

**Allied Academies  
International Conference**

**New Orleans, Louisiana  
April 7-10, 2004**

**Academy of Organizational Culture,  
Communications and Conflict**

**PROCEEDINGS**



# Table of Contents

EFFECTIVENESS, COHESIVENESS,  
AND SATISFACTION OF VIRTUAL TEAMS ..... 1  
Gary Baker, Sam Houston State University

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS'  
KNOWLEDGE OF MEETING ETIQUETTE ..... 3  
Lillian H. Chaney, The University of Memphis  
Catherine G. Green, The University of Memphis

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE VIEWS OF  
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY DIRECTORS OF  
CAREER SERVICES AND AACSB DEANS  
CONCERNING RESUME WRITING ..... 9  
Donald E. English, Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Edgar Manton, Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Janet Walker, Texas A&M University-Commerce

LEADERSHIP IN HIGH-RISK ENVIRONMENTS:  
CROSS-GENERATIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF  
CRITICAL LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES PROVIDED  
BY MILITARY SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL ..... 11  
Jerry D. Estenson, California State University, Sacramento

THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE FOR MUNICIPALITIES  
CONCERNING THE UTILIZATION OF SOLID WASTE  
ACCUMULATION FOR RESOURCES: RECYCLING ..... 13  
Frank E. Hood, Mississippi College  
Sarah T. Pitts, Christian Brothers University  
Rob H. Kamery, Christian Brothers University

DIGITAL DEPRESSION, STRESS, AND BURNOUT:  
SAME SONG, DIFFERENT VERSE ..... 19  
Pamela R. Johnson, California State University-Chico  
Julie Indvik, California State University-Chico

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND  
BEHAVIORAL ISSUES AFFECTING A BUSINESS  
COLLEGE IN A UNIVERSITY  
DURING AN ACCREDITATION PROCESS ..... 25  
Frank R. Lazzara, Columbus State University

QUALITY OF WORK-LIFE ISSUES  
THE NEEDS OF THE DUAL-CAREER COUPLE  
EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONNEL  
PRACTICES: A STUDY OF RURAL AMERICA  
A BAROMETER FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS ..... 27  
Kelly L. Littlefield, Northwestern Michigan College

RELIGION AND BUSINESS:  
SOME CROSS-FERTILIZATION ..... 35  
P. Michael McCullough, University of Tennessee at Martin  
Sam Faught, Lambuth University

HOW EFFECTIVE USE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOUR JOB SEARCH ..... 41  
Melissa McMasters, Christian Brothers University

MANAGING THE GENERATION GAP:  
A STUDY OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STYLES ..... 47  
Shyanne Meekins, Sam Houston State University  
Shirley Tucker, Sam Houston State University

MAXIMIZING E-LEARNING ROI: IDENTIFYING  
SUCCESSFUL ONLINE LEARNERS ..... 49  
Margaret Ohara, East Carolina University

ORGANIZATIONAL TEAM BUILDING ..... 55  
Philip D. Olson, University of Idaho  
Jennifer J. Olson, University of Idaho

DECEPTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATIONS:  
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IDENTIFYING LIES AND  
OTHER DECEPTIVE COMMUNICATIONS ..... 57  
Holly Payne, Western Kentucky University  
Robert D. Hatfield, Western Kentucky University

THE SATISFACTION/DISSATISFACTION PROCESS:  
A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF FAMILY  
PURCHASING DECISIONS ..... 59  
Reginald M. Peyton, Christian Brothers University  
Sarah T. Pitts, Christian Brothers University  
Rob H. Kamery, Christian Brothers University

LEADER ETHIC: A CROSS-CULTURAL  
EXAMINATION OF COVEY’S EFFECTIVE HABITS ..... 65  
Danny L. Rhodes, Anderson College  
Charles R. Emery, Lander University  
Robert G. Tian, Coker College  
Michael C. Shurden, Lander University  
Samuel H. Tolbert, Lander University  
Simon Oertel, University of Applied Sciences Trier  
Maria Antonova, Kazan State University

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF BEHAVIOR AS A  
MOTIVATOR-MODIFIER ..... 71  
James T. Rhodes, Christian Brothers University  
Kristin O. Prien, Christian Brothers University  
Sarah T. Pitts, Christian Brothers University  
Rob H. Kamery, Christian Brothers University

HOW BENEFICIAL ARE BENEFITS? ..... 77  
Thomas A. Timmerman, Tennessee Technological University

WHEN ARE MORE HEADS BETTER THAN ONE? ..... 83  
Thomas A. Timmerman, Tennessee Technological University

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNICATION  
MEDIA AND GROUP PROCESSES ..... 89  
Thomas A. Timmerman, Tennessee Technological University  
Bonita Barger, Tennessee Technological University

Authors’ Index ..... 93

# EFFECTIVENESS, COHESIVENESS, AND SATISFACTION OF VIRTUAL TEAMS

Gary Baker, Sam Houston State University  
mis\_gab@shsu.edu

## ABSTRACT

*Over the past forty years, computers have dramatically changed the ways in which organizations collect, process, and store information. More recent growth in speed and accessibility of computer networks has changed the way individuals in organizations gather and exchange information. While face-to-face meetings have been the traditional medium for collaborative work among individuals, advances in both computer networks and processing capabilities now support virtual teams consisting of geographically dispersed members.*

*Virtual teams remain an emerging and largely unstudied organizational form. While email and telephone conversations provide tools to support the collection and dissemination of needed information, they fail to provide the non-verbal cues that contribute to effective task oriented communication (Campbell, 1995; Hammer and Mangurian, 1987). Early work with audio only and videoconferencing by Birrell and White (1982) found that a majority of individuals felt that the two technologies were equal to or superior to the face-to-face mode with regard to task orientation, brevity, level of contribution, and friendliness. In a 1993 study at Sun Microsystems Laboratories, Isaacs and Tang reported a significant reduction in the usage of their desktop conferencing prototype (DCP) when the video was removed. A 1994 study by Andersen Worldwide comparing the value of non-video desktop conferencing with desktop videoconferencing reported that while 75% of subjects using Desktop Video Conferencing (DVC) said that they would prefer video, only 33% reported that the ability to see the other members enhanced communication*

*In evaluating the impact of a given technology, at least three different types of factors on group performance should be evaluated: (1) task performance effectiveness (2) group interaction and performance processes and (3) user reactions to the system and its results (McGrath and Hollingshead 1994). This proposal suggests mapping specific variables utilized in research to evaluate the impact of using text, audio, and video to support the communications of virtual teams. For the first category, task performance effectiveness, an objective measure of decision quality or task performance can be used. The second category, of group interaction and performance processes will need to include several variables. Sambamurthy's (1989) level of comfort and degree of respect, Davis's (1989) perceived usefulness, and Moore's (1989) perceived compatibility. Green and Taber's process satisfaction will also be included along with Seashore's (1984) cohesiveness and Swap and Rubin's (1983) interpersonal orientation as a measure of team maintenance within this second category. The third category, user reactions to the system and its results will also need to include several variables. Gouran, Brown, and Henry's (1978) perceived outcome quality, and Davis's (1989) perceived ease of use. As problem solving and decision-making groups move from face-to-face to virtual environments, it is increasingly important to refine the factors used in evaluating the effectiveness and satisfaction of collaborative technologies.*



# DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF MEETING ETIQUETTE

**Lillian H. Chaney, The University of Memphis**

lchaney@memphis.edu

**Catherine G. Green, The University of Memphis**

cggreen1@memphis.edu

## ABSTRACT

*Meetings are an important part of business life in the United States and have become a major vehicle for creating and maintaining impressions of credibility, power, efficiency, and effectiveness. To determine whether students are knowledgeable about correct meeting procedures, a survey of 361 Mid-South students was conducted. ANOVA results revealed significant differences (<.05) between mean responses to 11 of the 18 statements and all four demographic factors of age, business/nonbusiness status, gender, and school.*

## INTRODUCTION

Meetings are a time-consuming and energy-depleting part of business life in the United States. In fact, U.S. businesses spend more time and money on meetings than any other country in the world (Baldrige, 1993). Estimates are that upper-level managers spend over half of each week in meetings, while middle-level managers spend over a third of each week attending meetings (Pachter & Brody, 1995). As duPont (1998) points out, "The cost of these meetings is staggering" (p. 59). Meetings have become a major vehicle for creating and maintaining impressions of credibility, power, efficiency, and effectiveness. People who manage meetings successfully can win recognition for their savoir-faire and respect for their professionalism (Chaney & Green, 2003).

To ensure that meetings are successful and achieve their intended purpose, attention should be given to meeting preparation, introductions, seating arrangements, responsibilities of the chairman and participants, refreshments, and follow-up activities.

## RELATED LITERATURE

While the meeting may be planned for various reasons, it will only be productive if certain basic guidelines and procedures are followed. These guidelines include: minimizing the number, frequency, and length of meetings; scheduling meetings only when necessary; selecting a date and time that is convenient to most people expected to attend; announcing and adhering to a beginning and ending time; and preparing a detailed agenda, with an indication of who is responsible for each item and well as the approximate length of time allotted to each topic (Fox, 2001; Mitchell, 1998;



Smith, 2001). The site selected should provide adequate seating for those attending, needed audiovisual equipment, as well as proper lighting, good ventilation, and a comfortable temperature level (Bonner & Chaney, 2004; Chaney & Lyden, 1998). The meeting chairman should arrive early and take the initiative in introducing people (duPont, 1998). In addition to introducing newcomers, the chairman greets regular participants as they arrive and shakes hands. Rules have changed over the last decade - now the guest takes the initiative in extending a hand first.

Seating arrangements are an important aspect of meetings. In fact, Craig (1996) says, "The location of your seat in a meeting is more important than most people ever imagine" (p. 18). She also recommends choosing a seat "to the immediate left of the person who has the most influence in the meeting" (p. 18) and cautions that this person is not necessarily the one leading the meeting. The person who called the meeting chooses a seat of central authority. The head of a rectangular table that is farthest from the door, commonly referred to as the "power perch," is widely recognized as the position of greatest authority (Bixler, 1997).

The person chairing the meeting should schedule it well in advance and choose a date and time that is convenient for most of the expected participants. Meetings scheduled early or late in the day should be avoided as well as meetings on Friday afternoon or the afternoon before a holiday (Mitchell, 2000). Asking those expected to attend their preferences on dates and times is usually appreciated as it shows consideration for others (Baldrige, 1993; Mina, 2000). The meeting chairman should distribute the agenda a few days in advance of the meeting; this agenda should include not only the date and location but also the beginning and ending times.

Proper participant behavior is also essential to the success of meetings. Participants should arrive three to five minutes early since punctuality is essential in this culture (Mitchell, 1998). Arriving too early is also inappropriate. According to Sabath (1998), arriving more than 10 minutes early is "considered a breach of privacy" (p. 112). Persons in charge of the meeting may be attending to last-minute details or discussing meeting procedures with a colleague or supervisor and do not appreciate being scrutinized by participants. Participants are expected introduce themselves to others and shake hands (Mitchell, 1998).

Offering refreshments at meetings is considered a gracious gesture and is appreciated by persons attending (Stewart, 1997). Good manners dictate that refreshments be provided when a meeting is expected to exceed an hour and a half (Chaney & Lyden, 1998). These refreshments should be available at a nearby table and arranged so that participants can serve themselves. The person who makes arrangements for refreshments should provide a tablecloth and napkins, furnish glasses and/or cups, and select food that is appropriate to the time of day.

The meeting should end with the chairman's summary of what the meeting has accomplished, reminders to participants of any tasks for which they have volunteered or have been assigned, and the date of the next meeting (Post & Post, 1999). Handling follow-up activities is the responsibility of the meeting chairman. These activities include being sure that the meeting room is left in good order. The chairman should send a summary memorandum to all participants indicating their assignments and deadlines for completing these assignments. Other follow-up activities include arranging for preparation and distribution of the minutes (Mina, 2000; Pachter & Brody, 1995).

## **SURVEY OBJECTIVE, PROCEDURES, AND RESULTS**

The purpose of this research was to determine demographic difference in students' knowledge of correct meeting procedures. Following a review of books and journal articles on etiquette as well as books related to conducting meetings properly, a survey was developed that included 18 statements reflecting correct or incorrect meeting procedures. The 361 students included in the survey were enrolled in upper division courses in business communication and international business communication at a public, urban university in the Mid-South of approximately 20,000 students as well as students (70) enrolled in business courses at a Mid-South community college of about 12,000 students. Students surveyed were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with the 18 statements provided using a five-point scale with five representing strongly agree and one representing strongly disagree. Students were also asked to indicate their gender and age and whether they were business or nonbusiness majors.

Over half of respondents were female, three-fourths were between 20 and 29 years of age, and over three-fourths were business majors. Statistical analysis was run using SPSS, Version 10. Means were determined for each of the statements related to correct meeting procedures. The statement with which the most students agreed was Cell phones should be turned off during a meeting (mean of 4.83). The statement missed by the highest percentage of students was Doughnuts and coffee are considered appropriate refreshments for business meetings (mean of 4.08 - the statement was false.) Correct responses are indicated in parentheses following each statement. ANOVAs were conducted to determine significant differences ( $<.05$ ) between mean responses and demographic factors. ANOVA results revealed significant differences between all four demographic factors of age, business/nonbusiness status, gender, and school and 11 of the 18 statements.

## **DISCUSSION**

Significant differences ( $<.05$ ) existed between all four demographic factors and responses: two showed significance by age, six showed significance by business/nonbusiness status, two showed significance by gender, and two showed significance by school.

These two statements showed significance by age: A relationship exists between good manners and meeting productivity and Doughnuts and coffee are considered appropriate refreshments for breakfast meetings. Respondents 40 years of age or above (mean of 4.54) were more knowledgeable about the relationship between good manners and meeting productivity than were those under the age of 20 (mean of 3.70). Respondents 40 years of age or above (mean of 3.54) were also more knowledgeable about the appropriateness of serving doughnuts and coffee at breakfast meetings than were respondents aged 30 to 39 (mean of 4.33). (The statement was incorrect; thus, the lower mean reflected more correct responses.)

The following six statements showed significance by business/nonbusiness status: The chairman should recap briefly the information that has been covered for meeting participants who arrive late (mean of 2.29 for business majors vs 2.70 for nonbusiness majors), Being ten minutes late to a meeting is acceptable in the United States (mean of 1.82 for business majors vs 2.16 for nonbusiness majors), Drinking from a can or bottle is acceptable in business meetings (mean of 2.44 for business majors vs 2.87 for nonbusiness majors), Providing 2-liter bottles of drinks at meetings

is recommended (mean of 2.54 for business majors vs 3.10 for nonbusiness majors), Serving pizza at noon meetings is recommended (mean of 2.56 for business majors vs. 3.04 for nonbusiness majors), The chairman and participants may bring their own beverages to a meeting (mean of 2.70 for business majors and 3.26 for nonbusiness majors). In all cases business majors were more knowledgeable about meeting procedures than were nonbusiness majors.

These two statements showed significance by gender: Cell phones should be turned off or set on vibration mode (mean of 4.90 for females vs 4.75 for males) and When participants serve themselves, they should take only one or two small muffins or cookies (mean of 3.97 for females vs 3.72 for males). In both cases females knew the correct response more often than males.

The following two statements showed significance by school: The chairman should recap briefly the information that has been covered for meeting participants who arrive late (mean of 2.25 for university vs 2.87 for community college) and Following the meeting, the chairman should send a summary memorandum to all participants (mean of 3.98 for university vs 4.29 for community college). University students answered correctly more often than did community college students the statement related to recapping information for latecomers. Community college students, however, were more knowledgeable about the importance of sending a summary memorandum to participants following the meeting.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since meetings are a necessary yet time consuming part of business life in the United States, they should be designed carefully to assure that time is used wisely and that optimum results are achieved. Students should be aware that, as the business leaders of tomorrow, they need to learn procedures for conducting business meetings properly. When students graduate from college and assume their leadership roles in the world of business, their knowledge of proper meeting etiquette, whether as a meeting leader or participant, will be noticed and may be an asset in promotion decisions. Is meeting etiquette readily apparent to those attending meetings? According to Mitchell (1998), "Meeting etiquette is like stage lighting: You only notice it when it is bad" (p. 79).

Results of this survey indicate that students are knowledgeable about some areas of meeting etiquette. Most students, for example, knew correct behavior related to use of cell phones and reading mail during meetings. However, students were less knowledgeable about guidelines for appropriate refreshments to serve. The research objective was to determine demographic differences in students' knowledge of correct meeting procedures. ANOVA results indicated that responses to two statements varied by age; in both cases respondents age 40 and above were more knowledgeable than younger students. Of the six statements showing significance by business/nonbusiness status, all were answered correctly more often by business majors than by nonbusiness majors. Of the two statements showing significance by gender, females answered correctly more often than males. Thus, older students who are female and business majors answered correctly more often than younger students who are male and nonbusiness majors.

Business communication teachers can use results of this survey as a basis for class discussion when presenting information on meeting management and procedures. Students can be encouraged to share their experiences related to correct and incorrect procedures they have observed during business meetings.

## REFERENCES

- Baldrige, L. (1993). *New complete guide to executive manners*. New York: Rawson Associates.
- Bixler, S. (1997). *The new professional image*. Avon, MA: Adams Media Corp.
- Bonner, W. H., & Chaney, L. H. (2004). *Communicating effectively in an information age* (2nd ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Thomson Learning.
- Chaney, L. H., & Lyden, J. A. (1998, May). Managing meetings to manage your image. *Supervision*, 59(5), 13-15.
- Chaney, L. H., & Green, C. G. (2003, November/December). Mind your meeting manners. *OfficePRO*, 63(8), 19-21.
- Craig, E. (1996). *Don't slurp your soup*. St. Paul, MN: Brighton Publications, Inc.
- duPont, M. K. (1998). *Business etiquette and professionalism*. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications.
- Fox, S. (2001). *Business etiquette for dummies*. Foster City, CA: IDG Books.
- Mina, E. (2000). *The complete handbook of business meetings*. New York: AMACOM.
- Mitchell, M. (2000). *The complete idiot's guide to business etiquette*. Indianapolis, IN: Alpha Books.
- Mitchell, M. (1998). *The first five minutes*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Pachter, B., & Brody, M. (1995). *Complete business etiquette handbook*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Post, P., & Post, P. (1999). *Emily Post's the etiquette advantage in business*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.
- Sabath, A. M. (1998). *Business etiquette*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press.
- Smith, T. E. (2001). *Meeting management*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Stewart, M. Y. (1997). *The new etiquette*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.



# **A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE VIEWS OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY DIRECTORS OF CAREER SERVICES AND AACSB DEANS CONCERNING RESUME WRITING**

**Donald E. English, Texas A&M University-Commerce**

Donald\_English@tamu-commerce.edu

**Edgar Manton, Texas A&M University-Commerce**

**Janet Walker, Texas A&M University-Commerce**

## **ABSTRACT**

*The primary purpose of this study was to determine the views of college and university Directors of Career Services and AACSB deans on resume writing. The findings of this study should be beneficial to those that teach resume writing. For example, 97 percent of the Directors believed that resume writing was "Very Valuable." However, only 78 percent of the deans believed resume writing was "Very Valuable."*

## **INTRODUCTION**

A resume is probably the most important piece of information that a potential employee can create. Human resource managers have a choice of many qualified workers. What information should be included on a resume? What information should be deleted? How long should a resume be? What are the most common errors made on resumes? These are just a few questions college graduates must answer. It is of vital importance that colleges and universities provide students with as much current information as possible on resume writing so that they can compete in the labor market.

## **PROBLEM/METHODOLOGY**

The problem of this study was to determine the views of selected college and university Directors of Career Services and AACSB deans on resume writing. A questionnaire was developed and mailed to Directors of Career Services in the Southwest Association of Colleges and Employers. The questionnaire was also mailed to AACSB deans. A comparison will be made between the views of Directors of Career Services and the AACSB deans pertaining to resume writing.



