Similarly, problems may occur when a quantity-conscious person pays too little attention to details or quality..

People regularly make decisions in all walks of life about task quality that enable them to complete certain required tasks adequately (e.g. sorting and folding laundry) while gaining time to do other tasks perfectly (e.g. replacing a leaky pipe; driving children safely to school). Similar decisions are often called for at work, especially for someone with a heavy workload who must accomplish a variety of tasks. Referring again to expectancy theory, within the “persistence” or “effort” component of the model lies a decision as to quality versus quantity. To a degree, the two factors are inversely related, meaning that time and attention to quality takes away from quantity and vice versa. As long as a person achieves a desired balance, and can make informed decisions about the level of quality required for a particular task, no major problem exists.

Productivity issues arise when a person over-focuses on either quality or quantity to the detriment of the other. In the case of quality, the “perfectionist” can come up short both in quantity of output and in timeliness of delivery. And because judgements about quality often lie within a person's value system, they are difficult to change. Similarly, for a person overly focused on quantity, or visible output, problems arise when quality falls short or important details are missed.

The choice of optimizing versus satisficing (March and Simon, 1958) is also a quality- versus-quantity issue but typically pertains to larger, more complex tasks (e.g. a project or a major report). People with such assignments tend to make internal assessments of what constitutes acceptable, good, or excellent output and then select a level to strive for based on what they perceive is expected, what they would like to achieve, and what they likely can achieve. Troubles come in two categories: (1) when an employee fails to understand whether a satisfactory or optimal output is expected and strives for the other, or (2) when an employee consistently strives for one or the other “levels” of output, regardless of what the

situation might call for on a given occasion.

A characteristic of complex work is that in terms of amount of effort on a particular task, the difference between someone doing an acceptable job and an excellent job can be large, which means that poor judgment about what is required can be costly. Furthermore, the expectancy model holds that one's estimated probability of achieving a required level of performance is reduced as the expected level of performance is increased. A misjudgment of a need for "excellent" versus "adequate" may then also discourage or de-motivate an otherwise capable person.

Management tactics: Initially, it is important that employees get a consistent message about expected quality levels in general and that these are reinforced in practice. In the case of major, specific projects, additional expectations should be communicated. If a person's "sense of balance" is off one way or the other, the task of the manager involves getting that person to re-adjust for the imbalance, and direct attention to whatever is neglected, be it quantity or quality.

One approach is for the manager to consistently emphasize to the employee the need for higher quality or for greater quantity, whichever it is that is being neglected. This approach may work, provided that the manager keeps it up long enough such that a new pattern of behavior is established. Another approach is to sit down with the employee and try to ascertain the basis for why they feel that a consistently high level of either quality or quantity is needed in work output. The manager can then re-assure that person that their values and beliefs are not necessarily compromised if they are willing to be flexible on their standards when occasions and organizational needs so demand.

In the case of satisficing versus optimizing in complex work, communication at the beginning of a task or project is essential. A manager must ensure that the person doing the work knows the expected level of output, especially in the case when a person has a tendency to stray to one end or the other of the quality spectrum. If a deadline is more important than an excellent result, then the manager should say so, and conversely if high quality is essential, then the manager should de-emphasize the deadline and ask the person how much time they need.

However it is no easy task getting someone to adjust their standards, as it means getting someone to adjust their values. Someone doing too fine a job at the expense of quantity may be so "glued" to high standards that they aren't able to distinguish the kinds of tasks that don't have to be perfect to be declared "finished". In this case, helping that person complete a job may enable them to better visualize an acceptable quality level. The same may hold true for someone overly focused on quantity. It may help to work with that person on a single task in order to demonstrate to them what a quality result should like and, more importantly, a method for achieving such.

Once the desired standards have been communicated and then demonstrated, it is important to hold a person to desired standard, knowing that it will not be easy for them. Depending upon a person's tendency to relapse, it may be necessary for a manager or supervisor to impose stricter standards. In the case of low quality, one option is simply to reject work that is below standard and insist upon rework, the same way that a teacher might reject a poorly written paper. In the case of low quantity, a manager might have to set firm time-lines for delivery of results and then insist that the deadlines be met. In extreme cases, it may prove necessary to reassign persons to jobs in which their tendency toward one end of the scale or the other is something that can prove useful in a particular job.