# **LEADERSHIP IN HIGH-RISK ENVIRONMENTS: CROSS-GENERATIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF CRITICAL LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES PROVIDED BY MILITARY SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL**

**Jerry D. Estenson, California State University, Sacramento**  
jestenso@earthlink.net

## **ABSTRACT**

*Military cultures tend to be perceived as hierarchal thus creating a climate where there may be a disconnect between the definition of leadership attributes by senior officers and soldiers on the ground. Data provided by 302 former special operations personnel was used to determine the degree of separation between how senior officers (strategic leaders), mid-grade officers (mid-level leaders) and junior officers, senior non-commissioned officers, and junior non-commissioned officers (functional leaders) define exemplary leaders. If the hierarchal hypothesis is correct, each level of the military hierarchy will perceive the attributes of an exemplary leader differently. The data indicates that senior officers, mid-grade officers, junior officers, senior non-commissioned officers, junior non-commissioned officers and covert government operatives spanning a period from World War II to the Afghanistan War all saw competence as the most significant behavior of an exemplary leader. The ranking of the remaining nineteen leadership attributes used in the study provides a worthwhile insight into how this unique population views exemplary leaders. This study may be of value to other governmental organizations designing teams to conduct high-risk ventures and private sector companies constructing teams to engage in high-risk economic projects.*





# **THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE FOR MUNICIPALITIES CONCERNING THE UTILIZATION OF SOLID WASTE ACCUMULATION FOR RESOURCES: RECYCLING**

**Frank E. Hood, Mississippi College**

fhood@mc.edu

**Sarah T. Pitts, Christian Brothers University**

spitts@cbu.edu

**Rob H. Kamery, Christian Brothers University**

rkamery@cbu.edu

## **ABSTRACT**

*Many firms that are currently engaged in active programs of recycling are, in all probability, acting in a manner that is conducive to good public relations. However, the promise of recycling offers the prospect of relatively low cost inputs to producers, while the opportunity of utilization of solid waste accumulations for resources may provide the key in seeking an environmental balance. Irreplaceable resources can be preserved and solid waste problems can be alleviated to some degree through the adaptation of recycling into the municipal solid waste system.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Recycling is advantageous for several reasons. As land area suitable for disposal activity decreases, and as anti-pollution restrictions and the volume of solid waste increase, the alternative of recycling becomes more and more attractive. Unusable refuse is returned to society as a productive input. Municipalities should seek out those recycling opportunities that will return enough revenue to offset a sizable portion of the solid waste disposal expense.

The problem of determining which economic unit is to perform the collection function is still unanswered. If the collection function can be centralized, possibly performed by the municipality, in all probability the sorting can take place at the firm. Unfortunately, not all municipalities are actively attempting to take part in recycling programs that would offer benefits to both the municipality and the firm. The municipality can utilize recycling as a partial solution to the communities' solid waste problem, and the revenue obtained from an active recycling program would help offset some of the tax burden that is associated with solid waste disposal. The firm, by actively supporting a program of recycling, could receive a low-cost input in the form of refuse and its program of resource reclamation would benefit society through the preservation of natural resources.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

The problem of solid waste is primarily one of public health. One of the primary reasons for removing accumulations of refuse is to provide a more healthful environment and more aesthetic living conditions. Unfortunately, some of the solid waste disposed at the present time still is placed in open dumps. Open dumping causes a major health problem for communities of any size. Open dumps provide shelter for disease-bearing vectors such as rodents and flies and provide generally unsanitary conditions. Typhoid fever, cholera, summer diarrhea, dysentery, tuberculosis, and anthrax are just a few of the many costly epidemical diseases that may result from the improper handling of solid waste.

### **SOLID WASTE AND DISEASE**

Even though the correlation between disease and solid waste is low, solid waste has been linked conclusively with disease in the U.S. Lower-income families tend to be the most susceptible to disease-bearing vectors (Prindle, 1967). Low-income families tend to live in proximity to municipal refuse disposal facilities because of the relative low cost of the land space. Also, lower-income families tend to concentrate in the central city forming a ghetto type atmosphere, again because of the relatively low-cost housing. This problem of concentrating low-income families in particular areas is the result of urban growth. As municipalities grow, they appear to grow in patterns of more or less concentric circles. The center city is abandoned for the suburbs, and the lower-income families begin to occupy the central city. Political realities indicate that municipal services tend to break down because the taxpayer has moved elsewhere.

As the occupants of the central city begin to expand their living area outward, the higher-income groups continue their outward migration to suburbia. This concentration of lower-income groups into the central city and the land surrounding the city dump poses a serious public health problem. The incidence of disease appears to be higher among central city families and families living in proximity to the solid waste accumulations. These low-income families are able to share their communicable diseases with the rest of society through the intermingling of the various levels of social strata, namely cooks, fast-food workers, and other occupations that exist in day to day life. The community reflects the public health problem in that the cost to the municipality is higher with a low level of public health. Disease associated with solid waste accumulations causes the community to establish methods of treating the sick at public expense. Reduction of the solid waste problem by the municipality can increase the level of public health and reduce the cost to the municipality that results from the damage by rats and flies that reside in solid waste accumulations.

### **ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS CAUSED BY SOLID WASTE**

Many fires and home accidents result from poor refuse handling. Abandoned items that are not properly stored are attractive to children and often provide the cause of serious accidents. Inefficient disposal of solid waste frequently leads to air and water pollution. These pollution problems have become a matter of public health both from the side of improved public health and the desire to provide aesthetic living conditions. Air pollution contributes to skin and eye

irritations and to respiratory diseases. Water pollution, resulting from improper solid waste disposal, can contaminate the municipal water supply through seepage into underground water tables. From an aesthetic viewpoint, air and water pollution reduces the quality of life.

### **CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

The problem of solid waste disposal takes on an added dimension since many municipalities are forced to spend sizable amounts of public money to convince the local residents that new methods of solid waste disposal will benefit rather than harm the community. Citizen support is essential in order to implement any efficient and sanitary disposal methodology. Since solid waste represents a useless commodity, households exhibit definite disinterest in municipal disposal methodology, subscribing to an out of sight, out of mind mentality. The solid waste problem becomes apparent when keeping the accumulations of refuse out of sight and out of mind is no longer possible. When the question arises, the public demands that the most efficient disposal method available be used, while at the same time demanding that the cost of the disposal remain unchanged. Usually, any technology employed brings criticism and possibly a court injunction. Opponents of the incinerator maintain that incineration pollutes the air, and the opponents of the sanitary landfill often claim that the city is trying to replace one type of dump with another. Unfortunately, the criticism of the sanitary landfill is often based on fact.

Both of the above criticisms are upsetting and time-consuming, and the public usually demands the utmost haste in solving municipal problems. An excellent example of the result of a misconception is the state legislature that was considering legislation that would have required any refuse to be fed to swine to be cooked. The cooking process was to rid the refuse of parasites that could possibly enter the blood stream of the swine. The bill progressed satisfactorily until one of its opponents called it the hot lunch for hogs bill. The name stuck, and the bill was defeated (Hanson, 1967).

### **THE PROBLEM OF CITIZEN RESISTANCE TO SOLID WASTE TECHNOLOGY**

One of the main obstacles to the installation of a new solid waste disposal system is site selection difficulties. Regardless of whether a sanitary landfill or an incinerator is selected, generally there will be some resistance by the public. A good example of citizen resistance is the Hamilton, Ohio experience. The city announced that it was going to install a sanitary landfill in an abandoned gravel pit. The gravel pit separated a few residential and commercial buildings from a railroad track. The citizens of Hamilton organized and complained to the governor, the state health department, and to federal health agencies. Protests finally subsided as the landfill proceeded to operate efficiently. The director of public works later stated that an efficient operation was the best way to win public approval (Citizen support for solid waste management, 1970). A good program of public education, however, might have prevented the furor that preceded the landfill. In many cases, the public is informed by rumor rather than fact.

Baltimore County, Maryland was faced with a different type of problem, that of litter. Unlike the Hamilton case, the county began an all-out media campaign to educate citizens concerning the damage that litter was causing. Pictures of the pollution damage caused by litter and

entitled *The Dirty Picture of the Month* were printed in newspapers. Citizens were urged to dispose of unwanted objects by calling the city instead of personally dumping them. The results of this campaign were highly favorable. Generally, the citizens were as concerned as were the city officials, but many of the citizens professed confusion as to how to fight the problem of litter (Citizen support for solid waste management, 1970).

### **SOLID WASTE AND THE MEDIA**

The extensive use of communications media possibly contains a partial answer to the problems of litter and citizen resistance to new methodology of disposal. Through public education, citizens can learn that sanitary landfills can be converted into golf courses, ballparks, and even solid land for municipal expansion. Possibly most important, knowledge of the problems of litter and the methods of dealing with litter problems can be transmitted to citizens. The cost of using such media methods for public education is small if the desired results are achieved. By utilizing the yearly mailing of tax bills to insert a flyer describing the heavy fiscal burden attributed to solid waste, the Baltimore County project was able to obtain a mailing cost of less than one-half cent per mailing to reach 180,000 homes. Public service announcements on 11 radio stations cost about \$200 per announcement (Citizen support for solid waste management, 1970). Contributions of time to public service announcements by many radio stations would possibly further cut the cost of media used for public education. A popular trend in public service announcements is the utilization of a famous person to urge citizens to cooperate. Professional athletes appear to influence a wide range of citizens. Whatever the method, public education can be very helpful in solving the nation's solid waste problems.

### **THE NATION'S CHANGING ATTITUDE**

The existence of the nation's solid waste problem is not new, but the national attitude toward the disposal of refuse accumulations represents an awakening of national interest as to the magnitude of the solid waste dilemma. The action taken by the federal government during the 1960s and early 1970s (the passage of the Solid Waste Act of 1965 and the Resource Recovery Act of 1970) reflects the fact that the solid waste problem appeared to be reaching critical proportions.

Solid waste, like any other type of pollution, presents citizens with a wide variety of related problems that add to the difficulties of financing the public sector. A large part of the air and water pollution problems that currently exist can be traced to the improper disposal of solid waste, either from the producer and the consumer of the private sector or the municipality itself. These side effects of everyday life represent a social cost that must be paid, either directly or indirectly, by society.

### **GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION**

The intervention of governmental units into the activities of the private sector appears to be unavoidable in order to reduce the external effects of solid waste pollution. The alternatives open to the public sector are twofold: first, the municipality can treat the increased solid waste

accumulations as it has in the past and bear the increased fiscal and physical burden; or secondly, the municipality can take the necessary actions to ensure the efficient disposal of refuse. In doing so, the municipality must intervene to limit the quantity of pollution that may be tolerable to society and thus limit the amount of social cost that must be apparent to society. The decision appears to fit into the category of which is the lesser of the two evils.

Unfortunately, society appears to be growing accustomed to the damage done to the natural resources by the externalities of production and consumption. The project of cleaning up the city or state usually is thought of as the responsibility of the governmental unit involved. Therefore, the public sector is given the responsibility of disposing of the constantly growing accumulations of solid waste and the companion problems of air and water pollution that result from poor solid waste disposal methodology. Since the alternative of elimination of production and consumption to ensure a pollution-free environment is unacceptable, the solutions to the solid waste problem lie in the efficient disposal of existing solid waste accumulations and in the advancement of technology so that future generation of refuse will present a minimal problem.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Technology represents an area that offers a possible solution to the solid waste problem, or at least an opportunity to reduce the fiscal burden associated with refuse disposal. Reclamation of economic resources presents the final link in the economic cycle; the resource is returned to the producer as a raw input. Resource reclamation offers a possible answer to the problem of rapidly depleting natural resources and a source of municipal revenue to aid in offsetting the fiscal burden that is associated with solid waste disposal. The main limitation attached to a successful reclamation program appears in establishing a channel of distribution of the used resource to the producer. Many recycling programs are economically feasible if the producers can obtain enough of the raw material. The problem of collection of reusable resources is one obstacle that must be solved if a program of resource reclamation is to be economical.

The motivating force behind any sanitary disposal procedure is the desire of the community to maintain a consistently high level of public health. The higher the level of public health, the lower the cost of public health is to society.

### **CONCLUSION**

The most widely accepted method of assuring public cooperation in dealing with the solid waste disposal problem is the utilization of an effective public education program to educate the public as to the necessity and the benefits that will accrue with the adoption of a sound technology for solid waste disposal. There are many ways to accomplish a program of public education that will inform the public of the municipality's intentions in taking a particular action. The significance of a well-executed program of public education is that a well-informed public is more likely to react in a manner conducive to municipal action than is an uninformed public susceptible to rumors and misrepresentations.

## **REFERENCES**

Hanson, R. (1967). Politics and trash. Proceedings of Surgeon General Conference on Solid Waste. U.S. Public Health Service Publication No. 1729. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Prindle, R.A. (1967). Health aspects of solid waste. Proceedings of the Surgeon General's Conference on Solid Waste Management. U.S. Public Health Service Publication No. 1729. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Solid Waste Disposal Act (PL 89-272) § 202, Stat. 997 (1965), 42 U.S.C. § 3251 (1965).

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1970). Citizen support for solid waste management. Publication No. s2-17c.1. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 10-11, 14.

# **DIGITAL DEPRESSION, STRESS, AND BURNOUT: SAME SONG, DIFFERENT VERSE**

**Pamela R. Johnson, California State University-Chico**

pjohnson@csuchico.edu

**Julie Indvik, California State University-Chico**

jindivik@csuchico.edu

## **ABSTRACT**

*Digital depression is the term given to the feeling of being overwhelmed and overworked by technology. With fewer employees doing more work in nearly every industry, people are feeling the drain both mentally and physically. What many employees are doing is engaging in something called "rational endurance;" they are trying to keep focused on their jobs despite the tough economic climate, job layoffs, and technology demands. Yet, many employees are beginning to feel the stress. Common symptoms of stress include irritability, anxiety, depression, muscular tensions, digestive problems and elevation in blood pressure. To combat these symptoms, some workers become disengaged; others just burn out. Burnout, unlike disengagement, is a condition that affects motivated people with high ideals. This paper will describe digital depression, discuss the stress that follows when employees are overworked for an extended period of time, describe the resulting burnout that occurs, and describe what managers can do to help.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

*"Work saves us from three great evils: boredom, vice, and need." Voltaire*

The United States has surpassed Japan as the most overworked country in the industrialized world. U.S. workers earn the fewest number of vacation days out of a long list of countries. With fewer staff doing more work in nearly every industry, people are feeling the drain both mentally and physically (Ammondson, 2001). In fact, forty percent of employees say their workload is unreasonable. And in many organizations, that won't change soon. Positions have been eliminated, and many people will be expected to continue to do more work than they believe is appropriate because hiring has stalled (Bates, 2003). And as work continues to pile up and employees feel additional pressure on the job, stress, depression and burnout will occur. In a recent study conducted by the Families and Work Institute in New York City, it found that the more overworked employees feel, the more likely they are to report making mistakes at work and the more likely they are to lose sleep because of their work. In addition, the report found that many employees reach a point when increasing work demands simply become too much, a point at which personal and family relations, personal health, and the quality of work itself are seriously threatened (Eisinger, 2001). This paper will describe digital depression, discuss the stress that follows when employees are overworked for



an extended period of time, describe the resulting burnout that occurs, and detail what managers can do to help.

## DIGITAL DEPRESSION

*"In order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it. They must not do too much of it. And they must have a sense of success in it." John Ruskin*

"Digital Depression" is the term given to the feeling of being overwhelmed and overworked by technology. Employees don't feel that they can escape anymore. Up to five million employees feel stressed at work and up to half a million of us suffer from stress related illnesses. Eighty percent of employees work more than 40 hours a week with only five percent feeling a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. Technology means that employees are always accessible. The profusion of communications technology, mobiles, email, wireless PDAs and laptops, are contributing to a rise in employee stress levels, which currently affects sixty-four percent of the working population. (Digital depression, 2003).

People experience stress in many parts of their lives. Stress is a by-product of modern-day life. However, stress becomes harmful when it reaches an intensity that begins to impair daily activity (Pretrus & Kleiner, 2003). Several factors contribute to feeling overworked: working more than 50 hours a week, regularly working more than five days a week, working more than one prefers, and believing that one has little or no control over his/her work schedule. Other factors include continual use of technologies like beepers, cell phones, and laptops to communicate with the office during nonwork hours, an expectation to be accessible during off-hours and off-days, and the feeling of powerlessness about the pacing of job goals and tasks (Leggiere, 2002).

Technology offers greater convenience but also fuels the flames of stress. The speed of information exchanges today drives the nonstop mentality that has made multitasking a necessity. And, one of the perils of instant communication is that because we respond so quickly, we are more apt to make careless mistakes. The classic example is someone sending an e-message and then regretting what he or she said (Eisinger, 2001).

According to research, there are seven main signs of digital depression: 1) only the most technologically up-to-date will gain career success, 2) an inability to unplug from working life, 3) the permanent interruption of work by emails, mobiles, colleagues and bosses, 4) the 24/7 working life - shorter deadlines and a faster working environment, 5) the pressure to acquire the newest digital gadget, 6) the frustration when technology does not work, and 7) the constant stream of communications that creates a sense that work never ends (Digital depression, 2003).

What many employees are doing is engaging in something called "rational endurance" (Employee view, 2003). Rational endurance is a phrase that describes how US workers are trying to keep focused on their jobs despite the tough economic climate, job layoffs, and technology. Employees are getting the job done but are becoming more stressed and burned out as they do so.

## STRESS

*"Over the years your bodies become walking autobiographies, telling friends and strangers alike of the minor and major stresses of your lives."*

Marilyn Ferguson

Common symptoms of stress include irritability, anxiety, depression, muscular tensions, digestive problems, and elevation in blood pressure. Based on research conducted during the past 20 years by the American Institute of Stress, 43 percent of all adults suffer adverse health effects due to stress and nearly half of all American workers suffer from symptoms of burnout. In addition, an estimated 1 million workers are absent on an average workday because of stress-related complaints. The Occupation Safety and Health Administration has declared stress a hazard of the workplace. And it is no wonder that workers feel overwhelmed and overworked; the average American office worker sends or receives about 201 messages a day in the form of e-mails, voice mails, faxes, and memos (Eisinger, 2001).

And, the costs of stress are high. The American Institute of Stress reports that stress costs U.S. businesses an estimated \$200-\$300 billion in lost productivity each year (Eisinger, 2001). Companies who think the way to increase profitability is to push for more demanding schedules should take a hard look. There is clear evidence that not allowing their people time for leisure will come back to haunt their bottom lines in the form of high turnover costs, deteriorating performance, high health care costs, and declining customer satisfaction. Employees who consider themselves overworked are 17 times more likely to make mistakes or have accidents on the job than employees who are not overworked. They are more than 40 percent more likely to feel angry with employers and co-workers, 30 percent more likely to develop health problems, and not surprisingly nearly 50 percent more likely to seek jobs elsewhere when the economy improves (Leggiere, 2002).

## DISENGAGED EMPLOYEES

Others, because of the stress, simply become disengaged. Whether managers realize it or not, unhappy and stressed workers often send unconscious and conscious signals of dissatisfaction long before they become disengaged (Ware, 1997). Unhappy workers, those who are "actively disengaged" are costing American employers billions of dollars a year. About 19 percent of American employees say they are actively disengaged from their work. That disinterest is costing U.S. firms about \$300 billion in lost productivity annually (Cassiani, 2001).

Disengaged workers are rusted out, rather than burnt out. They are often formerly excellent employees who did whatever it took to get the job done and who now contribute at a minimal level. Disengaged workers are not accomplishing the same amount of work that they used to because the person has pulled his or her heart out of the work. In addition, actively disengaged workers in the US collectively miss roughly 150 million days annually (Cassiani, 2001).

Some signals that managers should watch for to identify the disengaged employees are the person used to contribute in meetings now no longer offers his or her views, or the person who always was ready to pitch in during an emergency now sits on the sidelines (Prencipe, 2001). In addition, actively disengaged workers are less loyal, are away from work more often, report higher

stress levels and lower life satisfaction, and are less likely to recommend the organization to others who are looking for work (Cassiani, 2001).

## BURNOUT

*"One of the symptoms of an approaching nervous breakdown is the belief that one's work is terribly important." Bertrand Russell*

There is the disengaged employee, the stressed employee, and the burnt out employee. Research studies suggest stress and burnout are different. Most people become stressed periodically. Burnout is much more than being stressed. Burnout, unlike disengagement, is a condition that affects motivated people with high ideals. There is a human need to derive meaning from work. High quality employees, regardless of the field, want to believe their life and work is significant and purposeful. There is an ancient desire to be fulfilled at work that goes back to a time when skilled crafts were looked upon with pride. Not surprisingly, there is a connection between idealistic dedication to a job and a heightened tendency to burnout (Stanley, 2001).

Burnout results in reduced productivity, higher turnover, and generally poor performance, which is exactly what organizations cannot afford as budgets keep getting tighter and demands from the business side keep getting louder (21 Hayes, 2003). In fact, a recent study found that employee morale is becoming an issue among workers. Seventy-one percent of managers admit that burnout is a serious problem in their organizations (McGee, 2003).

Burnout is a costly and distressing phenomenon, which damages both individuals and organizations. Employees feel undervalued and frustrated, the quality of their work deteriorates, and ultimately they may leave the organization (Beating burnout, 2002). The bottom line is employers are squeezing people to accomplish more with less, and there is a reduction of commitment and loyalty between employers and employees. And, although technology is speeding our lives along, in actuality, people are experiencing more depression, stress, and burnout (Motley, 2001).

## WHAT CAN MANAGERS DO?

There are a number of things that managers can do to reduce stress and burnout. For example, managers can:

1. Build a more supportive workplace. This can be done by giving workers the tools they need to do their jobs.
2. Assess vulnerable populations in terms of the type and amount of work they do. Try to make accommodations to maximize their productivity and improve retention.
3. Assess job design to see if you can reduce feelings of being overworked.
4. Eliminate unnecessary tasks in order to increase productivity and reduce workload (Stop burnout, 2002).
5. Set realistic goals.

6. Encourage workers to take time out for a few minutes each day to take a brief walk or just sit quietly.
7. Think of tasks that turn your employees on rather than overwhelm them (Avoiding burnout, 2003).
8. Spend time with your happy and productive employees. Once you feel you know all the things your best employees like about their jobs, develop an interview format that will help you to determine how much a job candidate is like your best employees (Rovner, 2001).
9. Establish an employee mental health at work referral system.
10. Create information services to help employees maintain a balance between their work and family lives (McIntyre, et. al., 2003).

## **CONCLUSION**

*"It is your work in life that is the ultimate seduction."* Pablo Picasso

Job stress is common today. The workplace is highly charged and organizations are in a global economy that has little mercy for companies that fall behind. And, technology, once thought of as the means to greater leisure, has paradoxically increased the pressure of work. This, in turn, challenges organizations to find ways of maintaining employees' full engagement in their work while reducing their stress. Staff must be appraised and rewarded in ways which they feel are beneficial and just, and any organization which fails to meet these challenges will lose its most precious resource to burnout.

## **REFERENCES**

- Ammondson, P. (2001). Beat job burnout. *T + D*, 55(9), September, 68-70.
- Avoiding job burnout. (2003). *The American Salesman*. 48(12), December, 30.
- Bates, S. (2003). Expert: Don't overlook burnout. *HRMagazine*, 48(8), August, 14.
- Beating burn-out. (2002). *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 10(1), 6-9.
- Cassiani, L. (2001). Disengaged workers costing the U.S. \$billions. *Canadian HR Reporter*, 14(7), 9 April, 2.
- 'Digital depression' identified as new form of stress. *Management Services*, 47(5), May, 7.
- Eisinger, J. (2001). High anxiety. *Association Management*, 53(8), August, 130-138.
- Employee view: Rational endurance. *Chemical Market Reporter*, 264(10), 29 September, 18.
- Leggiere, P. (2002). What happened to the leisure society? *Across the Board*, 39(4), July/August, 42-48.
- McGee, M. (2003). Behind the numbers: Businesses fess up to morale issues. *InformationWeek*, 937, 28 April, 110-111.

- McIntyre, R., et. al. (2003). The hidden costs of depression in the workplace. *Benefits Canada*, 27(10), October, A1.
- Motley, C. (2001). Beating burnout. *Office Solutions*, 18(6), June, 14-15.
- Prencipe, L. (2001). Reenergize the disengaged worker. *InfoWorld*, 16 April, 95.
- Pretrus, T., & Kleiner, B. (2003). New developments concerning workplace safety training: Managing stress arising from work. *Management Research News*, 26(6), 68-77.
- Rovner, L. (2001). A simple tip to reduce turnover. *DSN Retailing Today*, 40(15), 6 August, 14.
- Stanley, T. (2001). Burnout: A manager's worst nightmare. *SuperVision*, 62(8), August, 3-5.
- Stop burnout-before it stops your employees. (2002). *HR Focus*, 79(2), February, 3-4.
- Ware, B. (1997). Recognizing discontent. *Network World*, 14(33), 18 August, 63.

# **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND BEHAVIORAL ISSUES AFFECTING A BUSINESS COLLEGE IN A UNIVERSITY DURING AN ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

**Frank R. Lazzara, Columbus State University**

lazzara\_frank@colstate.edu

## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper analyzes the organizational structure and behavioral issues affecting a Business College in a university during an accreditation process in the areas of process impact, leadership challenges, and customer service. Looking at the organization, three main organizational behavior challenges face them. The challenges are threefold. First, organizational behavior issues caused by accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) influence the organization. Secondly, the dramatic change in the leadership structure to support this accreditation effort is trying to settle into their management style and deal with the effect internal politics from their every decision. Finally, the paper discusses customer service issues pertaining to the College's customers trying to remain competitive among the local colleges and universities and establishing relationships with its customers - the students. This paper will address these organizational structure and behavioral issues. The paper identifies and properly cites current research in support of possible interventions a College of Business should implement to remedy some of the shortcomings.*



# **QUALITY OF WORK-LIFE ISSUES THE NEEDS OF THE DUAL-CAREER COUPLE EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONNEL PRACTICES: A STUDY OF RURAL AMERICA A BAROMETER FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS**

**Kelly L. Littlefield, Northwestern Michigan College**  
klittlefield@nmc.edu

## **ABSTRACT**

*America's work force has undergone a transformation over the past forty years. The Census Bureau reported that in 1997 only 17% of all families conformed to the 1950s model of a wage-earning dad, a stay-at-home mom, and one or more children. Since the late 1950s, growing attention has focused on families in which both partners work; these relationships are called dual-earner marriages. Societal changes such as the number of women entering the workforce and the economic need for two incomes to support a family have impacted the American labor force. Married coupled families in which husband and wife both work accounted for 53.2% of the workforce in 2000. These workers face problems in balancing work responsibilities with home commitment. Literature supports that work-life conflict poses problems to both employees and business. Organizations look to their employees for productivity and efficiency, which is compromised by work-life conflict in the form of absenteeism, decreased employee satisfaction, and poor job performance. Employees look to their employers for personnel practices to help alleviate the stress they experience in balancing home and work responsibilities. Fourteen organizations in northern-lower Michigan participated in this study with employees representative of healthcare, education, banking, insurance, tourism, and the manufacturing industries. A Likert-type scale was used to assess the perception of 278 members of dual-career families on how helpful eighteen personnel practices were in alleviating work-life conflict. The rankings of the personnel practices were examined and implications to business and industry made. Based on the research findings, businesses can develop strategies to more effectively allocate financial resources to provide personnel practices that are perceived as most supportive by dual-career family employees. The results of this study will be useful to those academics and human resource practitioners who are interested in evaluating quality of work-life personnel practices to better meet the needs of dual-career families who face conflict in managing work responsibilities and family commitments. It serves as a tool for business and industry to accurately assess the needs of their own workforce. The underlying results for the organization is the potential for increased employee morale, productivity, and job satisfaction.*



## INTRODUCTION

America's work force has undergone immense change over the past forty years bringing with it societal changes impacting the way people value their quality of life and their willingness to compromise career over family. The 2003 workforce is much different than the workforce of the 1980s and early 1990s, which evolved from stereotypical norms of work in the 1960s.

The Census Bureau reported that in 1997 only 17% of all families conformed to the 1950s model of a wage-earning dad, a stay-at-home mom, and one or more children. Since the late 1950s, growing attention has focused on families in which both partners work; these relationships are called dual-earner marriages (Jordan, Cobb, McCully, 1989). Married couples with children in which husband and wife both work accounted for 53.2% of the workforce in 2000 (Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment Characteristics of Families: April 24, 2001).

The number of women entering the workforce and the incidence of dual-earner families has steadily increased; a trend that seems unlikely to change in the near future (Facts about the demographics of working families, Careers Institute, Winter, 1999). The most significant increase has been in married-couple families with children under the age of six. The percentage of such families increased almost 10% between 1986 and 1998, from 52.6 to more than 62% (Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census).

Research on employee values reflects a new trend with employees often placing family interests above career and increasingly expecting employers to help them balance home and work demands. These changes have made it imperative for organizations to consider how their policies and procedures affect family life.

Sekaran (1986) illustrates a number of critical issues in dual-career families: (a) their need for flexible work patterns, enabling them to balance the demands of family and career; (b) the need for revised benefits plans that will allow couples to start families without jeopardizing their career prospects; and (c) their need to be freed from anxieties about child care when they are at work. Work responsibilities and family obligations compete for time and attention in most working adults. The more time individuals allocate to one arena, the less they have to allocate to the other (Moen, Waismel-Manor, & Sweet, 2002). When individuals feel that too many demands of one domain are unmet, they experience work-family conflict, which is consistent with a conflict approach (also referred to as depletion or resource drain) to the relationship between work and family roles (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Lambert, 1990). However, when individuals are able to allocate their time and energy to meet the demands of each domain, they feel successful in balancing work and family. This is consistent with past literature that has defined work-family balance in terms of satisfactorily resolving competing demands emanating from the work and family domains (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981; Clark, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999).

If members of dual-career families face problems in simultaneously meeting the demands of work and family, what would be their perceived attitude toward work if quality of work-life concepts and benefits were supported by the organization? The research supports that many managers in organizations cite issues with lost time at work, lack of motivated workers, and loss of worker productivity resulting from work-family conflicts. Absenteeism, employee turnover, and

job satisfaction attributable to the existence or non-existence of quality of work-life concepts in the workplace are also concerns of managers as cited in the research.

One of the major changes Mowday, et al. (1982) note with respect to impacts on employee-organizational linkages related to the changing composition of the characteristics of the work force. In particular, they suggest that the percentage of women entering the work force, an increase in dual-career households, and a new value system will create difficulties for organizations that ignore the problem. The widened ties of individuals to the organization may have negative implications for both individuals and organizations. More specifically, Mowday et al (1982) suggest that reduced linkages may lead to lowered organizational commitment.

The workforce has undergone a transformation leading to an increase in dual-career families. These dual-career couples face many stressors in balancing career, family, social obligations and work expectations. Changing societal trends such as an increase in the number of women entering the work force combined with an economy that requires dual incomes to support an average standard of living contribute to work-family conflicts. As a result, society and American business have recognized the conflicts unique to dual-career families and have responded.

With the increase of dual-career couples in the workforce, many organizations have begun to take a role in developing quality of work-life programs. The goal of the organization is to relieve the stressors of employees in an attempt to retain employees, cultivate good employee morale, and develop organizational commitment while also enhancing productivity and efficiency of work performance. Society has responded with innovative solutions such as job sharing, flexible work schedules, and day care solutions. Dual-career families continue to look to employers and society for assistance in managing quality of work-life conflicts.

Absenteeism, employee turnover, employee morale, and job satisfaction may be directly related to the firm's ability to offer quality of work-life programs which the employee perceives as important in coping with quality of work-life issues. If employees face problems in simultaneously meeting the demands of work and family, the organization usually suffers in terms of lost time at work and turnover of personnel due to an inability to cope with concurrent family and work demands or to relocate when required by the organization. The conflicts employees have between work and family hinder overall corporate productivity (Fernandez, 1986). The literature review and supporting empirical research further support a correlation of quality of work-life programs with employee productivity, morale, job satisfaction, and loyalty.

American work-force statistics show an increasing percentage (53.2%) of dual-career couples in the work-force. This particular segment of the population appears to be increasingly requesting business to issue policies, form programs, and offer benefits that will assist them in managing both career and family in a society that places increasing demands in both sectors. With the security of dual-incomes, this population segment, which comprises the majority of the American workforce, seeks quality of work-life benefits from organizations in which they wish to be employed.

Business is interested in retaining good employees, decreasing employee turnover, increasing overall corporate productivity, and seeks to cultivate a good corporate culture inclusive of good employee morale, employee loyalty to the organization, and job satisfaction. In addition, organizations are concerned with meeting the demands of their employees to enhance employee commitment to the organization. With a slow economy placing demands on companies to downsize

and re-evaluate budgets, there is a growing need for human resource managers to review personnel practices in an effort to maximize the benefit to employees using limited organizational financial resources.

Organizations can implement or redesign practices to reflect consideration of the issues facing dual-career couples. As a result, they may avoid the costs resulting from home stress spilling over to work. Creative practices designed to accommodate the needs of working couples are emerging in companies across the United States (Hall & Hall, 1978; Koplemann, Rosenweigh & Lally, 1982).

Unfortunately, despite expressed interest in supporting families, the actual practices of most companies lag behind expressed attitudes of workers (Catalyst Career and Family Center, 1997). Employers may be reluctant to adopt new quality of work-life practices partly because they lack clear evidence of their effects, both for employees and the company. Although an array of new options exists, confusion surrounds the election of practices to best meet the needs of an organization's specific employee population.

Employee perception of the support their company provides them in balancing career with family roles affect critical employee attitudes such as employee commitment, job satisfaction, and employee morale (Chusmir, 1986; Magid, 1983). Other studies have identified a causal relationship between employee perceptions of the support of their company with employee productivity and have established a correlation of worker's attitude of QWL concepts with employee morale, employee loyalty to the organization, and overall job satisfaction.

Practices such as flextime and childcare are typically assumed to be helpful to dual-career couple employees with families. However, the actual beliefs of employees are rarely assessed. Employee's perceptions may be a crucial barometer of the usefulness of family support practices in diminishing home-career conflicts and may assist companies in selecting and implementing new benefits while also enhancing corporate productivity. Companies that minimally support and consider employee's family responsibilities in terms of personnel practices may experience decreased acceptance of the organization's values. This may lead to diminished loyalty to the company, decreased willingness to exert effort of work (decreasing worker productivity), and the employee may elect to leave the company in favor of organizations who support quality of work-life programs and practices which employees deem important.

An organizational climate or quality of work-life (QWL) exists in all companies (Balch & Blanck, 1989). In the journal article entitled *Measuring the Quality of Work-life*, (1989) Balch and Blanck state:

Evidence of high QWL can be increased productivity and loyalty, increased levels of morale, frequent participation in cost savings suggestions, and employees who feel they do not need union representation to achieve their goal of having a good place to work (p. 44).

Balch and Blanck suggest that an organizational survey can help reveal how employees feel about their work situation and that measuring quality of work-life perception can reveal to management what employees feel are the most beneficial benefits and programs provided by their

employer that curtail work-life conflict. Management can then address new practices and procedures that assist dual-career families to manage work-life conflicts (Balch & Blanck, 1989).

## **SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The purpose of this research is to examine how supportive members of dual-career families perceive eighteen personnel practices in alleviating work-life conflict.

Face validity of personnel practices was established by an expert panel of Human Resources practitioners in the northern-lower Michigan area.

Data collection consisted of distributing 2,530 surveys through organizations voluntarily participating in the study. Eighty-three organizations were contacted throughout northern-lower Michigan with fourteen participating. The industries representative of health care, education, banking, insurance, manufacturing, and tourism are included in the study.

The study's findings support that members of dual-career families in northern-lower Michigan perceive health insurance followed by dental insurance as most supportive in alleviating work-life conflict. Employee sick leave for child's illness ranked third at a mean of 5.65 followed by flexible work hours with a mean of 5.47, and leave without pay, position assured, with a mean of 5.22. The researcher speculates that the ranking of health and dental as most supportive may be attributable to the emergence of health benefits stemming from the Family Medical Leave Act in 1993 and the growing value of health and dental benefits to the employee as organizations seek to curb expenses in these areas placing more financial responsibility of health and dental insurance on the employee.

It is interesting to note that employee sick leave for child's illness, flexible work hours and leave without pay-position assured, ranked above maternity benefits, which had a mean of 4.99. The data suggests that dual-career families perceive time off to attend to their children's illness, flexible working hours, and leave without pay as more supportive than more traditional benefits such as maternity benefits. It is speculated that perhaps employees may expect maternity benefits to be in place as an employee benefit since it has been a personnel practice that has been in place in many organizations throughout the past three decades and is supported by legislation of the Family Medical Leave Act for organizations with more than 50 employees.

Time off to attend to child's illness ranked third in importance among all eighteen personnel practices. Dual-career families find this personnel practice (based on the ranking) quite important. This concurs with the growing trend of organizations offering assistance to employees in tending to their child's illness. These findings are supported with a growth in facilities established to assist parents in caring for children when they are too sick to go to school or day care centers. About 80 employers (up from 50% from 1986-87) have made this provision for working parents (LeFleur & Newsom, 1988).

The research indicates that flexible work hours ranked fourth in importance in alleviating work-life conflict experienced by members of dual-career families in northern-lower Michigan. Flexible work hours ranked 85% (number one) in a national study by Catalyst: Two Careers One Family. The Catalyst study evaluated nine personnel practices when asking the respondent what they would like offered by new employers. This was followed by cafeteria-style benefits at 79% and family leave provisions at 74%. Healthcare, dental, and employee time off to attend to child's

illness were not personnel practices included in the Catalyst study. The study supports the desire for flexible hours among dual-career employees. Thomas and Ganster (1995) found that employees with access to flexible scheduling had more control over managing work and family, which in turn increased job satisfaction and lowered work-family conflict.

Eldercare support care ranked last in this study and also ranked ninth in the Catalyst Study Two Careers, One Family. It is speculated by the researcher that eldercare support will grow in importance as the U.S. population experiences the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. Fully, 42% of employees surveyed for the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce study expect to have elder care responsibilities over the next five years (The 1998 Business Work-Life Survey, p. 48).

## CONCLUSION

The implications for business and industry in northern-lower Michigan which can be generalized for other organizations in rural geographic areas of America, is the findings suggest members of dual-career families perceive health insurance and dental insurance as most supportive in alleviating work-life conflict. Organizations may wish to evaluate their personnel practices to ensure that they include healthcare and dental insurance. In addition, non-traditional benefits such as employee sick leave for child's illness, flexible work hours, and leave without pay-position assured, are perceived as more supportive than traditional benefits such as maternity benefits and cafeteria approach to benefits. Human resource managers may want to re-evaluate their existing personnel practices to incorporate practices relating to flexible hours and time off to attend to a child's illness as part of their practices and examine the possibility of flexible work hours.

The findings also suggest that members of dual-career families indicate that monetary support of community child-care facilities is perceived as more supportive at a mean of 3.97 than on-site childcare at a mean of 3.8. Organizations may want to evaluate the expense of creating an on-site childcare facility versus monetary support of community child-care facilities since the subjects indicate that they find monetary support of child-care facilities more supportive.

The literature and research addressed in this study support that increased satisfaction of workers due to implementation of quality of work life programs that help them balance the stress of work-life conflict may increase productivity, employee morale, and overall corporate productivity. The 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) found that employees with more supportive work places as well as better quality jobs are more likely to have: (a) higher levels of job satisfaction; (b) more commitment to their company's success; (c) greater loyalty to their companies; and (d) a strong intention to remain with the company. The NSCW also found that employees with more demanding jobs and less supportive workplaces experience more stress, poor coping, and less energy off the job.

The results of this study will be useful to those academics and human resource practitioners who are interested in evaluating quality of work-life personnel practices to better meet the needs of dual-career families who face conflict in managing work responsibilities and family commitments. It serves as a tool for business and industry to accurately assess the needs of their own workforce.

From the findings, business strategies can be developed to more effectively allocate financial resources to provide personnel practices that are perceived as most supportive by their employees.

The underlying results for the organization is the potential for increased employee morale, productivity, and job satisfaction.