On an organization-wide scale, managers and leaders need to ensure that the kinds of reward systems they implement, and the messages these systems send, are ones that reinforce their desired balance in output. Whatever intervention a manager makes on an individual basis to change or refine an employee's values, it must

be one that is consistent with, and not contradicted by, the values of the organization and its reward systems.

Concern 3. Cooperation versus competition: For certain people, their willingness to cooperate is conditional based on a perceived gain. They often feel the necessity to consistently push or lobby for their interests at the expense of others' needs and concerns in order to achieve success. What will ensure that such a person, eager for recognition and reward, will engage in cooperative behavior with other people, when such cooperation is perceived as not necessarily good for that person's individual advancement? How can such a person be held to the same norms of cooperation that others are encouraged to follow without undermining their motivation?

This issue pertains, in part, to "in-role" cooperative behavior, and in part to what is referred to as "extra-role" or "pro-social" behavior (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). "In-role" cooperative behavior is usually essential for an organization to function as a unit or team. A person who constantly badgers for attention and support for his or her needs generally detracts from attention to others' needs and productivity. "In-role" cooperative behavior is often essential to producing joint outcomes, especially when those outcomes are in some way reciprocal or serial. With "pro-social behavior", cooperation represents a bonus of sorts for the unit, since it is extra and not essential for joint outcomes; many motivated employees tend not to engage in this type of behavior as they see it as a distraction of sorts.

Unfortunately, in many organizations individual rewards and recognition are based on individual results and not joint or organizational outcomes. And this is a problem for a manager whose goal involves shared, departmental, or organizational outcomes. For example, suppose a plant superintendent has her evaluation and bonus tied to meeting an operating budget, which budget is "hurt" by pleasing customers on such things as short notice orders, re-shipments for missing or incomplete orders, or refunds for faulty product. Her profit-center manager might prefer to retain customer good-will by taking short-term "hits", but the superintendent may decide, based on the reward system, that such is not her number one priority.

More demoralizing to others, in a general sense, are employees who run roughshod over others in their efforts to gain priority for whatever it is they happen to be working on. Often these employees appear as top performers in an organization, and so not necessarily ones that a manager wants to rein in. But a closer look at department or unit performance may reveal that their gains simply come at the expense of others' output and that overall unit performance could well be higher if their behavior were cooperative instead of aggressively competitive.

Management tactics: Systems can and should be changed to lessen potential for intra-firm conflict, but an astute leader or manager, stuck with a bad system, must make the best of it. That requires monitoring of activities and skillful intervention. In the example above, as in most cases, prevention is the best cure. Rarely is it in the best interest to change or add to people's jobs, such that they assume responsibility for each other. But an increase in communication and cooperation that enabled both persons to achieve better individual results would be seen as mutually beneficial by both parties. So the manager's role is to facilitate such communication and cooperation, between "rival" parties, in joint problem-solving sessions that help get them out of an internally competitive mode and into a mode where they focus on the benefits of helping each other prevent problems ahead of time.

When practical, managers should also consider the use of team or group rewards and sanctions. Using the expectancy model, this implies tying extrinsic rewards, or a portion thereof, to the overall performance of some team or unit. And, a manager should avoid rewarding the overly competitive individual with positive feedback and praise for individual results.

For persons manifesting this tendency to dominate, relapse to prior behavior is extremely common. Persons confronted with a need to be more cooperative with fellow employees rarely dispute or argue with the request. More often, they will acknowledge the norm of cooperation but practice it only as long as they feel they are

under the microscope. For that reason, it is critical that a manager follow up on complaints that pertain to this type of behavior. And it isn't necessary or wise for the manager to take full ownership of the problem. Persons voicing complaints should be told to directly confront the person who is making unreasonable demands, and let that person know that he/she is making life hard. If the complainer is someone being asked to provide priority service, then encourage that person to refuse the special requests.