## REFERENCES

- Balch, D., & Blanck, R. (1989). Measuring the Quality of Work-life, *Quality Progress*, Nov. 44-48.
- Bohen, H. H., & Viveros-Long, A. (1981). *Balancing jobs and family life : Do flexible work schedules help?* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Bond, T., Golinski, E. & Swanberg, J. (1997). The 1997 National Study of the Changing Work Force. Families and Work Institute.
- Catalyst Career and Family Center (1980). *Corporations and the Two-Career Family: Directions for the Future*. New York: Catalyst Career and Family Center.
- Catalyst Career and Family Center (1997). *Corporations and the Two-Careers One Marriage: Making it Work in the Workplace*. New York: Catalyst Career and Family Center.
- Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747-770.
- Cornell Careers Institute, (Winter, 1999). Facts about the demographics of working families.
- Edwards, J. R., & Rothbard, N. P. (2000). Mechanisms linking work and family: Clarifying the relationship between work and family constructs. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 178-199.
- Fernandez, J. (1986). *Child Care and Corporation Productivity: Resolving Family/Work Conflicts*. Lexington: Lexington Books.
- Greenhaus, J. and Beutell, N. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10, 76-88.
- Hall, F. & Hall, D. (1978). Dual-careers-how do couples and companies cope with the problems? *Organizational Dynamics*, 7, 57-77.
- Higgins, C., Duxbury, L., & Johnson, K. L. (2000). Part-time work for women: Does it really help balance work and family? *Human Resource Management*, 39(1), 17-32.
- Jordan, C., Cobb, N. & McCully, R. (1989, January). Clinical issues of the dual-career couple. *Social Work*.
- Kopelman, R, Rosenweig, L, & Lally, H. (1982). Dual-career couples: The organizational response. *Personnel Administrator*, 27, 73-78.
- Kossek, E. E., Noe, R. A., & DeMarr, B. J. (1999). Work-family role synthesis: Individual and organizational determinants. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 10 (2), 102-129.
- LaFleur, E., and Newson, W. (1988). Opportunities for child care. *Personnel Administrator*, 33, 146-154.
- Lambert, S. J. (1990). Processes linking work and family: A critical review and research agenda. *Human Relations*, 43(3), 239-257.

- Moen, P., Haris-Abbott, D, Lee, S. & Roeling, P. (1999). The Cornell Couples and Career Study. Cornell Careers Institute, Division of Employment and Family, A Sloan Center for the Study of Working Families, 1-31.
- Mowday, R., Porter, L. & Steers R. (1982). *Employee organization linkages: The psychology of commitment, absenteeism, and turnover*. New York: Academic Press.
- Sekaran, U. (1986). *Dual-career Families*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Thomas, L. & Ganster, D (1995). Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: a control perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 6-15.
- United States Labor Bureau Statistics (October, 1997). BLS New 1994-2000 Employment Projects.
- United States Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment characteristics of Families: April 24, 2001.
- Vannoy, D. & Philliber, W.W. (1992). Wife's employment and quality of marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54, 387-398.

## **RELIGION AND BUSINESS: SOME CROSS-FERTILIZATION**

**P. Michael McCullough, University of Tennessee at Martin**

mccullou@utm.edu

**Sam Faught, Lambuth University**

faught@lambuth.edu

### **INTRODUCTION**

Whyte (1956) described the "organization man" as one who had become bureaucratized through the suppression of individual freedom by social controls. Bowles (1994) revisits Whyte's work and suggests that modern organizations are more "evangelical" in their attempts to socialize employees by using so called "opportunities", "benefits" and "incentives".

Scheler said (1960), "massification" meant the modern person's basic difference from our ancestors comes from the fact that we have ceased to be individuals. We are only part of the mass, not a free and autonomous part of a structured whole, but emotionally unstable, capricious and hysterical.

It was Carl Jung who said: "The world of Gods and spirits is truly nothing but the collective unconscious inside me." (Jung, 1958, 525). Eliade (1961, 129) wrote: "...the enormous domain of the history of religions provided an inexhaustible supply of terms for comparison with the behavior of the individual or the collective psyche,..." Jung called the deep symbols contained in religions and mythology, archetypes.

Modern organizations are descendants of bureaucracy and we know that, according to Max Weber, bureaucratic structures have their roots in the Catholic Church. Furthermore, Protestantism, beginning in the early 1500s, has impacted many of those who immigrated to the U.S. from the more protestant European nations (Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands) Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

The historical influence of religion on current HR practices is perpetuated through educational institutions and the mass media of a society, even though many of the modern people may have fallen out of regular church attendance or religious practice (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). The United States is a nation whose cultural history is dominated by Catholicism and Protestantism. Families and organizations are not likely to see the passing of this influence for generations to come.

Archetypes, as identified by Jung, are cultural icons that last beyond the passing of an era in the conscious and unconscious minds of those who inherit the culture. Archetypes of bygone eras continue in the form of symbols, rituals and rites, lying beneath the surface of everyday life in our organizations. No source of archetypes is richer than religion.

Perhaps the most fundamental archetype that is virtually synonymous with Eastern and Western religious ideals, is that of the Self. "The Christian during contemplation would never say, "I am Christ," but will confess with Paul: "Not I, but Christ lives in me. (Jung, 1958, 574.) For the Christian, the self and Christ are merged.



Jung observes that East and West share an important purpose in common: "Both make desperate efforts to conquer the mere naturalness of life. It is the assertion of mind over matter, the *opus contra naturam* a symptom of the youthfulness of man, still delighting in the use of the most powerful weapon ever devised by nature: the conscious mind." (Jung, 1958, 493). The reification of the conscious mind by religion, it could be argued, helped create the foundation on which modern organizational life has been established. Organizations, like religions, find natural life insufficient, but rather strive to turn individual and collective humans into powerful economic weapons.

Religious practice tends to be a fertile area for archetypes, perhaps because it is mystical or, as some might argue, mythical. God is held as a man, perhaps one with a white beard, an older man, with strong features and simultaneously fierce and loving eyes. All the world's major religions agree on this point. God is an imposing figure of a man. That is an archetype, passed down across generations. Children are not taught it as much as they learn to breathe it in and exhale it. It is a concept as ubiquitous as oxygen itself.

One area where the influence of these archetypes is most plentiful is in what is today called human resource management because it is through HR programs and activities that organizations tend to actualize contracts with employees, much the way church offices have done with their members. It is possible through critical hermeneutic analysis (Phillips & Brown, 1993) to assess these trappings as meaningful texts that make statements about how the way we live today in our organizations is shaped by religious practices that go back hundreds of years.

According to Phillips & Brown (1993), texts are intentional (job descriptions are offered as an example of the intentions of the organization being communicated to the employee), referential (they are symbolic of something outside of themselves, job descriptions can be taken as symbols of the authority of the organization to determine time and energy expenditures of those occupying the jobs being described), contextual (job descriptions can be seen as "Bibles" or prescriptions for how to live in that role, appealing to the Christian context in which U.S. come to be), conventional (the job description is parallel to other societal conventions such as when the church shares its doctrinal beliefs with the new member and expects acceptance of them), and structural (the job description may be communicated to the new hire in his or her own general employee manual or handbook, thus connecting his or her role to all the others in the organization).

### **CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN ETHOS OF BUSINESS IN THE U.S.**

If science has been the ethos of the technological side of business, it could be argued that Christianity has been at least a strong contributor to the social ethos of the business set in the United States. Engineers and those in charge of industrial processes appeal to scientific knowledge to establish processes and standards for their management. Managers, perhaps without being fully aware of doing so, may well have often been the beneficiary of the controlling influence of the church and religion in people's lives to support a consistently positive attitude toward the work to be done.

We are talking about more than the protestant work ethic. Churches often offer emotional, spiritual and material support, for employees of businesses, a type of psychological infrastructure that would be tremendously expensive if private companies had to pick up the tab. It would be

interesting to see if those who most often take advantage of Employee Assistance Programs, are frequent church attenders or not.

### **FORSAKE NOT ASSEMBLY**

Drive by a Christian-faith church parking lot on Sunday morning in the United States and you are likely to see a gathering of vehicles there, reminiscent of those you see at places of business during the week. Both assemblages gather on the assumption that they must do so to remain an intact organization. The truth is, in both cases, the goals of individuals and to some extent, those of the collective, could be met without periodic assembly. A good deal of what is done at a central location on behalf of organizations, could be accomplished just as easily at a remote location, but longer after this fact has become true, most companies continue to require employees to show up and few physical churches of which I am aware, allow members to attend via the internet.

### **THE RELIGIOUS AWAKENING IN THE UNITED STATES**

Economic development tends to bring pervasive cultural changes, but the fact that a society was historically shaped by Protestantism or Confucianism or Islam leaves a cultural heritage with enduring effects that influence subsequent development. Even though few people attend church in Protestant Europe today, historically Protestant societies remain distinctive across a wide range of values and attitudes. The same is true for historically Roman Catholic societies, for historically Islamic or Orthodox societies, and for historically Confucian societies (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

According to one survey, 40% of Americans identify themselves as Evangelical Christians and sociologist Alan Wolfe says that even Catholics and Jews are highly influenced by the approaches of this movement. George Marsden, a University of Notre Dame historian and author of *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, said, American history without religion is like *Moby Dick* without the whale.

The anti-institutional tendencies of the awakening created other problems, including proliferating sectarianism. The Protestant Reformation had itself been a sectarian movement dividing European Christendom into two major camps. Protestants attacked Catholicism for institutional excesses and shifted the focus of religious life toward individual experience. But the leaders of Reformed Christianity--Martin Luther, John Calvin, and their heirs in America--believed their new churches required what Nathan Hatch calls the "ecclesiastical walls of liturgy, governance, theology, and instruction." (Tolson, 2003)

The evangelical explosion of the early 19th century threatened to bring down those walls. As denominations subdivided into new denominations, offering frontier Americans an expanding menu of possibilities, the old, quasi-established denominations, Anglicanism and Congregationalism, lost their authority and following. And ministers of the new, upstart churches often behaved like shameless hucksters in their efforts to win over spiritual consumers. Evangelicalism's folksy appeal is one big reason that America became the most religious of industrial nations. It seems inevitable that given America's religiosity, the way the nation industrialized has been greatly influenced by religion. (Tolson, 2003).

We can only guess at the total number of houses of worship currently extant in the United States. American Church Lists, Inc. of Arlington, Texas, maintained a database of 355,232 congregations as of 1993, but it may well have missed a certain number even while more new churches have been organized in the past several years than have perished (Vaughan 1993, 39).<sup>3</sup> A current total well in excess of 400,000 is quite credible. Such an extraordinary proliferation probably works out to a ratio between general population and churches that rivals or exceeds that of any other country.

The Civil Rights movement, under the leadership of Dr. M.L. King was distinctly religious, his speeches really fiery sermons. The movement resulted in the 1964 Civil Rights Act and protections for African Americans in the workplace. HR management, arguably, would not exist were it not for this movement (Zelinsky, 2003).

### **VALUE OF A LOOK AT THE CROSSING OF RELIGIOUS AND BUSINESS SYMBOLS**

Geertz (1973) defined culture as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life"

(1) Culture is a collection of meaningful texts. (2) But meaning requires some form of inter-subjectively shared code or convention (for example, the English language) with which meaningful objects and actions can be produced and interpreted. (3) Therefore, to the degree that culture is meaningful it must depend on--in fact, must incorporate--these codes. (4) Therefore, culture itself must be inter-subjective. A person can no more create a meaningful text individually than he or she can redefine "banana" to mean "a tool used to pound nails" in any sensible way (Wittgenstein, 1958).

Any activity or object that affects the network of symbols through which a group or individual understands an organization and its place in the world is of interest from a critical hermeneutic perspective.

We have argued here that the cross-fertilization of symbolic forms across the domains of religion and business is under appreciated and have attempted to conceptualize these connections. Thompson (1990, 136) characterized such a hermeneutic approach as, "the study of symbolic forms--that is meaningful actions, objects and expressions of various kinds--in relation to the historically specific and socially-structured contexts and processes within which, and by means of which, these symbolic forms are produced, transmitted and received."

We end on the following note of urgency registered by Philpott, (2002) He asserts that the attacks of September 11, 2001, highlight the absence of attention to religion in international scholarship. The absence is understandable, as it comes from the secularized nature of the authority structure of the international system, described as the "Westphalian synthesis." Over the past generation, though, the global rise of public religion has challenged several planks of the synthesis. The sharpest challenge is "radical Islamic revivalism," a political theology that has its roots in the early twentieth century and that gave rise to al-Qaeda. He believes that if international relations scholars are to understand the events of September 11, they should devote more attention to the way

in which radical Islamic revivalism and public religion shape international relations, sometimes in dramatic ways.

## REFERENCES

- Bowles, M L. (1994). Maturation and life in organizations. *Organization Studies*.15(6), 903-920 18.
- Eliade, Mircea. (1961). *Images and Symbols*, trans. by Philip Mairet (New York:Sheed and Ward.
- Frank, Thomas Edward. (2002). The discourse of leadership and the practice of administration. *Journal of Religious Leadership*, 1 (2), 7-30.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Helgesen, Sally (1990). *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership* (New York: Doubleday Currency.
- Inglehart, Ronald & Wayne E. Baker. (2000). Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values, *American Sociological Review*, 65(1), 19-51.
- Jung, C.G. (1958). *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, trans. by R.F.G. Hull (Bullington Series XX, New York: Pantheon, Vol. 11.
- Phillips, Nelson,& John L. Brown. (1993). Analyzing communication in and around organizations: A critical hermeneutic approach. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6), 1547-76.
- Philpott, Daniel. (2002). The challenge of September 11 to secularism in international relations. *World Politics*, 55(1), 66-96.
- Scheler, M. (1960). *Gesammelte Werke*. Bern: Francke.
- Thompson, J. B. 1990. *Ideology and modern culture: Critical social theory in the era of mass communication*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.
- Tolson, Jay. (2003). The New Old-Time Religion Evangelicals defy easy labels. Here's why--and why their numbers are growing *U.S. News & World Report*. Washington: Dec 8, 135 (20), 36.
- Whyte, W. A. (1956). *Organization man*. Aylesbury: Pelican.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Zelinsky, W. (2001). The uniqueness of the American religious landscape. *Geographical Review*. 91(3) pg. 565, 21 +pgs



# **HOW EFFECTIVE USE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOUR JOB SEARCH**

**Melissa McMasters, Christian Brothers University**

**mmcmaste@cbu.edu**

## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper provides job-seekers with seven ways to write better cover letters and résumés through effective use of English. Techniques for writing effective cover letters and résumés are discussed, with special attention given to writing style, word choice, and the importance of editing. Examples of English-related errors in cover letters and résumés were gleaned from applications made to a large metropolitan hospital.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's difficult job market, job-seekers must truly stand out among the field of applicants to even be considered for employment. Recruiters often face a flood of applications for a single position, and only the people who present a consistently excellent application package receive attention. Therefore, the slightest careless error on a cover letter or résumé can remove a candidate from consideration. A sample of applicants' cover letters and résumés from a large metropolitan hospital in the Mid-South revealed numerous instances of sloppy writing, unfortunate typos, and inappropriate style--mistakes the applicants could easily have avoided. This paper discusses how to construct a cover letter, résumé, and application to boost job-seekers' chances of getting their résumés into the "interview" pile instead of the "reject" pile.

## **USE LANGUAGE APPROPRIATE TO THE SITUATION**

Résumés and cover letters should be written in a professional tone. They should read like business communications, meaning that slang should be avoided, as should any technical jargon not relating specifically to the position of interest.

Sometimes applicants attempt to stray from this formal style in their cover letters and résumés, believing that their personalities are unable to shine through such a rigid format. Often the "personality" is inserted through inappropriate punctuation. One enthusiastic applicant for an information technology position ended his introductory paragraph with the question, "May I tell you about my many qualifications?" When the applicant asks questions with predetermined answers, recruiters take the application less seriously.

Other applicants attempt to inject their letters with personality by writing in a colloquial style. However, recruiters are seeking not friends but qualified candidates. One applicant shared this information at the bottom of her résumé: "Interests: I enjoy spending time with my oldest daughter, taking long walks with my boyfriend, and curling up with a good magazine at night."

Not only was her style more suitable to a personal ad, but instead of considering her qualifications, the recruiters were left pondering why she only enjoyed spending time with her oldest daughter. Writing style can be just as much a distraction as it can be an asset, and applicants must take care to choose an appropriate style.

One final caution: the e-mail address used on résumés should make a professional impression (Tyler, 2003). Would you hire msdominatrix@hotmail.com? With so many free e-mail programs available, it is easy to set up a more professional-sounding address for use in application materials.

### **BE CONCISE**

According to JobStar Central, a Web site devoted to aiding applicants in their job search, it may take less than thirty seconds for a recruiter to judge whether a résumé should be discarded or thoroughly considered (What is a resume?, 2003). In other words, applicants have to make a good impression quickly. Résumés should not be longer than two pages, and they should have ample white space so the reader can focus on qualifications rather than be forced to navigate through a huge block of words with no point of entry (Bumpus, 2003).

Omitting first-person pronouns gives résumés a streamlined feel. According to Bumpus (2003), "The words 'I', 'me', 'my', 'mine', or 'our' should never, ever appear in a résumé." They are unnecessary--the content of your résumé is obviously about you--and can cause sentences to become repetitive. Compare a paragraph where every sentence begins with "I" to one where every sentence begins with an action word, such as "represented," "implemented," or "created." Full sentences are not required in a résumé as they are in a cover letter, so use words economically to give each one maximum impact. Bullet points are an excellent tool for résumés because they are much more easily readable than lengthy sentences (Tyler, 2003).

### **BE CAREFUL WITH BIG WORDS**

Some job applicants believe that to make an impression in a cover letter, they need to impress the recruiter by using big words. This can go wrong in two ways: the words are misplaced or (worse) nonexistent, or the words are correct but weigh down the material.

Nothing can set a recruiter laughing faster than a word used woefully out of context. One application contained the sentence: "Through the years I have found that most people when put to test will rise above their diversities and improve their outlook." She must have meant that people would rise above their adversities, but it was not clear whether or not she thought diversities were a sure obstacle to a good outlook. This is an example of how larger words can be tricky; she should have used "problems" or "weaknesses" instead.

Worse even than a misplaced or misused word is one that has been completely invented. Another applicant wrote that his objective was "to be a profident and zealous employee." This is one of those mistakes even the notoriously unreliable spell-check would never miss, and it is thus the most inexcusable of writing mistakes. When applicants turn in materials that are expected to represent their best work, recruiters dismiss them as lazy if they find errors this obvious.

Even if applicants are certain that every word big and small in their application is correct, an abundance of big vocabulary words can make cover letters difficult to read. While the avoidance

of overused words and phrases can make for an excellent cover letter, job application materials are not the place to show off a large vocabulary. Remember that a cover letter is a form of business communication and not a literary document. Readers want their information fast and easily understood, and a tangle of big words slows them down.

Use the words that are relevant to what you are saying, but do not go overboard. If you worked with a large customer base, say so--do not say you worked with "a plethora of customers." Better yet, quantify the amount of customers you worked with. A good rule of thumb for checking vocabulary in a cover letter is that if you have to use a thesaurus to think of a more impressive-sounding word, you are probably better off sticking with the word you had in mind.

### **WRITE CONFIDENTLY**

To make a good impression and force the recruiter to sit up and take notice, applicants must be both interesting and self-assured. The words they choose must convey their strengths effectively, and to do this the words themselves must be strong.

Bumpus (2003) asserts that passive voice phrases such as "responsible for" and "duties included" weaken the résumé. Allen (1998) suggests that action verbs such as "designed," "organized," and "controlled" enliven the résumé. As an illustration of how active verbs create a better impression than passive phrases, compare the following two openers to a résumé:

1. "Responsibilities included servicing multiple customer accounts, following up on sales calls, and writing monthly sales reports."
2. "Serviced five major corporate accounts totaling more than \$1 billion in annual revenue. Contacted customers twice monthly to ensure continuous customer satisfaction. Created monthly reports charting sales data and linking revenue to company performance."

The writer of the second paragraph uses action verbs to begin her sentences, and she follows through with specific details. Her description of her job duties shows confidence that her accomplishments qualify her for consideration. The writer of the first paragraph lumps all her duties together, creating a dull first impression. She does not tell the reader that her responsibilities led to meaningful results. The description of the same job duties is watered down in the first paragraph and enlivened in the second because the writer uses active language.

### **USE CONCRETE WORDING**

In the previous section, it was mentioned that quantifying something rather than using more general terms can make a letter or résumé easier to evaluate because it is more specific. Describing yourself and your accomplishments with generic phrases does not market you--it puts the recruiter to sleep. Judy Rosemarin, president of the career management firm Sense-Able Strategies, Inc., advises applicants not to describe themselves with stock phrases such as "a creative problem solver and team player who thrives on challenge, excels under pressure, and continually exceeds corporate goals," because these words say nothing about the candidate--they are "fluff" of the sort recruiters see every day (Marcus, 2002).



Numbers can provide applicants with a competitive edge that words like "many," "large," and "extensive" cannot. Richardson (2001) states that numbers "show magnitude of achievement" and "offer concrete evidence that's rarely questioned." Numbers illustrate exactly what you achieved in a credible way that will not leave the reader guessing.