Concern 4. Over-identification with profession versus organization – the loyalty/retention issue: Ambition can be as costly a trait to an employer as it can be beneficial, depending upon how and where that ambition leads a person in their career decisions. Without a large degree of organizational focus, an employee with high motivation, who constantly seeks to maximize their “contribution-inducement” balance, may end up exploiting the organization more than benefitting it. Almost all people's jobs at an organization include an orientation stage, in which the person learns the nuances of the job and the organizational “ropes”. And typically, a person doesn't make their optimal contributions during this stage. If someone leaves during or shortly thereafter this phase, they in effect leave the organization with a net loss in terms of personnel investment. This can especially true in cases where much specialized training is involved in a job, and the employee treats the organization more like a graduate school than an employer. What can help ensure that employees, manifesting this tendency, develop or retain a sufficient degree of organizational commitment or loyalty such that they stay long enough to be of real benefit to organizational performance?

Management tactics: As part of their regular practice, leaders and managers should do their best to ensure that their unit is an attractive place to work. In addition, the astute manager should be on the lookout for an employee who, despite a positive work environment, appears to “keep a distance” during the orientation period, or one who having been there a while begins to manifest a more distant, less personable attitude. Both of these can be warning signs of low identification and commitment to the organization, and possible departure. In the first case, the manager should give special attention to the new person, and try to establish bonds and connections between that person and others, including him or herself. It may help to assign a peer mentor to the person – someone especially loyal to the unit – or, if possible, schedule a team training with existing employees. Early on, the manager should meet one on one and discuss the person's satisfaction with their job assignments and ask if there are any adjustments that might be considered. The important thing to recognize is that the strength of links or commitment to the unit stem from growing bonds to both the job and the people in the unit. The more each can be enhanced through active involvement, the more likely the person's sense of identification with the organization will increase.

In the case of a longer-term employee, the manager should meet with the person informally and try to gauge a sense, if any, of job unrest or dissatisfaction. The manager could then choose either a direct or indirect approach to the topic. The direct way would simply be to ask the employee how he or she feels about their long-term prospects with the organization, and are there sufficient opportunities for them to stay long-term. The indirect approach could begin with the manager inquiring about the person's job and career goals and then asking the person if there is anything the manager can do to help further those goals within the organization. With either approach, there is a risk of losing this person to another unit or department, for if the person expresses a desire to move laterally, the manager must in all fairness consider such request. But keeping the person in the organization still represents a gain for the organization, and one that encourages mutual reciprocation on an organization wide level.

Concern 5. Type A personalities and employee burnout. Upon first glance, such individuals are usually seen as major assets to organizations. And they may be, provided that they don't self-destruct or negatively impact others to the point of dysfunction. What might encourage such persons to slow down just enough for long-term benefits and at the same time reduce or ameliorate their impacts on others?

As this issue is the most questionable on a theoretical basis, it is perhaps least likely for a leader or manager to have to take action on. For one, almost all people are “economic” in some sense of the term, and weigh the inducement - contribution ratio that applies to their job. Even if excess devotion to a job provides greater intrinsic reward, a nagging counter-feeling often arises, stemming from excess contribution, that they aren’t being adequately compensated for their extra productivity. This feeling, in turn, undermines intrinsic satisfaction and subsequently acts as a check on motivation. When made in comparison to other employees, this equity “calculation” acts as further check on motivation.

Job structure adds another check. Most jobs are designed to be done in a certain period, or in conjunction with others, and even a motivated person will tend to leave work at the same time as others, albeit with more things accomplished. A third check applies to other, competing activities. Motivation involves both a decision to engage in an activity and the effort subsequently applied to it. If a person has other activities apart from work that they are motivated to engage in, anticipation of these activities can outweigh anticipation of further work satisfaction.

And yet despite these checks and countervailing tendencies, there are still certain individuals who overly devote themselves to their work, while neglecting other priorities. The psychological benefits that they derive from work simply outweigh the costs, and they will find ways to stay later, work at home, and/or work on weekends. While these people are not rational in an economic sense, they may be rational in a psychological sense, at least in the short term, for they know what they love doing and want more of it. However, a host of issues related to health, work-life balance, relationships, and sustainability come into play when a person over-dedicates him or herself to their job. The organization may benefit on the one hand from increased productivity by the individual, but may realize long-term negative effects in the form of quality of work, harmony among employees and health issues. An organization with many such individuals could be quite fortunate, provided its managers recognize the tendencies and actively manage the individuals in ways beneficial to both the employee and the organization.

Management tactics: Managers need to take a long-range view with persons who have this tendency and intervene early on. It won’t do to wait until serious problems have developed. The leadership challenge is twofold: to rein in the employee enough to avoid the negative consequences of overwork for the individual – stress, burnout, poor health, family issues – and to steer the person towards a more sustainable life-work balance. Rational persuasion and consultation are two influence tactics that a manager might find effective in trying to persuade an over-dedicated employee to consider a different work-life balance. In this case, the skill involved consists of persuading the employee to slow down some at work, without undermining that person’s enthusiasm for the job. Interactions that build trust, show consideration, and engage in frank dialogue will help. However, since the net benefits the over-achiever gets from work are more psychological than economic, rational persuasion has its limits. A skilled manager should also be capable of using emotional appeals to persuade the employee to adjust their work-life balance. The emphasis here should begin with concern for the employee. Beginning always with expressions of appreciation for this employee, the manager should move towards a general feeling of concern for that person’s long-term well-being. And if gentle persuasion doesn’t suffice, the manager should take a doctor’s approach and, in a friendly but persistent manner, “order the patient” to spend more time at home, that is time away from work, always emphasizing concern for the person and the need to have this person in the organization for years to come.

Concern 6. Bending the ethical guidelines: Organizations are bound by law to adhere to specific modes of operating and standards of doing business. Beyond such, most organizations develop their own ethical standards and guidelines as to employee behavior that often exceed the letter of the law, with the aim of reducing the possibility of legal problems by having employees operate at a higher ethical standards in the first place. But along with these is often the unstated message or dictate that in order to succeed at this organization

you must out-produce your colleagues. So, much as in certain professional sports (e.g. bicycling, baseball), there is an incentive for even motivated persons to bend or fudge the rules when it will benefit both the individual and the organization. How do you ensure that motivated persons with questionable judgement adhere to both the spirit and the letter of organizational legal and ethical standards in the face of pressure to win out over ones colleagues? Doing so could prove critical not only to the well-being and career of the person involved, but to others in the department or unit including you, the manager.

Management attention: This issue may be the most challenging of all for someone in a management position to deal with. It is one thing to have to deal with un-motivated, unethical employees, but there is a simple rule for such: fire them as soon as possible. With motivated individuals, the problem is far more complex due to the fact that the line between ethical and unethical conduct is often hazy, as individuals strive to meet demanding organizational goals.

Competition in the market place dictates that an organization must do all it can do, legally, to best its rivals. Because ethics and ethical behavior in organizations is both organizationally and individually driven, unethical behavior can occur or arise in both a top-down and bottom up pattern.

This article is primarily concerned with bottom-up behavior that arises in spite of positive ethical cues coming from management. But that is not to say that such behavior is not, in part, derived from pressure to produce, coming down from above. Even in value-based organizations, competition, and need to achieve profit goals at the organization level, trickles down as pressure on people in all departments to meet or exceed their previous goals. It leads to rising expectations, which according to the expectancy model, may have mixed effects on motivation. If outcomes and rewards, extrinsic and intrinsic both, are properly linked to superior performance, and training is provided to build skills, then a person's motivation and effort may increase to enable them to achieve higher goals. Ethical issues and problems are more likely to arise when management and reward systems are not adjusted, training and support not provided, and/or expectations are simply raised beyond a person's capacity to meet, and sustain meeting, them, and managers fail to take notice.

Under such pressure, certain employees may begin to look for alternative ways to cope, beyond simply working themselves to the bone. Many undoubtedly feel that a value system that permits steadily increasing pressure and demand on employees itself is ethically questionable in terms of fair treatment, and thus feel that some "cheating" to meet goals constitutes fair play. For example, "banking work" is an old concept practiced by hourly workers to help enable them to meet quotas when demand suddenly rises. More serious is a situation in which employees, under pressure, manipulate quantity or lower the quality of work in cases where outputs are not readily observable but which outputs often cause problems for customers and others down the line, and ultimately hurt the organization. Examples are numerous: the salesperson "front-loading" orders into a prior period; the production superintendent shipping marginal product which will get mixed with other product prior to use; the engineer not double-checking calculations before submission; the professor cutting back on written papers to have time to add another section.