A résumé with the right balance of numbers and descriptive sentences can lead the recruiter to the right information about the applicant more quickly. A few well-placed numerals can immediately catch the reader's eye because they stand out from the words on the rest of the page. If the reader first notices that you were responsible for increasing revenues by 75 percent, you drove annual sales up from \$1.5 million to \$3.2 million in a year, or you managed a department serving 1,000 customers, they will be intrigued by these statistics and give the rest of your résumé more careful attention.

Remember, too, that more and more employers are scanning paper résumés or requesting that applicants submit electronic résumés. Concrete, specific terms make it easier for a keyword search to land on your résumé (Cohen, 2003).

### **CONNECT BUZZ WORDS TO RESULTS**

Reading multiple applications for the same position, recruiters grow weary of hearing the same terms over and over again. Phrases like "I bring many strengths to the table" and "I am seeking a job where I can best utilize my skills" become virtually meaningless as applicant after applicant uses them to generically describe themselves and their accomplishments. Buzz words and phrases are often tossed in, whether or not they describe the applicant or apply to the job in question. The key to crafting a résumé that stands apart is connecting buzz words (and industry-specific phrases) to real results.

With the availability of professional résumé-writing services and software that can quickly generate résumé documents, applicants are often tempted to create one formula and stick with it (Allen, 1998). However useful these services may be, they will likely create a generic portrait if applicants do not add information about individual accomplishments. The cover letter provides an opportunity to expand on the information presented in your résumé, and it gives you the space to "describe your experiences not only in terms of what you have actually done, but in terms of what you have learned from the experiences and how they will help you in the future" (Anson & Schwegler, 2003). If applicants have properly researched the company to which they are applying, they can even connect their past experience to the prospective employer's objectives.

Focusing your résumé on the specific position to which you are applying, rather than creating one résumé and sending it to many different companies, allows you to be distinctive. If you do not relate your qualifications to the specific job, you force the reader to guess why you are a good candidate. Most recruiters do not have time to put in the extra effort and will move on to a candidate who is more obviously suited to the position. The only way to make yourself stand out is to demonstrate exactly what makes you the best candidate.

## EDIT YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

This is the single most important thing you can do before you submit a résumé and cover letter: read over them. After you read your documents and make changes, have someone else read over them. So many embarrassing mistakes could be avoided if all applicants took the time to give their application materials a careful reading before turning them in.

Because a recruiter's initial scan determines whether an application is immediately discarded or reviewed more thoroughly, careless errors are unacceptable. A glaring typo or a grammatically sloppy first sentence can sink an applicant within seconds. If your objective trumpets your ability to "work well in a fast-pasted environment," recruiters will consider you their laugh for the day rather than their next hire. They expect a totally polished presentation.

First and foremost is an often-repeated rule: never rely on word-processing software to check your spelling and grammar for you. Trusting in spell-check can lead to mistakes like one man's claim that he worked well under "litter supervision." With the advent of word-processing tools that automatically correct what they perceive to be common errors, résumé writers may not even notice when the wrong words are substituted because their fingers slipped on the keyboard.

An important corrective to overuse of software programs is having another person read your résumé and cover letter before you submit them (Tyler, 2003). They may catch more than just typos or misspellings; they can help you see what you are actually saying in your letter instead of only what you intended to say. A secondary editor, especially one skilled in English, can be invaluable in helping you use the right language and avoid unnecessary mistakes that could lessen your chances at an interview. Having an editor who is familiar with the terminology of the field to which you are applying can be an additional bonus.

## CONCLUSION

Cover letters and résumés jump out at recruiters for two reasons: they are polished documents describing a highly motivated, qualified candidate, or they are full of embarrassing errors that make the applicant seem careless and mistake-prone. The goal of any job applicant is to get noticed for the first reason--to capture someone's attention in a way that convinces them they have to call you for an interview. Good writing techniques can save you from getting noticed for the wrong reasons and enhance your chances of getting noticed for the right ones.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, J. (1998). *Employment communications. Writing in the Workplace*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 355-386.
- Anson, C. & R. Schwegler (2003). Developing business writing. *The Longman Handbook for Writers and Readers*. New York: Longman, 830-841.
- Bumpus, T.A. (2003). Top ten mistakes made on do-it-yourself resumes. OnlineProfessionalResumes.com. Retrieved January 31, 2004, from <http://onlineprofessionalresumes.com/>
- Cohen, A. (2003). Résumé necessities. *Sales & Marketing Management*, 155(3), 16.

Marcus, J.J. (2002). How to get employers to read your resume. CareerJournal.com. Retrieved January 26, 2004, from <http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/resumes/20020130-marcus.html>

Richardson, D.B. (2001). Skeptical resume reader tells how he really thinks. CareerJournal.com. Retrieved January 26, 2004, from <http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/resumes/20010730-richardson.html>

Tyler, J.L. (2003). Do you have mistakes in your resumé? *Healthcare Financial Management*, August, 94-96.

What is a resume? (2003). Jobstar Central. Retrieved January 26, 2004, from <http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/res-def.cfm>

## **MANAGING THE GENERATION GAP: A STUDY OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STYLES**

**Shyanne Meekins, Sam Houston State University**

Shyanne\_Meekins@hines.com

**Shirley Tucker, Sam Houston State University**

shirl@shsu.edu

### **ABSTRACT**

*For the first time in US history, there are now four distinct generations working side-by-side. The generations most prevalent in the workplace include the Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Each generation was influenced by a different set of icons (people, places, things, or events which impacted the generation) and conditions (forces at work in the environment as each generation comes of age). These influences caused each generation to develop a distinct "personality," or general set of preferences or opinions.*

*As the workplace continues to become diverse in generations, an understanding of the generational differences will become increasingly important for managers to effectively inspire and manage the work of their employees. This document describes the various icons and conditions that influenced each generation, determines their preferred management style, and offers strategies for managing employees from different generations.*



# MAXIMIZING E-LEARNING ROI: IDENTIFYING SUCCESSFUL ONLINE LEARNERS

Margaret Ohara, East Carolina University  
oharam@mail.ecu.edu

## ABSTRACT

*Businesses today face many dilemmas, one of which is the high cost of training. When employees are widely dispersed, gathering them in one location or sending instructors to remote sites accounts for a significant portion of the training cost. Online, Internet-based classes are often seen as a possible solution to this problem. While the virtual classroom does eliminate the need for travel, thus lowering cost, other considerations arise. One of these is motivating students to ensure successful course completion. While motivating students in the corporate arena is not as significant a task as it typically is in the university setting, it is still a critical facet of successful online learning. Moreover, some students, despite motivation, are less likely to be successful online learners than others, and identifying such employees at the start would prove beneficial. While some studies have indicated characteristics of successful online learners, little research exists detailing how to identify those people before they become students in a class. In this paper, a method for doing so is suggested.*

## INTRODUCTION

Businesses today face many dilemmas, one of which is the high cost of training employees, especially when those employees are dispersed across large geographic areas. The costs associated with gathering employees in one location for instruction, or sending instructors to various remote sites are staggering, and education and training in all forms accounts for 9% of the GNP, second only to healthcare (Clarke and Hermens, 2001).

A PriceWaterhouseCoopers survey of large companies indicates that 70% of them cite lack of trained employees as a major barrier to growth (Clarke and Hermens, 2001). As the world becomes more of a knowledge-based society, knowledge becomes the main source for competitive advantage. Still, in the larger firms, training budgets are dwindling in today's economy and many HR executives are being challenged to find more efficient, yet still effective, methods of delivering instruction (Groves, 2002). Internet-based training is seen as a way of doing so, and such initiatives are increasingly seen as a way to reduce costs. In March 2000, an IDC report projected that spending on Internet-based training would reach \$11.4 billion by 2003, an 83% annual growth rate (Leoalliance, 2004).

Traditional face-to-face on-site training is decreasing for other reasons as well. In the post-911 world, neither instructors nor employees are as willing to travel as they once were. Employees are more spread out, and Internet-based learning is available anytime, anywhere to anyone with Internet access. Moreover, bandwidth has increased over the last five years, thus allowing employees to work more efficiently from home.

Thus, Internet-based classes are often seen as an excellent alternative to FTF classes. Internet-based classes have been shown to be effective in reducing costs while providing effective training (Gale, 2002). While these classes do eliminate the need for travel on the part of instructors or employees, and thus lowers costs, other issues arise. These issues include: cost of course development, high band-width needed for fast data transfer and keeping online learners motivated to ensure successful course completion. While the cost of delivering Internet-based learning may be lower than traditional classes, it is not insignificant and “e-learning course completion rates are notoriously low” (ASTD – The Masie Center, 2001, page 7).

Developers are finding that putting together an online course is not a trivial matter. While motivating online learners in the corporate arena is not as critical an issue as it typically is in the university setting, qualities such as self-discipline, the ability to work independently, and perseverance are still important. To avoid spending money on courses for online learners unlikely to complete them, businesses could benefit from a method to identify employees likely to be successful in such a setting – those who can work independently, are disciplined and can motivate themselves to persevere when difficulties arise, among other things. Studies have shown these characteristics are typical of entrepreneurs as well.

In this paper, Internet-based classes and instructional material delivered using information technology will be collectively referred to as e-learning, and those employees taking courses in this manner will be called online learners. The paper proceeds as follows. The qualities of successful online learners are examined first, followed by an exploration of entrepreneurial characteristics. Next, successful online learners are compared to successful entrepreneurs. These two seemingly diverse groups share similar characteristics. Then, a survey instrument that measures entrepreneurial attitudes is discussed and its use as a predictor of online learning success is proposed. The paper concludes with some suggestions for future research.

### **WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE LEARNER?**

Some universities that offer degree programs in an e-learning format have websites with questionnaires or checklists for potential online learners to work through before signing up for e-learning classes. These include: Do I work independently? Am I confident in my academic abilities? Am I computer literate? Am I self-motivated? (For example sites, see e.g., <http://www.cu-portland.edu/online/ready.cfm> or <http://www.bt.wp.cc.nc.us/online/DLstudnt.html>). Although e-learning is becoming increasingly popular, there is surprisingly little formal research as to what makes a successful online learner.

Some difficulty in studying online learners arises because of the diversity of the population. There is truly no typical online learner. In a university setting, online learners may be non-traditional students – older, more independent – or they may be standard-age undergraduates trying something new. In a business setting, online learners may be those employees who are limited to taking classes in an online setting because of personal or professional considerations, or they may be restricted to a specific geographic area due to organizational cost cutting measures. And, as in the university setting, they may simply be employees interested in trying a “new way” of learning. In any case, the research that does exist suggests that individuals with a high degree of self-

discipline, who can manage their time well and who have set clear, reasonable goals for themselves are likely to be successful.

Other characteristics of successful online learners have emerged anecdotally during three years of teaching an online MBA course in a university setting (O'Hara, forthcoming). Student satisfaction – as identified through comments after the class ends, is generally higher for those students who have immersed themselves in the class by participating in scheduled and informal online chats and maintaining a steady stream of comments in discussion forums. Reading email often and responding to questions asked is another indicator of satisfaction with the online learning experience.

Sending a report to the class file exchange is fraught with uncertainty for some students, and some seem unable or unwilling to deal with such. Other students doubt both the technology and their ability to use it properly, and it takes reassurance from the instructor before they begin to trust the technology. Some students never learn to trust and never reduce their uncertainty with the technology. One graduate student who dropped the class stated: "I can't get the attachment to open so I will just drop the class."

Another characteristic of those students who successfully complete the online course is a willingness to try new things. Virtual team meetings, informal chatting and enhanced use of email are three areas that are new to many students. Successful online learners are among the first to attempt using the new technologies. They "ping" the instructor early in the semester, and they typically lead their team members through setting up chat sessions.

Finally, successful online learners do not give up easily. They tend to persevere in the face of obstacles and they do not ruminate on their failures for long. A computer crash? No problem, they will be back on line in a couple of hours. Childbirth? Take one day off and attend the virtual chat the next day! A problem significant enough for some students to drop the class only serves to spur the successful online learner on to work harder. General characteristics of successful online learners that emerged anecdotally and in the literature are summarized in Table 1. Interestingly, the literature shows that entrepreneurs share many of these same characteristics.

Characteristics of Successful Online Learners	Research Study
Being engaged (Full participation)	
Ability to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity	
Willingness to try new things	
Rebound after difficulties	
Internal Locus of Control	(Cooper, 1990; Altmann & Arambasich, 1982; Parker 1999)
Experience in online learning	(Ehrman, 1990)

Table 1: Characteristics of Successful Online Learners



## WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR?

Numerous studies of entrepreneurship exist, yet there is little agreement as to what constitutes an entrepreneur. Even more difficult to establish is what makes an entrepreneur successful (Koh, 1996).

Cunningham and Lisheron (1991) suggest that entrepreneurship might be viewed as an iterative process of evaluating one's personal values, identifying opportunities, planning and acting and then reassessing. A full-scale discussion of the various schools of thought is beyond the scope of this paper (see Robinson, et al 1991 for a more complete review of the literature).

Entrepreneurs are often classified as innovative and as constantly looking for new opportunities (Freeman & Varey, 1997). One study showed that entrepreneurs are more intuitive than members of the general population and middle or junior managers but similar in intuition levels to senior managers (Allinson, et al, 2000). Other characteristics are tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. Entrepreneurs are also self-confident (Koh, 1996). Characteristics of entrepreneurs that emerged from a literature review are summarized in Table 2.

Characteristics of Entrepreneurs	Research Study
Internal locus of control	Koh, 1996; Brockhaus, 1982
Innovative	Freeman & Varey, 1997
Ability to deal with uncertainty	Koh; Freeman & Varey, 1997
Willingness to accept risk	Freeman & Varey, 1997; Kuemmerle, 2002
Constantly looking for new opportunities	Freeman & Varey, 1997; Kuemmerle, 2002
Intuitive	Bottles, 2002; Allinson et al, 2000
Willing to skirt boundaries of propriety	Kuemmerle, 2002
Patiently work toward a goal	Kuemmerle, 2002
Rebound from setbacks	Reiss, 2003
Ability to focus on task	Bottles, 2002
Deep sense of trust in oneself (self-efficacy)	Bottles, 2002; Koh, 1995
Talent for networking	Bottles, 2002
Need for control	Koh 1996

Table 2: Entrepreneur Characteristics from the Literature  
(adapted from O'Hara, forthcoming)

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

It is evident that successful distance learners and entrepreneurs share several characteristics. An internal locus of control is apparent in both entrepreneurs and successful online students. Other characteristics of students can be mapped to entrepreneurial characteristics as well. While entrepreneurs and online learners do differ in some respects, the many factors they have in common are summarized in Table 3.

Characteristics of Entrepreneurs	Characteristics of Distance Learners
Internal locus of control	Internal locus of control
Innovative	Willingness to try new things
Ability to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity	Ability to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity
Willingness to accept risk	Willingness to try new things
Constantly looking for new opportunities	Willingness to try new things
Willing to skirt boundaries of propriety	Willingness to try new things
Patiently work toward a goal	Patiently work toward a goal
Rebound from setbacks	Rebound after difficulties
Life is viewed as dynamic	Willingness to try new things
Ability to focus on task	Time
Deep sense of trust in oneself (self-efficacy)	Belief in oneself; self-confidence
Talent for networking	Being engaged (Full participation)

Table 3: Comparison of Entrepreneurs and Successful Distance Learners  
(from O'Hara, forthcoming)

### FINDING THE RIGHT STUDENTS

Given the investment that many businesses make in online learning, a method for identifying those students likely to be successful in completing a course might prove beneficial. Since entrepreneurs and successful online learners share many characteristics, an instrument that measures entrepreneurial attitudes might be a useful student selection tool, especially when multiple modes of course delivery exist. One possible instrument is the Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (Robinson, et al, 1991).

The Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (EAO) is a theoretically well grounded survey instrument. The instrument's reliability and validity were well documented, and the instrument has been used in pre- and post- test studies to determine the effect of various interventions on graduate students' attitude toward entrepreneurship (Kavan and O'Hara, 2003).

The EAO views attitude as a combination of reactions to an object along three dimensions -- affect, cognition, and conation. Affect is the positive or negative feeling one has about a situation. Conation refers to one's behavior in a situation, and cognition is the thoughts or beliefs one has. The EAO measures attitude across four constructs that previous research has identified as distinguishing entrepreneurs from others (Robinson et al, 1991). These constructs are self-esteem, personal control, innovation, and the need for achievement. It provides a composite score based upon these constructs.

Employees considering an online course could take the EAO and, based on the score, opt for the online version of a class or wait for a face-to-face opportunity. When no face-to-face opportunity exists, students would at least be aware of the potential pitfalls they face in the online version of the class, and perhaps prepare better for them.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated the link between the attitudes and perspectives of entrepreneurs and successful online learners, and suggested a method for predicting whether an employee will achieve success in an online course. More research is needed in this area to determine if the EAO would serve as a useful indicator of online learning success. One possible future research project would be to pre-test students enrolled in online classes and then correlate their scores on the EAO to the grades they receive in the class. Another project might be to survey online course dropouts to determine if their scores were significantly lower than those who finish the class. This would be difficult in a university setting since dropouts might have left the school, but it is more feasible in the corporate world since employees who drop a class would not necessarily leave the firm.

Businesses are spending millions annually to train their employees, and the portion of training budgets being spent on e-learning continues to rise. Given these facts, and the ever-present reality of cost-cutting initiatives that abound in business, every avenue to identify successful online learners at the outset of training should be explored.

## REFERENCES

Available upon request from the author

## ORGANIZATIONAL TEAM BUILDING

**Philip D. Olson, University of Idaho**

polson@uidaho.edu

**Jennifer J. Olson, University of Idaho**

jenn@uidaho.edu

### ABSTRACT

*The purposes of this study are: to discuss the need for teamwork in organizational settings; to review important teamwork traits; to present a model showing the relationships between teamwork traits, and to discuss team building strategies for how these traits can best be acquired.*

*The study builds on existing research in the field. That is, to document the need for teamwork, past studies in the literature are reviewed and summarized. Regarding the identification of important teamwork traits, again past research is examined and common teamwork traits—i.e., trust, communication, norms, etc.—are identified. Further, to show how different teamwork traits relate to each other, existing models in the literature are reviewed, including their strengths and weaknesses. Then, building on these approaches, a new model is presented. Finally, team building strategies are studied and recommendations are made for promoting the key teamwork traits of trust, respect, clear purpose and mutual responsibility.*



# **DECEPTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATIONS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IDENTIFYING LIES AND OTHER DECEPTIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

**Holly Payne, Western Kentucky University**

holly.payne@wku.edu

**Robert D. Hatfield, Western Kentucky University**

bob.hatfield@wku.edu

## **ABSTRACT**

*Workplace deception and deceptive communication seems to permeate our society. Corporate and individual deceptions at work are featured in our news as recently as the Martha Stewart, Tyco, and ENRON cases. While some consider all deception as lying, many social scientists argue that deception is mostly a subconscious message strategy and that there may be a differentiation between lying and other forms of deception. In this study some 84 subjects kept logs of their own workplace communications which might be considered deceptive or even lying. A taxonomy of deceptive communications was developed from the communication and business literatures and hundreds of workplace communications were categorized. Raters separated "lies" from three other categories (evasion, overstatement, and concealment). The most common deception found in among the subjects was lying. Attempts were made to identify the motivation for the deceptive acts but the motivational factors lacked independence. This study provides an excellent basis for additional research in employee deceptive communication within the organizational setting.*



# THE SATISFACTION/DISSATISFACTION PROCESS: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF FAMILY PURCHASING DECISIONS

**Reginald M. Peyton, Christian Brothers University**

rpeyton@cbu.edu

**Sarah T. Pitts, Christian Brothers University**

spitts@cbu.edu

**Rob H. Kamery, Christian Brothers University**

rkamery@cbu.edu

## ABSTRACT

*This paper discusses the meaningful theoretical and practical implications derived from the study of family purchasing decisions and the satisfaction/dissatisfaction process. The paper provides a summary of the study and reviews the major findings. It draws conclusions based upon these findings and examines how the body of knowledge in the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (CS/D) area has been extended. Limitations of the study are cited and discussed, and areas for future research are recommended.*

## INTRODUCTION

Considerable attention has been given to the notion of consumer satisfaction. Research efforts in this area focus mainly on satisfaction with an individually purchased and consumed product/service. Most studies in this area use the disconfirmation framework for studying consumer satisfaction. There is some evidence to support the use of this approach.