The ethical boundary is clearly crossed when an action or decision causes harm to someone or ones. While often not overtly illegal, such actions "move the ethical goal-posts" on what is acceptable and defensible behavior, and may act as "foot in the door" to more serious ethical lapses. They are devilishly hard to deal with when they involve otherwise reliable and motivated employees. After all, who wants to reign in a strong producer and risk creating a morale problem with an otherwise ideal employee, especially when harm may or may not occur, and any harmed party is peripheral to the unit.

The way out of this dilemma for a manager need be the realization that any such overt cheating or cutting corners, which may harm others, also has the potential to bring disaster down the road, both for the individual,

the organization, and the manager. Is it something that a manager would risk his or her career on? And the potential for disaster only gets worse once an employee knows that his or her manager is aware of some unsanctioned behavior and willing to “turn a blind eye” to it. At that point in the judgment of the employee, such behavior is no longer seen as unsanctioned or unethical within the organization’s value system. The manager, who turns a blind eye and then fools himself by believing that his employee doesn’t know that he knows, may be the most dangerous to self and to the organization. Even a normally ethical employee will recognize a potential “safety net” in the person of such a manager, if that person should feel pressed to cut corners and later have to ask questions about whether the behavior was sanctioned or not.

The smart approach is to immediately confront employees who appear to have strayed beyond ethical guidelines the moment such behavior becomes apparent. Any wavering may be interpreted as sanctioning the behavior. Naturally there are morale issues that may arise at this point. One stereo-typical response by an employee under pressure is, “...and just how do they expect us to get this done?” That in turn is the signal for a manager to look for and find other ways to support their employees than simply upping the expectations and pressure and hoping for the best. It may mean lobbying for more resources, it may mean additional training, it may mean pressuring upper management to change the reward system, and it may mean a confrontation with upper management about the decisions that are placing unreasonable demands on employees and affecting morale. It may mean getting assertive and putting one’s job on the line. If there is any solace in taking such action, and associated risks, it has to be the strength of conviction that acting according to one’s beliefs and values ultimately is the duty of every organizational member who values both individual and collective integrity and the need to keep their organization, and by extension their civil society, from deviating from its core values and ethics. And as for dealing with an employee who continues to flout ethical guidelines and standards, that person, even if otherwise motivated, should be terminated upon substantiation of the behavior.

Conclusion

There are scores of books and articles that focus on people management, with more coming out everyday. The six concerns discussed above are only one reason for so much attention, focus, and credit on good leadership and management. They do highlight the fact that in today’s economy, as in the past, there is an ever-present shortage of good leaders and managers, as evidenced by the fact that almost anyone with reasonably credentials and track record is regularly pursued by head-hunters and can command a high salary. Management is no easy job. It requires a host of skills, abilities, good judgment, ethics, and sound values. Most importantly, it requires an over-riding concern for people and desire to interact with all including those who appear to be among the best workers.

The notion that motivated persons can manage themselves is largely a fallacy – that people just need a good working environment, room to operate in, and fair rewards at the end of the day, and the manager can take a hands-off approach. At the head of just about every group, someone is needed to guide and fine tune the process, to help individuals and groups adjust to the variances and uncertainties that permeate organizational life on a regular basis, and to intervene with people who manifest any of the six concerns noted herein. The important thing is to make it a point to observe, monitor, and touch base regularly with all employees, including the self-motivated ones, even while attending to more salient, more urgent employee issues and problems. Just as the book, “Soar with Your Strengths” (Clifton and Nelson, 1992) directs the reader to focus on what they do best, so managers should “soar” with their most motivated employees. But rather than “out in front” of the group, a manager’s place is best along side of them, interacting with them, involving them in job-related decisions, observing their work and progress, and guiding those who need it to behaviors that maximize their potential as productive employees.

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