Literature from the late 1980s suggests that satisfied consumers are a prerequisite to the successful practice of marketing. The importance of satisfaction to marketers is magnified because of the numerous adverse effects that can result from consumer dissatisfaction. Consumer behavior models indicate that the judging of satisfaction is really a cognitive process whereby consumers make subjective evaluations about the outcomes derived from the product relative to prior expectations. Customer satisfaction with a product reflects an individual's subjective belief or perception that prior expectations were equaled or exceeded. Since repeat purchases, acceptance of other products from the same product line, and favorable word-of-mouth are often the results of product satisfaction, it is imperative that marketers understand the critical elements of the consumer decision-making process that affect consumer satisfaction.

This paper focuses on the degree to which it is possible to investigate the notion of joint satisfaction with a syncratic decision. The symbolic interaction framework is used as the framework to integrate the CS/D and the family decision-making literature. From a theoretical perspective, this study seeks to extend the work of Oliver beyond the conceptualization of CS/D as strictly an



individual phenomenon by empirically demonstrating the application of the disconfirmation framework to joint decision-making.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Despite the pervasiveness of joint or syncratic decision-making in the purchase of most consumer products, much of the research on CS/D has focused on the individual consumer, largely ignoring dyads and larger groups. While individual consumer satisfaction is important, there are situations where the satisfaction of more than one person has to be taken into consideration. For the marketer, a group or syncratic decision-making process poses the critical question of whether to consider group or individual satisfaction. Further, if it were determined that group satisfaction is to be considered, there is the issue of whether that means the joint, interactive, or the summated effects of individual satisfactions.

### **OBJECTIVES**

This paper focuses upon the degree to which the group satisfaction with a syncratic or joint decision is best measured by obtaining the joint responses of the parties to the decision rather than the individual response from the dominant person in the decision. As a basis for providing a comprehensive study of these issues, symbolic interaction (SI) was used as the theoretical framework of the paper.

Given the lack of studies taking this perspective, this research possesses both theoretical and practical relevance. Further, the study seeks to extend Oliver's two-stage expectancy model by including the joint expectations and satisfactions of parties to a syncratic decision. As such, this study represents a major departure from the individual expectation-satisfaction approach adopted in the marketing literature. In a practical sense, marketers can use the findings from this study to guide the development of marketing strategy for products purchased using joint decision-making processes. In keeping with these objectives, a number of research hypotheses were developed as a basis for narrowing the focus of the study.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The SI framework provides a meaningful way of integrating the literature on consumer satisfaction and family decision-making. Research in the area of consumer satisfaction has utilized many of the concepts from SI, and the framework has been widely used in family studies. The relevance of the concept to marketing lies in the notion that personal and environmental interactions affect consumer decisions and satisfaction with those decisions. This study attempts to affirm the existence of group satisfaction with the purchase and consumption of a product. Further, the study seeks to investigate the existence of group satisfaction.

A major dictum of SI is that both the person and society are abstractions from interactions. They are two sides of the same social phenomenon. Accordingly, the study of human behavior is best approached from the perspective of an ongoing social process. People, when faced with external stimuli, initiate actions that relate them to their environment, and the stimuli acquire

meaning in the course of activity. During social acts people take one another into account, and this gives rise to the development of personality and social behavior.

The SI literature can be broadly classified into two major perspectives or schools of thought: the Chicago School, led by Blumer (1969), and the Iowa School, led by Kuhn (1964). The two perspectives differ methodologically and conceptually. Methodologically, proponents of the Chicago School seek to make modern society intelligible. They argue for the use of observational techniques and immersion in the research setting, in addition to survey techniques, as a specific or otherwise distinctive methodology in the study of human interaction. Arguing that experimental and quantitative approaches fail to catch meanings that are critical to an individual's behavior, they contend that the researcher must get inside the actor's world and see that world as the actor sees it.

Kuhn (1964) and the Iowa School, however, present a distinctively different interpretation and methodological approach to SI. They stress the need for the social sciences to achieve a unity or universal similarity of methods that would facilitate uniformity and replicability in predictions of human interaction. They seek general propositions from which specific hypotheses can be deduced and tested, the end-result being a theory that can predict and explain human behavior and interaction. Thus, apart from calling for the operational definition of concepts, they also make the case for methods that would meet scientific criteria and for a standardized, objective, and dependable process of measurement for significant variables.

Conceptually, the difference between the two perspectives revolves around the question of whether human behavior is free or determined. The key issue is the place of impulse in conduct. Proponents of the Chicago School assert that human behavior is indeterminate and unpredictable. In contrast, the Iowa approach to SI adopts a deterministic slant.

There are four central tenets in the SI framework. First, people form their definition of the world through social interaction. During this interaction, culture and social structure are derived and people learn the meaning of things which surround them. Second, social interaction is the foundation out of which human behavior originates. Individuals do not passively accept meanings offered to them. Instead, they are constantly involved in the selection and transformation of meaning and in interpreting each other's acts in an effort to coordinate their activities. Third, the rational behavior of an individual is a function of that person's definition of the environment. This process, however, is not automatic. Previously learned meanings do not always provide ready-made definitions for new situations, and definitions of situations do not always translate directly into action. Instead, meanings are handled in, and modified through, the interpretative procedures used in action. Fourth, an examination of joint action must include the sum of individual actions as well as the unique character of the interaction between the actors. In fact, joint action or the interlinking of human action forms the social bonds that arise in fitting together lines of action.

SI provides a meaningful way of integrating the literature on consumer satisfaction and family decision-making. Despite the apparent importance of the SI framework, it has remained outside of the realm of marketing inquiry. Therefore, this study seeks to fill a void in the literature by applying the SI approach in the context of a syncretic decision.

SI regards satisfaction as an affective or emotional response varying in the degree of gratification with something. This view of the satisfaction phenomenon is consistent with the satisfaction model advanced in the marketing literature. There are indications that the interaction approach continues to be the most influential framework in family studies. The close association

between SI and consumer satisfaction enables the researcher to integrate the elements of the family decision-making process into the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction model. Therefore, SI provides a meaningful way of linking the family decision-making and the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction processes. Applied to the family situation, the approach is concerned with the evolving social meanings of satisfaction among family members. Because of the interactions taking place within families, it is possible that satisfaction within the family might reflect the shared meanings and role expectations of the individual family members. This study attempts to understand the dynamics of group satisfaction associated with a complex, durable purchase. Hempel (1976) notes that there is a need for greater recognition of the interdependence of persons in defining satisfaction. Therefore, this study will attempt to affirm the existence of group satisfaction with the purchase of a house. SI recognizes that the interaction among family members has implications for the decision-making process. Therefore, it provides a means of determining the degree of congruence between the satisfaction of the individual family member and the satisfaction of the family as a whole.

### **THE FAMILY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Decision-making, a central construct in models of individual consumer behavior, is an important part of family life. However, despite the importance of family decision-making, it has not received as much attention as individual decision-making. Two main reasons may be advanced to explain the continued focus on individual decision-making. First, the cost of conducting joint or family decision-making research far exceeds the cost associated with conducting individual studies. Second, the family, as a unit of analysis, is considered to be a poor decision-making unit.

Past research in the area of family decision-making has used a number of theoretical models including resource theory, social exchange theory, role theory, and the process-oriented model. Resource theory posits that, within the family, the relative power of each spouse varies with the socio-economic resources contributed by that spouse. The social exchange theory is most often used to assess family power and decision-making. This theory assumes that people act in a manner that will maximize benefits to them. Role theory focuses on the traditional versus modern gender roles of the spouses to explain the relative power in the family. Traditional roles give more power to the husband, putting the children second and the wife last. Modern roles are not clearly defined according to gender and all decisions are negotiable. Unlike the other approaches, the process-oriented model does not focus only on decision outcomes. Instead, it analyzes the family decision-making process in conjunction with the effect of changing sex roles. Family decisions can be classified according to who makes the decision and how the decision is made. The typologies of family decision includes husband dominant, wife dominant, autonomic, and syncratic decisions. A major criticism of this typology is that it focuses upon the outcome of a decision rather than on the decision-making process. Generally, families tend to use two models in their decision-making. In the first model, the consensus model, family members agree about goals and then arrive at a decision using role structure, budgets/rules, or problem solving strategies. Consensus about goals results in family problem solving behavior instead of reliance on the individuals or rules. In the second model, the accommodation model, family members disagree about goals and choose between

persuasion and bargaining to arrive at a decision. If a decision cannot be reached, or if one family member tries to impose a decision, conflict results.

In studying the family as a unit of analysis, researchers have questioned the adequacy of using one spouse to report on the family decision-making process because husbands and wives do not always agree in their responses to questions related to a given decision. The general belief is that administering instruments to only one spouse ignores the reality that family decision-making is a joint enterprise. Because of the many problems encountered in family research, it remains an intriguing yet under-researched area of study. Further, researchers have not addressed the issue of consumer satisfaction with a joint decision. This study attempts to fill this void in the literature.

## CONCLUSION

The nature of the contributions made by this study and its application to marketing thought and practice have been addressed. The limitations on generalizing from these findings have been made explicit and, finally, suggestions for future research in this area have been made. The suggestions outlined focus on areas where the results of the study and the notion of joint satisfaction can be further researched in order to advance understanding of both the consumer satisfaction and the family decision-making processes.

## REFERENCES

- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Bolfing, C. (1985). *An examination of selected triggering mechanisms for consumer satisfaction processes*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee.
- Cadotte, E., R. Woodruff & R. Jenkins (1983). Norms and expectations predictions: How different are the measures? In R. Day & H. Hunt (Eds.), *International Fare in Consumer Satisfaction and Complaining Behavior* (pp. 49-56). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Churchill, G. & C. Surprenant (1982). An investigation into the determinants of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19(11), 491-504.
- Davis, H. (1971). Measurement of husband-wife influence in consumer purchase decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 8(8), 305-312.
- Hempel, D. (1976). Consumer satisfaction with the home buying process: Conceptualization and measurement. In H. Hunt (Ed.), *Conceptualization and Measurement of Consumer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction* (pp. 275-299). Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute.
- Hill, W. & J. Scanzoni (1982). An approach for assessing marital decision-making processes. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, (11), 927-941.
- Kuhn, M. (1964). Major trends in symbolic interaction in the past twenty-five years. *The Sociological Quarterly*, (Winter), 61-84.

Thompson, L. & A. Walker (1982). The dyad as the unit of analysis: Conceptual and methodological issues. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, (11), 889-900.

Thomson, E. & R. Williams (1982). Beyond wives' family sociology: A method for analyzing couple data. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, (11), 999-1008.

Woodruff, R., E. Cadotte & R. Jenkins (1983). Modeling consumer satisfaction processes using experience-based norms. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20(8), 296-304.

# LEADER ETHIC: A CROSS-CULTURAL EXAMINATION OF COVEY'S EFFECTIVE HABITS

**Danny L. Rhodes, Anderson College**

drhodes@ac.edu

**Charles R. Emery, Lander University**

cemery@lander.edu

**Robert G. Tian, Coker College**

rtian@pascal.coker.edu

**Michael C. Shurden, Lander University**

mshurden@lander.edu

**Samuel H. Tolbert, Lander University**

stolbert@lander.edu

**Simon Oertel, University of Applied Sciences Trier**

Sim.Oertel@t-online.de

**Maria Antonova, Kazan State University**

maryia\_antonova@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

*The answer to what makes an effective leader has long been the “holy grail” of business research. By and large, theorists have abandoned trait and behavior approaches in favor of situational leadership theories. Popular press gurus, however, continue to focus on a “leader ethic” (traits and behavior) as the foundation to effective leadership. Further, gurus such as Goleman (emotional intelligence) and Covey (seven habits) believe that this fundamental ethic is universal to mankind. As such, this research uses Stephen Covey’s seven habits of effectiveness to explore how leaders from various cultures (e.g., U.S., Russia, Germany, and China) rank popular traits and behaviors that make up a “leader ethic.” The rankings are compared across gender, age groups, supervisory levels, and professions. Cultural differences of opinion are examined in terms of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (e.g., uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, individualism, power distance and time) for possible insights to variances in “leader ethic.” The findings have implication for understanding and training cross-cultural leadership.*

## INTRODUCTION

The answer to what makes an effective leader has long been the “holy grail” of business researchers. Part of the problem is that the term “leadership” means different things to different people. Most, however, agree that leadership involves influencing followers to accomplish organizational goals. Originally, this influencing power was thought to spring from the leader’s extraordinary abilities such as tireless energy, penetrating intuition, uncanny foresight and irresistible persuasive skill. Eventually this thought was abandoned because empirical researchers

noted that the possession of these traits did not necessarily guarantee the successful accomplishment of organizational goals. Subsequently, researchers began to believe that it was the leader's behavior that made all the difference (e.g., focus on task, focus on employees or some combination thereof). Now, however, theorists believe that effectiveness is dependent upon providing the right leadership style for a given situation. In other words, the situational factors (e.g., leader's authority, subordinates' capabilities, task, etc.) determine what kinds of leader traits, skills, and behaviors are relevant. As such, theorists believe that the education of leaders should focus on analyzing the situation and taking proper action.

The popular press gurus, however, suggest a slightly different focus on leadership training, i.e. they believe that leadership should be built from the inside-out. In other words, focus on building a "leadership ethic" that contains certain traits and behaviors as prerequisites to effective leadership. Given this foundation, leaders will have the power to influence the workers to accomplish organizational goals. For example, Goleman (2002) suggests that leaders must possess a high emotional intelligence (the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively) to be successful. Similarly, Covey (1989) believes there are fundamental principles that govern human effectiveness and that these principles start with achieving independence and proceed to mastering interdependence. Both men believe that a "leadership ethic" is universal to mankind. Unfortunately, there has been little research in the U.S. on these popular notions and no research across cultures. This research explores how leaders from various cultures (e.g., U.S., Russia, Germany, and China) rank several of the popular traits and behaviors that make up the "leader ethic." The rankings are compared across gender, age groups, supervisory levels, and professions. Cultural differences of opinion are examined in terms of Hofstede's (1992) cultural dimensions for possible insights to variances in "leader ethic."

## LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

A synthesis of recent empirical research studies indicate that most leadership behaviors/styles fall into one of two orientations: people or task. Although leaders have a predominant style, most will use a combination of these orientations depending on such situational factors as the characteristics of the followers, the nature of the work, the type of organization, and the nature of the external environment (Yukl, 2002). The leader's response to these situational factors, along with his/her application of power, will determine the amount of influence the leader will have over the followers – in short, the leader's effectiveness. Using Fiedler's Contingency Model of leadership as rationale, Nahavandi (2003) asserts that leadership effectiveness is a function of the match between the leader's style and the situation. "If the leader's style matches the situation, the leader will be effective; if the leader's style does not match the situation, the leader will not be effective" (p. 126).

Contrary to situational theories, several leadership gurus continue to preach that the secret of effective leadership is inside our character and behavior. For example, Daniel Goleman's (2002) construct of emotional intelligence has recently captured the imagination of business leaders and prompted a firestorm of criticism from the theorists. He suggests that the basic task of leaders is to create good feelings in those they lead in order to obtain commitment. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are able to do this because they have significant capabilities in two areas of personal

competence and two areas of social competence. Gardner (1983) identified these two competencies as intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence respectively, so the concepts are hardly new. The personal competence areas include self-awareness and self-management. These competencies are further refined into the following nine categories: emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative, and optimism. The social competence areas are social awareness and relationship management, including the following: empathy, organizational awareness, service, inspirational leadership, influence, developing others, being a change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, and teamwork and collaboration.

Similarly, Stephen Covey (1989) believes in a character-based, “inside-out” approach to personal and interpersonal effectiveness. Inside-out is a continuing process of human growth and renewal based on several fundamental and universal principles. Mastering these principles generates an upward spiral of influence that progressively leads to higher forms of responsible independence and effective interdependence. Specifically, his first three habits (i.e., personal vision, personal leadership, and time management) move a person from dependence to independence. His second three habits (i.e., conflict resolution, empathic communication, and creative cooperation) transition one from independence to interdependence. His seventh habit of continuing to “sharpen the saw” makes all the others possible. “It’s preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have—you” (Covey, 1989).

The recent resurgence in popularity of transformational or charismatic leadership seems to suggest a renewal in the beliefs of a leader’s mystical qualities. Transformational leaders are those who achieve success by being magnetic, charming, and visionary. Charisma and intellectual stimulation are its essential ingredients (Bass, 1985). Charisma is a talent, a gift—even a supernatural gift. It is part of the soul or character, radiating from within. As noted in Stephen Covey’s (1989) “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” and in Daniel Goleman’s (1998) “What Makes a Leader?” effective leadership is “inside-out.” Transformational leaders possess a high degree of self-confidence and convictions in their own beliefs. They are able to relate the work and mission of the group to values, ideals, and aspirations shared among followers. They are able to inspire enthusiasm and growth by communicating confidence in each employee while increasing expectations. In short, they influence subordinates through referent power (House, 1977).

## METHOD

A common approach to studying leadership is to use “critical incident” comparisons. Incidents of effective behavior are interpreted and grouped into broad behavior/trait categories. In turn, these categories are ranked by leaders in term of relevance. This study uses the combined traits and behaviors of Covey (1989), Goleman, et al. (2002), and Bass (1985) to create “critical incident” categories or a “leader ethic.” Specifically, the seven habits of effective people (time management, empathic communication, creative cooperation, self-renewal, personal leadership, proactive behavior/personal vision, and conflict resolution) were believed to accurately represent the “inside” and “outside” facets of emotional intelligence suggested by Goleman, et al. (2002). Further, the traits and behaviors of intellectual stimulation and charisma were added to represent the two distinctly different characteristics of transformational leadership suggested by Bass (1985). As such, the following nine factors and “critical incident” definitions were used as the basis of this study.



1. Put First Things First--Time Management. Emphasize daily planning and the ability to develop priorities and to delegate appropriate tasks. Focus on activities that support your values and personal mission. Understand what is urgent and important in your life. Balance today's production with long-term development.
2. Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood---Empathic Communication. Focus on listening carefully to others to understand their frame of reference and appreciate their perceptions before the presentation of one's own ideas.
3. Synergize---Creative Cooperation. Find a better solution together—recognize the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Focus on encouraging and managing diverse ideas to create growth.
4. Sharpen the Saw---Self-Renewal. Emphasize the continuous and balanced investment of time to maintaining or improving one's physical, social, spiritual and mental health. This attribute suggests the importance of continuous personal growth on effective leadership.
5. Begin with the End in Mind—Personal Leadership. Possess a clear understanding of your desired destinations and the development of strategies to accomplish personal objectives. Ensure that actions are in line with objectives.
6. Be Proactive---Personal Vision. Take responsibility of your own life. Develop a keen sense of awareness and the initiative to influence outcomes. Choose behaviors that match your value system.
7. Stimulate to Motivate—Intellectual Growth of Employees. Focus on helping followers rethink rational ways to examine a situation. Encourage employees to expand their capabilities, paradigms and creativity through intellectual stimulation.
8. Create Win/Win Solutions---Conflict Resolution. Seek and create mutually beneficial solutions to conflicts between individuals or groups. Understand that too much conflict causes organizational turbulence.
9. Be Charismatic---Employee Commitment. Create employee motivation through their emotional commitment to your values, beliefs and vision. This attribute involves a combination of charm and personal magnetism that contribute to the ability to create change and to get people to passionately endorse your ideas.

Current maps (Emery & Tian, 2002; Rhodes & Emery, 2003; Hofstede, 1992) of Hofstede's (1992) cultural dimensions were used to select four diverse cultures (e.g., U.S., Central Russia, Eastern China, and Germany) to explore how a country's leadership prioritizes the universal factors suggested by popular U.S. leadership theories. The nine leadership characteristics (see above) were translated into the various languages and dialects of the participating country researchers and placed on a one page, two-sided questionnaire. Further, the forms were back-translated by other researchers from the foreign languages to English to ensure the appropriate intent; modifications were made as appropriate. The respondents were asked to select the "top three" characteristics that they thought were most important in career advancement. Knowing what it takes for career success in different countries provides a way of understanding what is valued in different countries. Additionally, the respondents were asked to state why they made these selections along with some demographic data (e.g., age, gender, years of experience, supervisory level, profession, and education specialty). The question of why they selected a particular choice was meant to provide a check against the translation and respondent's perception of the task. Also, the respondents were asked to add any other leader characteristics or attributes that they thought were more important than the three that they had indicated on the questionnaire. One hundred and fifty questionnaires were randomly handed out or emailed by each country researcher across demographic categories and to 10 businesses (five manufacturing and five non-manufacturing) between September and November 2003.

## RESULTS

The prioritization of leadership characteristics and comparisons are summarized in Table 1. The response rates of useable questionnaires varied between 40 and 70 percent. The low number of questionnaires collected in Russia was the result of the security service's intervention.

An examination of demographic differences (i.e., age, gender, years of experience, supervisory level, etc.) within each country indicated almost no significant variation of characteristic choices. This suggests that the prioritization of choices within countries is predominately based on culture.

Table 1  
Emphasized Characteristics by Percentage

Leader Characteristics Column 1	China Col 2	Germany Col3	Russia Col4	U.S. Col5
1. Time Management	.49*	.29	.60*	.49*
2. Empathic Communication	.23	.35	.25	.49*
3. Creative Cooperation	.28	.25	.42*	.18
4. Self-Renewal	.51*	.18	.20	.17
5. Personal Leadership	.30	.45*	.71*	.44*
6. Personal Vision	.23	.55*	.40*	.28
7. Intellectual Stimulation	.15	.41*	.16	.29
8. Conflict Resolution	.20	.18	.18	.08
9. Charisma	.60*	.35	.13	.56*

\* These characteristics received a .40 or higher response from managers

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study examined how managers from various cultures rank behavioral attributes that contribute to a leader ethic. We expected to find some universal leadership priorities and did. Managers in three out of four countries stressed personal leadership (setting goals) and time management (setting priorities) in their "top three." The fact that both these factors come from within the leader seems to give a universal endorsement to the prescriptions of Goleman (1998) and Covey (1989), i.e. learn to manage oneself before managing others. On the other hand, national boundaries did make a profound difference in the managers' recommendations for the use of empathic communication and stimulating intellectual growth. As such, we have evidence supporting the convergence, divergence and crossvergence theories.

It was surprising to note that the demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, etc.) didn't have much of an affect on the managers' recommendations. This seems to suggest that each society has a notion of "leader ethic" that doesn't vary within a society. Further, our separation of responses by "supervisory level" was an attempt to assess whether ideas were changing as one progressed up the corporate ladder—they did not. Future studies, however, need to combine the respondent's

responses with their rate of advancement to capture additional insight to the values of various cultures. In other words, different managerial behaviors are selectively reinforced in different countries through differential promotion and advancement. Additionally, if indeed these nine characteristics are part of a leader ethic, one should revisit this list every few years to examine convergence; particularly in light of converging political and economic characteristics.

### **REFERENCES**

References are available upon request to Danny Rhodes, Phone: 864-231-2086, FAX: 864-231-2004, drhodes@ac.edu

## **A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF BEHAVIOR AS A MOTIVATOR-MODIFIER**

**James T. Rhodes, Christian Brothers University**

jtrhodes@cbu.edu

**Kristin O. Prien, Christian Brothers University**

kprien@cbu.edu

**Sarah T. Pitts, Christian Brothers University**

spitts@cbu.edu

**Rob H. Kamery, Christian Brothers University**

rkamery@cbu.edu

### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper will analyze both sides of behavior, that of the individual being observed and those studying and observing the individual. The observation of the behavior of an individual involves internal processes--thinking, emotional reactions, and the like--which one person cannot observe directly in another but which can be inferred from observations of external behavior (Ruch & Zimbardo, 1971). This is one of the many faults of simple definitions of behavior. Often conclusions are drawn from only observation or external behavior. The individuals being studied should be able to voice their feelings about behavior to complete both sides of the "behavior coin."*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper studies behavior as it is perceived from without as it affects the individual from within. This means that an individual's behavior might be perceived as something other than what it is intended to be. An example of this would be a worker who is perceived as hostile towards other workers. His or her behavior is often interpreted as being negative, but in reality it may be a means of satisfying internal needs. The worker may be withdrawn and use what appears to be hostility as a defense mechanism. The worker could possibly be masking frustration. This frustrated worker could possibly fabricate a situation where he or she perceives that a skilled worker (possibly a foreman) has more opportunities than he or she does, therefore creating more obstacles for overcoming the causes of frustration (Pyrn, 1963).

This paper also examines the reinforcement theory and endeavors to illustrate that behavior can affect future and immediate goals. Some behavior is intrinsic; not all behavior is learned. A small child does not "learn" to cry, but that child can learn to show respect to his elders through previous reinforcement. Reinforcement is any stimulus that follows a response and increases the probability of its occurrence (Warren, 1934). An example of a reinforcer could be when a laboratory rat knows that he will get food as a reward for opening a latch or pressing a button. If getting food as a result of opening a latch makes the latch opening response more probable next time, then getting the food is a reinforcer (Ruch & Zimbardo, 1971).

## MOTIVATOR-MODIFIER CONCEPT

“Motivator-modifiers” are need gratifiers and need counter-gratifiers. These two terms, unfortunately, lack the connotation of motivational-direction-to-action on the surface. A more commendable term, therefore, for emphasizing the effect of need gratification or the negating of need gratification on behavior is motivator-modifier (Archer, 1976). In simpler terms, a motivator-modifier is something that alters the normal modes of motivation. Further analysis will be given to this concept. Observation of behavior and life in general would be pleasingly simple if an individual behaved in only one set way--if heredity and past environment provided the individual with only one possible way of showing behavior in a given situation. If it were perfectly clear to the individual that at the next moment there was only one way to behave, or only one way that he could possibly want to behave, then the individual would have no choice in the matter (Marquis & Woodworth, 1962). Behavior is not infallibly given to one sure response. A certain stimulus does not always evoke the same response from an individual. One lackluster worker might “snap to it” upon being reprimanded by a foreman for being lazy on the job. The stimulus (being reprimanded) has modified his behavior from temporary indifference to diligence (if he is perceptive). In the same instance, another worker might be angered by the reprimand and see the foreman as a tyrant or overly strict. Both workers behaved differently because their needs were probably different. The worker who was indignant at being reprimanded exhibited anger, which is commonly perceived to be negative behavior. However, this anger may have actually satisfied a need, possibly the need for self-respect. The rebellious worker did not choose to outwardly display his anger, possibly because of formal laws and social conventions that prevent us from freely expressing our impulses.

## MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The theories of Maslow, McGregor, Argyris, and Herzberg lead to common recommendations for organization managers. The actual enactment of these theories requires a challenging job and increased participation in managerial decisions. Creative behavior has its place in organizations, but it is not found in every part of an organization, therefore management must deal with the less creative the majority of the time. Even those who regularly exhibit creative behavior are going to have needs. If the employee runs short of needs, he can create more. Assume that all needs now known could someday be met; it is likely that at that moment in time new needs would be brought out into the open from man’s subconscious mind. The lesson for management is that need satisfaction is a continuous problem for all time. It cannot be solved by satisfying a specific need today. A needs-priority model illustrates that gratified needs are no longer strongly motivating. This means that employees are enthusiastically motivated by what they are seeking more than by what they already have (Ghiselli, Haire & Porter, 1963).

The needs-priority model can apply to employees both inside and outside of the organization, because people satisfy many of their needs outside of organizations. Research has shown that the model does apply in the majority of cases, especially to managers and professionally qualified employees in the U.S. and Europe. Various studies show that their physiological security and social needs are well met, and they are seeking higher order needs. One study of managers in the U.S. and England reported that security, belonging, esteem, and self-realization needs are progressively less

satisfied, according to the pattern of the needs-priority model (Ghiselli, Haire & Porter, 1963). Another study supports the model by illustrating that managers and professionals in the U.S. highly value self-realization, while service and manual workers value job security most highly (Blai, 1963).

During the 1940s, researchers identified two important dimensions of leadership behavior: *initiating structure*, or the extent to which a leader is likely to define and structure his own role and the role of his subordinates toward goal attainment, and *consideration*, or the extent to which a leader is likely to have relationships with subordinates characterized by mutual trust, respect for their ideas, consideration of their feelings, and a certain degree of warmth (Karman, 1966). The union of these two leadership tendencies with reliable measures can be made. Karman (1966) found that in relating these dimensions to group performance effectiveness, no universal combination has been discovered. These two important elements of leadership behavior must be adapted to fluctuations in various situations.

If a group expects and wants authoritarian leadership behavior, it is more likely to be satisfied with any type of leadership given (Foa, 1957). If group members have less authoritarian expectations, a leader who strongly emphasizes initiating structure will be resented (Mann & Vroom, 1960). Various research illustrates that when the work situation is highly structured, the supervisor who is held in high esteem is more likely to meet with success as measured by absenteeism, grievances, and a high turnover rate. If task structuring precludes individual and group self-actualization, it will be useless to look for motivation from this source; therefore, attention will have to be given to Herzberg's hygiene factors instead. Another research study has shown that when subordinates have little contact with their superior, they tend to prefer him to be authoritarian, but if they must work and interact continuously, they want him to be high in consideration (Mann & Vroom, 1960). On the other hand, consideration is insufficient if the leader lacks the influence with his own superiors that would enable this concern to be profitable in terms of subordinate benefits (Pelz, 1952). Further consideration must be given to this theory. In a study of 129 clerical employees, those who perceived a high level of consideration in their supervisor seemed to be more strongly motivated by initiating structure than those who perceived a low level of consideration (Beer, 1966). In this study, consideration tended to relate significantly with more of the higher-order needs (esteem and self-actualization) while initiating structure related significantly with the security need. A combination of leadership behaviors tended to increase the overall level of satisfaction. Sabel & Woods (1970), found that the degree of style congruence between a subordinate and his superior is a factor of significance.

## **HUMAN RELATIONS FUNCTION**

Employees in the early days had no programs designated by the name "human relations." The basic human relation factors represent the operational conditions in any organization regardless of the quality of human relations that exists. However, it is apparent that organizations do differ in the quality of human relations that are developed. These differences are substantially caused by the different theories of organizational behavior which predominate in management thought in each organization (Likert, 1961). The theory of organizational behavior that managers hold usually leads to certain findings about people and certain interpretations of events that managers encounter. Theory, therefore, is an unconscious guide to each manager's behavior. Managers act as they see

fit to act. Eventually, this means that the underlying theory that prevails in an organization's management determines the behavioral climate of that firm. For this reason, theories of organizational behavior are significant.

The two most important theories studied are the autocratic theory and the supportive theory. Although one theory tends to predominate in the industrial life of a nation at one time, the other theory finds acceptance in some organizations at the same time. Earlier studies of personal traits centered on the analysis of qualities possessed by those who had displayed leadership capabilities. However, studies soon showed this approach to be an inadequate explanation of leadership, although one study by Ghiselli, Haire and Porter (1963) revealed significant correlation between leadership effectiveness and the traits of intelligence, supervisory ability, initiative, self-assurance, and individuality in the way in which the work was done.

The autocratic theory has its roots deep in history, and certainly it became the prevailing theory in the industrial revolution. Its premise is power. Those in command must have the power to say, "Do this--or else," meaning that an employee will be penalized if orders are not followed. It is threatening, depending on negative motivation backed by power (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1972). The autocratic leader is seen as one who commands and expects compliance, who is dogmatic and positive, and who leads by his ability to withhold or give rewards and punishment. Participative or supportive leadership, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that people want to participate and accomplish and that they will work best when general supervision is employed and where the superior not only allows them to use their own initiative but supports them in accomplishing their tasks (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1972).

A considerable volume of research has been undertaken on these two styles of leadership behavior. In their analysis, Filley and House (1969) found that although there was a general tendency for supportive leadership to have a positive effect on member satisfaction, no consistent relationship has been found between leadership style and production. Filley and House (1969) stated that the application of one or the other managerial style depended on the situation regarding tasks and the characteristics of subordinates. Filley and House (1969) concluded that participative leadership is most effective when the task involves non-routine decisions and non-standard information and decisions need not be made quickly. Participative leadership also works best when subordinates feel a strong need for independence and involvement in decision-making and are confident of their ability to work without close direction.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, it has been shown that behavior varies from individual to individual and from organization to organization. To be successful at their jobs, managers must learn how to manage their personnel, not manipulate them. Managers cannot motivate their employees in the intrinsic sense; they can only learn to apply motivator-modifiers (Archer, 1976). It has been shown that an individual's present behavior can influence near and distant future behavior. Much research has been conducted in the area of employee motivation and behavior, and there has been much change for the better in dealing with employees' needs and behavior. Still, many managers believe that they can motivate and set one behavior pattern for all employees. Managers must learn to become scholars and accept the findings of these various research studies in behavior and

motivation, especially that all behavior is different according to one's needs and that employees cannot only be motivated. You can only supply motivator-modifiers in the external sense (Archer, 1976).

## REFERENCES

- Archer, E.R. (1976, February). A new concept in motivation: Motivator modifiers. *The Personnel Administrator*, 26-27.
- Beer, M. (1966). *Leadership, employee needs, and motivation*. Columbus, OH: Bureau of Business Research, Monograph No. 129, 43-44, 67.
- Blai, B. Jr. (1963, October). A job satisfaction predictor. *Personnel Journal*, 453-456.
- Filley, A.C. & R.J. House (1969). *Managerial process and organizational behavior*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 403.
- Foa, U.G. (1957). Relation of workers expectation to satisfaction with supervisors. *Personnel Psychology*, 10(3), 161-168.
- Ghiselli, E.E., M. Haire & L.W. Porter (1963). Cultural patterns in the role of the manager. *Industrial Relations*, 113.
- Karman, A. (1966). Consideration, initiating structure, and organizational criteria--a review. *Personnel Psychology*, 19(4), 361-365.
- Koontz, H. & C. O'Donnell (1972). *Principles of management: An analysis of managerial functions (Fifth Edition)*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 560.
- Likert, R. (1961). *New patterns of management*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 102-103.
- Mann, F.C. & V.H. Vroom (1960). Leader authoritarianism and employee attitudes. *Personnel Psychology*, 13(4), 125-130.
- Marquis, D.G. & R.S. Woodworth (1962). *Psychology (Fifth Edition)*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 374.
- Pelz, D.C. (1952). Influence: A key to effective leadership in the first line supervisors. *Personnel*, 29, 209-211.
- Pym, D. (1963). A study of frustration among factory and office workers. *Occupational Psychology*, 165-179.
- Ruch, F.L. & P.G. Zimbardo (1971). *Psychology and life (Eighth Edition)*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 5.
- Sabel, R.S. & M.T. Woods (1970). Effects of similarity of leadership style at two levels of management on the job and satisfaction of the first line manager. *Personnel Psychology*, 23(4), 577-585.
- Warren, H.C. (1934). *Dictionary of psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 229.





## HOW BENEFICIAL ARE BENEFITS?

**Thomas A. Timmerman, Tennessee Technological University**  
ttimmerman@tntech.edu

### ABSTRACT

*According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the cost of employee benefits rose to 42.3% of payroll costs in 2002. The benefits with the largest costs are health care (15.2%), paid time off (11.6%), and retirement/savings plans (6.2%). Any other expense of this magnitude would likely be the subject of extensive cost/benefit analyses. Employee benefits, however, are typically not subjected to this type of analysis. Instead, employers assume that benefits provided produce enough savings or revenue to justify their expense. Indeed, it is often difficult to study the effects of benefits for several reasons. Primarily the difficulty arises from the fact that benefits tend to be constant within jobs within organizations. Therefore, to study the effects of different benefits, researchers must gain access to multiple organizations. In this study, data from the General Social Survey were used to examine the relationships between the presence/absence of various benefits and outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay with the organization. Surprisingly, the results show few differences between the attitudes of individuals with benefits and without them. The only benefits that appear to be “beneficial” in this large, multi-organization sample are flexible hours, performance bonuses, and profit sharing plans.*

### INTRODUCTION

Two recent surveys present an alarming picture of organizations in the United States. The most recent Employee Benefits Survey from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports that, in 2002, organizations spent an amount equal to 42.3% of payroll costs on employee benefits (an 8.4% increase from 2001). Medical benefits accounted for the largest portion of this expense (15.2%) and also the largest increase from 2001 when companies spent 11% of payroll costs on health care.

The Society for Human Resource Management’s (SHRM) 2003 Benefits Survey is similarly distressing. This survey asked SHRM members to report whether they offered any of 193 employee benefits. Nearly all of the respondents offered some sort of health care insurance; and they also reported increases in costs that were similar to those in the Chamber’s survey.

Beyond health care, other employee benefits also present substantial costs. Paid time off, for example, represents the next largest expense (11.6% of payroll costs) and some form of this benefit is offered by 98% of the SHRM survey respondents. The SHRM survey is also interesting in its demonstration of the creativity (or perhaps desperation) with which organizations attempt to compensate employees indirectly (e.g., 3% of respondents offer health insurance for pets).

These statistics are only alarming, however, if the costs of employee benefits are higher than the benefits (to the organization) gained from offering them. Most organizations believe that

employee benefits help to attract, retain, and motivate employees. Very little objective data, however, addresses this issue. Therein lies the question posed in this paper: Are employee benefits an effective way to “purchase” employee loyalty and commitment?

In the words of Milkovich and Newman (2002), the cost of employee benefits “would not seem nearly so outrageous if we had evidence that employees place high value on the benefits they receive. Unfortunately, there is evidence that employees frequently are not even aware of, or undervalue, the benefits provided by their organization” (p. 428). Not only are benefits undervalued, but there is very little evidence that (valued or not) they aid in the attraction, retention, and motivation of employees. In their comprehensive textbook on compensation, Milkovich and Newman cite only limited support for the idea that turnover is related to benefits (specifically pensions and medical coverage). Beyond this evidence, employers assume that employee benefits have some positive effects. This assumption is largely driven by the pressure to imitate competitors who are engaged in a similar imitative escalation.

## METHODOLOGY

The data analyzed in this study were obtained from the General Social Survey (GSS; [www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss)). Since 1972, the GSS has been conducted almost annually and provides a national representative sample of the US population over 18 years of age. In 1991, the GSS included a collection of questions related to employee benefits and work attitudes. Nine hundred twelve employed respondents provided data to the 1991 GSS. The sample was 50% female, 84.8% White, and 11.6% Black. The average age was 39.5 and the average level of educational attainment was 13.6 years.

The survey was administered via face-to-face interviews. The work-related questions were embedded within approximately 700 other questions pertaining to a variety of demographic and social subjects. Respondents were asked if they had access to each of eleven employee benefits (listed in Table 1). They were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed with statements that are hypothesized to be associated with the presence of employee benefits. Specifically, respondents indicated the extent to which they were 1) willing to work harder than needed to help the organization, 2) willing to turn down another job with higher pay to stay with the organization, and 3) satisfied with their job overall. Each of these attitudes was measured on a 4-point scale (where higher numbers represent more positive attitudes).

## RESULTS

The first column in Table 1 shows the prevalence of each employee benefit. The next columns show the mean attitudes for individuals with and without each benefit. Surprisingly, very few of the employee benefits are associated with any significant attitudinal differences. Individuals with flexible hours were more likely to report a willingness to turn down a higher-paying job to stay with their current employer. Employees with access to cash and stock performance bonuses reported significantly more positive attitudes on all three dimensions. Finally, profit sharing and stock option programs were associated with a greater willingness to work harder than necessary and greater overall job satisfaction.

Table 1  
Mean outcomes for employees with and without each benefit

Column 1 Heading: Type of Benefit

Column 2 Heading: Prevalence of Benefit

Columns 3 & 4 Heading: Willing to work harder than I have to to help the organization

Columns 5 & 6 Heading: Would turn down another job for higher pay to stay with this organization

Columns 7 & 8 Heading: Overall job satisfaction

		With	W/out	With	W/out	With	W/out
Medical Insurance	74.4%	3.26	3.29	2.31	2.41	3.32	3.30
Dental Care	55.2%	3.26	3.28	2.29	2.40	3.33	3.29
Life Insurance	63.9%	3.30	3.23	2.35	2.32	3.33	3.28
Paid Sick Leave	60.3%	3.30	3.22	2.37	2.27	3.33	3.28
Maternity Leave	56.7%	3.31	3.25	2.35	2.34	3.35	3.30
Flexible Hours	49.5%	3.28	3.26	2.40	2.27*	3.34	3.28
Cash/Stock Performance Bonuses	24.3%	3.40	3.23*	2.51	2.28*	3.49	3.26*
Retirement Plan	57.5%	3.28	3.26	2.35	2.33	3.34	3.29
Profit Sharing/Stock Options	27.4%	3.34	3.24*	2.43	2.30	3.41	3.28*
Information About Child Care	20.9%	3.31	3.26	2.44	2.31	3.38	3.30
Assistance With Child Care Costs	7.8%	3.28	3.27	2.48	2.33	3.39	3.31

\* Difference is significant,  $p < .05$

As a supplementary analysis, I examined other correlates of these three attitudes. If the traditional (and more expensive) employee benefits are not associated with employee loyalty and satisfaction, are there other job characteristics that might be more cost-effective? Table 2 shows the correlations between the same three attitudes described above and five additional job characteristics. Respondents were asked 1) if anyone noticed when they performed well, 2) if they were allowed to take part in decisions affecting their work, 3) if they worked independently, 4) their income, and 5) if they had ever been promoted by their current organizations. Table 2 shows that all three attitudes are significantly correlated with the benefit “alternatives” with the exception of promotions.

Table 2  
Correlations between outcomes and alternatives to employee benefits

Column 1 Heading: Benefit alternatives

Column 2 Heading: Willing to work harder than I have to to help the organization

Column 3 Heading: Would turn down another job for higher pay to stay with this organization

Column 4 Heading: Overall job satisfaction

People usually notice when I do my job well	.30**	.24**	.22**
My job allows me to take part in decisions	.29**	.31**	.27**
I can work independently	.25**	.21**	.21**
Income	.18**	.16**	.12**
Ever promoted	.02	.02	.04

\*\* p < .01

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study raise the interesting possibility that employee benefits are not as beneficial as organizations assume. Aside from flexible hours and cash-related incentives, other benefits show no association with employee satisfaction or loyalty. In addition, it appears as if satisfaction and loyalty can be “purchased” more efficiently with managerial interventions that have little or no cost (e.g., recognizing high performance).

As the costs of employee benefits continue to rise, employers should ask this question: What are we buying? To many employers, the thought of discontinuing benefits is unthinkable. Whereas these benefits may not be associated with satisfaction and loyalty, their removal may trigger significant backlash. But there are several strategies that may be useful for redirecting funds to expenses that are more valuable to the organization and its employees. First, an abundance of research in the field of organizational justice informs us that people are willing to accept bad outcomes if they believe the decision-making process is fair and decisions are delivered with sensitivity and informational justification (Konovsky, 2000). Perceived procedural fairness, for example, can be enhanced by allowing employees to have input into the process of determining which benefits will be offered.

Employee input will likely produce several advantages. Voice in the process will not only increase perceived fairness, but may also directly increase satisfaction and loyalty (see Table 2). Employee input may also result in the choice of employee benefits that are financially cheaper for the organization yet valued more by employees. Employers are experimenting with a variety of ways to control the spiraling costs of benefits. They may find that the best answers come from the beneficiaries.

## REFERENCES

- Konovsky, M.A. (2000). Understanding procedural justice and its impact on business organizations. *Journal of Management, 26*, 489-512.
- Milkovich, G.T., & Newman, J.M. (2002). *Compensation*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Society for Human Resource Management (2003). *2003 Benefits Survey*. Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resource Management.
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce (2003). *The 2003 Employee Benefits Survey*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Chamber of Commerce.



# WHEN ARE MORE HEADS BETTER THAN ONE?

**Thomas A. Timmerman, Tennessee Technological University**  
ttimmerman@tntech.edu

## ABSTRACT

*The use of groups and teams in business and educational settings is obviously gaining in popularity. Despite their popularity, however, there are some activities in which group processes are more likely to interfere with performance and overwhelm any potential gains. The purpose of this study was to test Steiner's (1972) model of group performance relative to individual performance. In additive tasks, individual contributions are summed to create a group product. The first exercise in this study contradicts "common sense" by demonstrating that the number of ideas produced per person in a typical brainstorming session actually decreases as group size increases. In the second task, group members are required to estimate unknown quantities while working alone. Then the group is required to reach consensus through discussing the individual estimates. The results of this exercise demonstrate that 1) the average individual estimate is usually more accurate than the estimate achieved through group discussion and 2) the group average becomes more accurate with more individuals providing estimates. Finally, a disjunctive task is used in which group discussion typically produces greater performance than any statistical combination of individual estimates.*

## INTRODUCTION

As groups become more prevalent in educational and business settings, one question seems to be of paramount importance: Do groups lead to better performance than individuals working alone? The relationship between individual and group performance has been studied for many years by social psychologists, but their findings have not yet permeated the business world. The purpose of this paper is to describe a series of tasks that can be easily conducted in educational or business settings to demonstrate if/when groups lead to better task performance than individuals.

Specifically, three types of tasks were chosen from Steiner's (1972) typology of tasks. Steiner proposed that the relationship between individual and group performance depends on the structure of the task. Additive tasks are tasks in which individuals' contributions are added together to create a group product. There are many such physical tasks (e.g., manufacturing), but I use brainstorming because of this type of task's popularity in the business world. Next, I use a compensatory task in which group members attempt to estimate some unknown quantity. This type of task has tremendous relevance to forecasting uncertain events (e.g., the sales of a new product, a stock's future price). Finally, I use a disjunctive task in which specific knowledge or logic can be used to solve a problem. At the group level, members combine and correct their knowledge/logic to reach a solution.



## ADDITIVE TASKS

For additive tasks, the key question is this: Does participation in a group increase the total performance of group members? Specific to brainstorming, the popular idea is that group brainstorming produces better performance than individuals working alone because members are able to synergistically use each others' ideas to generate more ideas. Paulus, Larey, and Dzindolet (2001), however, summarize the existing research by concluding "Controlled research has clearly demonstrated that group brainstorming is not very effective. This is in stark contrast to the claims for its efficacy by practitioners" (p. 324). To demonstrate this phenomenon, I conduct the following exercise in MBA Organizational Behavior classes and decision-making training classes.

Participants are asked to work in groups of various sizes ranging from nominal groups (people working alone whose ideas will be combined) to groups of five. Groups are asked to generate as many commercial uses for old tires as possible in 10 minutes. The results for 22 groups spanning three different classes are summarized in Table 1.

Group size	Nominal groups	2-person groups	3-person groups	4-person groups	5-person groups
Ideas per person	15.05	13.58	9.15	6.50	5.50

The data in Table 1 provide a convincing demonstration that, for additive tasks, more heads are not better than one. This phenomenon is well known in the social psychology arena, but business students are consistently surprised by the results. There are a number of factors that contribute to the decline. In larger groups, social loafing is more common as perceived responsibility for the task is diffused. In groups, individuals are also more likely to generate fewer ideas because of the cognitive interference associated with listening to others. Finally, the "rules" of brainstorming (i.e., no evaluation of ideas) usually do not overcome people's fear of being evaluated. The net result of these forces is that larger groups perform significantly worse than individuals working alone on additive tasks.

## COMPENSATORY TASKS

For compensatory tasks where members must estimate uncertain quantities, the key question is this: Will groups generate more accurate estimates than individuals? In this exercise, I ask individuals to estimate three quantities (e.g., the number of payphones in New York, the market capitalization of Novartis, the number of hot dogs consumed in the U.S. each year) and then indicate 99% confidence intervals around their estimates. Then individuals meet in groups that range from two to five members to estimate the same quantities and also provide confidence intervals. In this type of task, it is actually possible to compare two different group estimates. First, the estimates arrived at through group discussion can be compared to the accuracy of individual estimates. Second, group estimates can be calculated by taking the simple average of the individual estimates.

Comparing these two estimates will allow us to examine the effect of group discussion as opposed to simply having more estimates. The results from 22 groups are shown in Table 2.

Group Size	2	3	4	5	Total
Average Individual Better than Group	58.30%	61.10%	58.30%	50.00%	57.40%
Average Individual Better than Individual	58.30%	59.30%	64.60%	73.30%	65.10%
Group Better than Individual	54.20%	57.40%	54.20%	58.30%	56.50%

The results in Table 2 show that, overall, groups produce more accurate estimates than individuals 56.5% of the time. This finding might lead some to conclude that group discussion leads to better performance. Looking closer, however, we see that the average individual estimate is better than the group estimate 57.4% of the time. Thus, more estimates are better than one, but there is no evidence that group discussion produces better estimates in this type of task. In fact, it is possible that group discussion actually leads to less accurate estimates. How could discussion hurt performance? These are essentially random guesses. During group discussion, one person will often make a convincing case that their random guess is not as random as everyone else's and pull the group's estimate towards his/her random guess.

Another interesting observation in these data concerns the performance of the average individual relative to individual estimates. Across these 22 groups, the average individual estimate is progressively more likely to beat individual estimates as group size increases. In 5-person groups, the average individual estimate is more accurate than individual estimates 73.3% of the time. Thus, in this type of task, more heads are better than one, as long as they do not discuss their estimates.

Another consequence of group discussion deserves attention at this point. The 99% confidence intervals show that individuals are very overconfident in their estimates. Only 27.2% of the confidence intervals actually contained the correct answers. At the group level, however, overconfidence is even worse. Only 16.7% of the group confidence intervals contained the correct answers. Thus group discussion increases group confidence, but not group accuracy. This phenomenon is fairly well-known in the area of judgmental forecasting (Armstrong, 2001), but the technique is rarely used in general business settings where estimates or forecasts are needed.

## DISJUNCTIVE TASKS

For a disjunctive task, I chose EARTHQUAKE! (Wolff & Wohlberg, 2001), which is a survival exercise similar to the popular Survival on the Moon and Lost at Sea exercises. In this activity, individuals rank a list of steps in the order they should be done to maximize chances of survival while trapped in the basement of a building after an earthquake. After individual rankings, groups meet to reach a consensus on the order in which the steps should be carried out. Finally, individual and group rankings are compared to expert rankings. Table 3 shows the results of 22 groups where low scores represent more accurate results (i.e., closer to the expert rankings).

Group Size	2	3	4	5
Group Score	17	20	14	14
Average Individual Score	21	24	21	22
Lowest Individual Score	16	19	14	14
Highest Individual Score	26	31	30	32

Unlike compensatory tasks, group discussion produces better performance in disjunctive tasks than the average individual. Research in this area shows that individual performance on this type of task is related to specific expertise and logic. Groups tend to perform better than individuals because 1) there is a greater pool of knowledge with more members and 2) faulty logic is more likely to be detected. These principles are supported by additional analyses of these data. Across all 22 groups, group performance was strongly correlated with the best member's score ( $r = .81$ ), the average individual score ( $r = .50$ ), and group size ( $r = -.50$ ). Thus in disjunctive tasks, groups perform better when they have a larger collection of knowledgeable individuals and recognize the available expertise. This is more likely to occur as group size increases.

One additional thing that stands out in this exercise is that the group is rarely as accurate as the best individual (i.e., lowest individual score). This implies that groups would be better off simply letting the best individual solve the problem. Unfortunately, it's usually impossible to determine who the "best" individual is. In one of these groups, for example, one person had already done the EARTHQUAKE exercise. He would have been a likely choice had we picked one individual to solve the problem. His individual score was 39 (the worst in the class).

## DISCUSSION

These exercises provide a quick and convincing demonstration that more heads are not (always) better than one. The superiority of group discussion over non-interacting individuals is only evident in disjunctive tasks where knowledge and logic can be pooled to solve problems. The other types of tasks, however, are not enhanced by group discussion. The social dynamics associated with additive tasks and compensatory tasks tend to overcome any advantages that could occur with interacting groups. Although there are techniques to overcome specific social dynamics (e.g., the Delphi technique), they require training and problem structuring that is typically viewed as excessively time-consuming and expensive in organizations. These exercises may help demonstrate the need for better decision-making processes or the abandonment of group discussion where better processes are not available.

## REFERENCES

- Armstrong, J.S. (2001). *Principles of forecasting: A handbook for researchers and practitioners*. Norwell, MA: Kluwer.
- Paulus, P.B., Larey, T.S., & Dzindolet, M.T. (2001). Creativity in groups and teams. In M.E. Turner (Ed.), *Groups at work: Theory and research* (pp. 319-338). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Steiner, I.D. (1972). *Group process and productivity*. New York: Academic Press.
- Wolff, S.B., & Wohlberg, J.W. (2001). *OB in action: Cases and exercises*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.



# RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNICATION MEDIA AND GROUP PROCESSES

**Thomas A. Timmerman, Tennessee Technological University**

timmerman@tntech.edu

**Bonita Barger, Tennessee Technological University**

bbarger@tntech.edu

## ABSTRACT

*Groups have become more ubiquitous in educational and business settings as a popular means by which work is accomplished. One aspect of group functioning thought to promote group performance is the means by which group members communicate with each other to accomplish the group's objectives. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between choice of communication media and satisfaction with group processes. Previous research in the areas of organizational work groups and student work groups has identified the processes associated with group functioning (i.e., transition, action, interpersonal; Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001). This paper attempts to answer the following question: Does the choice of communication media influence group members' satisfaction with the group's processes? Ninety students participating in group projects completed questionnaires related to the communication media they used for each group process. Results show that students were satisfied with transition processes the more they communicated with virtually any media. Satisfaction with action processes, however, was only associated with increased use of email. Finally, students were more satisfied with interpersonal processes when they relied on face-to-face communication. The results of this study may help educational and business groups communicate using the most appropriate media for each process.*

## INTRODUCTION

As teams become a more popular method by which work is accomplished, organizations are becoming more interested in the factors that facilitate team performance. A theoretical step in that direction occurred with the development of a model describing the phases occurring across the development and performance of teams (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001). Empirical tests of this model have begun and this paper reports the results of a study testing the model across different communication media. Thus this paper should be useful for those interested in team processes, team communication, and the increasing use of virtual communication channels.

## BACKGROUND

In their synthesis of the existing research on team processes, Marks et al. (2001) concluded that teams engage in action phases, transition phases, and interpersonal processes. Transition phases are characterized by processes such as mission analysis, goal specification, and strategy formulation. These processes prepare teams to accomplish team goals. Action phases are characterized by

behaviors that are more directly related to pursuing team goals. These processes include monitoring progress toward goals, systems monitoring, team monitoring, and coordination activities. Finally, teams must also engage in interpersonal processes during action and transition phases. These processes include conflict management, motivating and confidence building, and affect management.

After validating a measure of the constructs, Lerner and colleagues (Lerner & Pineda, 2003; Lerner, Pineda, & Barger, 2002) demonstrated a positive relationship between team performance and the total amount of communication devoted to the transition phase. They also found a positive relationship between member satisfaction and the total amount of communication devoted to the action phase.

Advancing technology has made communication among team members more flexible than ever. Computer mediated communication systems (CMCS) are often the medium of choice for project teams. One remaining question is the extent to which various communication media enhance or distract from accomplishing transition, action, and interpersonal processes. The typical research design in this area compares the performance of teams in purely face-to-face encounters with the performance of teams using purely computer-mediated communication. The present study examines the outcomes when team members are free to choose any communication media for any of the processes.

The little research that has been done in this area leads us to the following hypotheses.

H1: Satisfaction with interpersonal processes will be positively related to the extent to which face-to-face communication is used for these processes.

Hypothesis 1 is derived from research findings comparing face-to-face (FTF) and computer-mediated communication (CMC). This research suggests that CMC is more likely to lead to misperceptions among group members (Bordia, 1997). It also seems likely that interpersonal processes (such as conflict management and affect management) would be resolved with greater satisfaction where nonverbal cues can be detected and acted upon.

H2: Satisfaction with action processes will be positively related to the extent to which computer-mediated communication is used for these processes.

Hypothesis 2 is derived from an emerging body of research suggesting that virtual teams are more task-oriented because of the difficulty with which social/relational tasks are handled (Warkentin, Sayeed, & Hightower, 1997). As action processes deal more with the accomplishment of the team's goals, CMC may lead to greater member satisfaction.

H3: Satisfaction with transition processes will be positively related to the extent to which computer-mediated communication is used for these processes.

Hypothesis 3 is derived from research suggesting that individuals are more satisfied using CMC for brainstorming tasks (Bordia, 1997). Individuals apparently feel less evaluation apprehension and a greater sense of participation in CMC compared to FTF. Because transition

processes involve a great deal of idea generation, they may be similar enough to brainstorming to evoke the same kinds of reactions and preferences.

## METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

Eighty-one students participating in 25 project teams provided data to test the previous hypotheses. Data were gathered via the questionnaire validated by Lerner, Pineda, and Barger (2002). This questionnaire asks respondents the extent to which they used each of five different communication media (i.e., face-to-face, phone, email, chat room, written) for each activity. Each process was represented by four or five activities that are part of the process (e.g., Transition: establishing group goals). Responses varied from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal). Respondents also indicated the extent to which they were satisfied with the results of each process (also scaled 1 to 5).

Before analysis, scales were constructed by calculating the average use of each medium within each process. Coefficient alphas showed that all of the scales had acceptable levels of reliability (range = .87-.97). For each process, media use was used to predict satisfaction with each process. Table 1 shows the standardized betas testing each hypothesis.

Table 1  
Results of hierarchical regressions predicting satisfaction with each process

	Satisfaction with interpersonal processes	Satisfaction with action processes	Satisfaction with transition processes
Face-to-face	.376**	.242	.534**
Phone	-.240	-.131	-.132
Email	.060	.318**	.358**
Chat	.161	-.115	.271*
Written	.073	.080	-.116
R <sup>2</sup>	.153	.186	.330

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

## DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 was supported in that greater use of face-to-face communication was associated with greater satisfaction with the team's interpersonal processes. Hypothesis 2 was also supported by the fact that greater use of email (one form of CMC) was associated with more satisfaction with the team's action processes. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported. Satisfaction with the team's transition processes was associated with greater use of FTF, email, and chat. Thus it appears as if communication (in general) is positively associated with transition processes, whereas more specific forms of communication lead to satisfaction with action and interpersonal tasks.

Several important questions remain surrounding the role of communication media in the model proposed by Marks et al. (2001). The most important question is whether the relationships



observed in this study will extend to actual group performance (as opposed to satisfaction with the processes). Detailed performance data were not available in this study, but knowing the connections between media and satisfaction may suggest similar relationships with media and performance. Another question is the extent to which these findings generalize to other types of tasks. One advantage of the present study is that it used relatively long-term groups. It would be useful, however, to see if non-student groups prefer the same types of media.

## REFERENCES

- Bordia, P. (1997). Face-to-face versus computer-mediated communication: A synthesis of the experimental literature. *Journal of Business Communication, 34*, 99-121.
- Lerner, L.D., & Pineda, R.C. (2003). Team process and communication: The relationship between internal team processes and performance in student project teams. *Proceedings of the Midwest Academy of Management Conference*.
- Lerner, L.D., Pineda, R.C., & Barger, (2002). Team process and communication in student project teams: A test of a temporally based framework of team processes. *Proceedings of the Academy of Managerial Communications, 7*, 19-24.
- Marks, M.A., Mathieu, J.E., & Zaccaro, S.J. (2001). A temporally based framework and taxonomy of team processes. *Academy of Management Review, 26*, 356-376.
- Wartenkin, M.E., Sayeed, L., & Hightower, R. (1997). Virtual teams versus face-to-face teams: An exploratory study of a web-based conference system. *Decision Sciences, 28*, 975-996.

## Authors' Index

Antonova, M. ....	65
Baker, G. ....	1
Barger, B. ....	89
Chaney, L.H. ....	3
Emery, C.R. ....	65
English, D.E. ....	9
Estenson, J.D. ....	11
Faught, S. ....	35
Green, C.G. ....	3
Hatfield, R.D. ....	57
Hood, F.E. ....	13
Indvik, J. ....	19
Johnson, P.R. ....	19
Kamery, R.H. ....	13, 59, 71
Lazzara, F.R. ....	25
Littlefield, K.L. ....	27
Manton, E. ....	9
McCullough, P.M. ....	35
McMasters, M. ....	41
Meekins, S. ....	47
Oertel, S. ....	65
Ohara, M. ....	49
Olson, J.J. ....	55
Olson, P.D. ....	55
Payne, H. ....	57
Peyton, R.M. ....	59
Pitts, S.T. ....	13, 59, 71
Prien, K.O. ....	71
Rhodes, D.L. ....	65
Rhodes, J.T. ....	71
Shurden, M.C. ....	65
Tian, R.G. ....	65
Timmerman, T.A. ....	77, 83, 89
Tolbert, S.H. ....	65
Tucker, S. ....	47
Walker, J. ....	9