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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR AND PUBLISHERS

Welcome to the third volume of the *Academy of Managerial Communications Journal*. The Academy of Managerial Communications is an affiliate of the Allied Academies, Inc., a non profit association of scholars whose purpose is to encourage and support the advancement and exchange of knowledge, understanding and teaching throughout the world. The *AMCJ* is a principal vehicle for achieving the objectives of the organization. The editorial mission of this journal is to publish empirical and theoretical manuscripts which advance the discipline, and applied, educational and pedagogic papers of practical value to practitioners and educators. We look forward to a long and successful career in publishing articles which will be of value to the many communications scholars around the world.

The articles contained in this volume have been double blind refereed. The acceptance rate for manuscripts in this issue, 25%, conforms to our editorial policies.

We intend to foster a supportive, mentoring effort on the part of the referees which will result in encouraging and supporting writers. We welcome different viewpoints because in differences we find learning; in differences we develop understanding; in differences we gain knowledge; and, in differences we develop the discipline into a more comprehensive, less esoteric, and dynamic metier.

The Editorial Policy, background and history of the organization, and calls for conferences are published on our web site. In addition, we keep the web site updated with the latest activities of the organization. Please visit our site and know that we welcome hearing from you at any time.

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THE GMAT WRITING ASSESSMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT

When the Graduate Management Admissions Council determined that a writing assessment should be added to its test, numerous studies had identified communication skills as critical in business although little evidence had been provided that the test itself was a predictor of success in Master of Business Administration programs in the U.S. Today that writing assessment is evaluated primarily by English professors using guidelines developed for English writing. In many ways these two factors are detrimental to the undergraduate business major. Changes in business writing assignments are needed to prepare undergraduates for the GMAT writing assessment.

INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) has been given four times each year to hundreds of thousands of individuals worldwide. Until 1994, the GMAT focused upon the quantitative and verbal skills of prospective Master of Business Administration (MBA) applicants, evaluating those skills with multiple choice questions. In the fall of 1994, the GMAT for the first time included an assessment of an applicant's ability to write. Since 1997 the test has been offered electonically as often as 15 days each month (Bulkeley, 1997).

Rogers and Rymer (1995a, 1995b) thoroughly discussed the essay writing value and the technical aspects of the assessment process. Noll and Stowers (1998) concentrated upon the use of the analytical writing assessment results by American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) institutions and upon its use in the admittance process. Rogers and Rymer (1996) have considered the GMAT's ability to index an individual's ability to write at a graduate level in business school. They discuss the assumption that decisions regarding admission to graduate schools or the need for remedial work can be made on the basis of this writing experience. Little consideration is given to the impact of the scoring process upon undergraduate business students. This article will discuss both positive and negative factors in the assessment process from an education for business perspective and offer teaching suggestions for improving the GMAT writing assessment of undergraduate business majors.

GMAT BACKGROUND

The majority of the graduate business programs in colleges and universities throughout the United States establish minimum admission requirements for applicants desiring a MBA. The generally established criteria for admittance used by these business colleges and schools include both undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) and GMAT scores, even though Paolillo (1982) found that these factors explained only small percentages (under 17%) of the variance of MBA graduate GPAs. Wright and Palmer (1997) more recently determined that GPA and GMAT scores showed a slight association with graduate performance; however, the predictability was greater with higher scores. Bieker (1996) developed a model that determined the GMAT score was a more significant factor of predicting academic performance of MBA students than undergraduate GPA, although Ahmadi and Raiszaheh (1997) found little evidence of success prediction with either in the MBA program at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Historically, communication ability had been perceived as critical for business success. For example, in a survey of 5,299 recently promoted executives, Bond, Hildebrandt, and Miller (1981) reported that communication skills were perceived as playing the most significant role in the promotion. In another survey of executives during that time, 79% perceived written communication as one of the most neglected business skills (U.S. Execs, 1984). In 1986 Bennett and Olney reported that over 84% of the businesspersons responding to their inquiry said that communication skills had a major effect upon advancement. Due in some part to findings such as these, the Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC) had recommended the addition of a written portion to the GMAT in the early 1980s (Hecht & Alloway, 1984). But due to " . . . high costs and many difficulties of implementation, including concerns of business faculty about subjectivity in evaluating writing" (Rogers & Rymer, 1995a, p. 349), the decision was delayed. In the early 1990s research again identified poor written communication skills as one of the most common weaknesses of young executives (Penrose, Rasberry, & Myers, 1993), and communication skills overall were identified as the single most important area of knowledge for business college graduates to gain employment (Gustafson, Johnson, & Hovey, 1993). A more recent metanalysis of managerial research has indicated, however, few studies in the writing domain (Smeltzer & Thomas, 1994).

In October 1994, the GMAT for the first time included two writing assignments with its standardized multiple-choice test. Test takers since that time have been asked to write two 30-minute essays which result in an overall Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) score. Two types of essay assignments are given to test takers: argument and issue. Each is offered with several paragraphs of directions for the test taker as well as a *prompt*, the sentences that stand alone and provide the information to be used in the writing assignment. The first, an *argument,* is based upon an analysis of the logic used to support the information provided in the prompt. Successful writing for an argument calls for recognition of the unsound reasoning used as well as identification of ways in which the premise could have been logically developed. The second essay is called an *issue*. Writing on an *issue* involves the in-depth development of a perspective on an assigned topic. Successful writing for the issue justifies the position taken on a topic using examples and building a logical foundation for the viewpoint chosen.

Both the argument and the issue essays are evaluated through what is called holistic assessment. Holistic scoring has been identified as "formal procedures for judging student writing, intended to mirror the objectivity of multiple choice tests by helping teachers to make consistent judgments about student writing. . ." (Williamson, 1993, p. 1). Evaluators avoid marking specific errors (such as each individual misspelled word) and assess the writer's overall consistency in broad areas (such as knowledge of English grammar). Individual’s write a comprehensive text, rather than completing a single sentence by choosing a correct version (verb, pronoun, phrase, etc.) from a choice of items. The resulting score provides an assessment of the overall ability of the individual to communicate successfully in a written format.

A REVIEW OF THE ESSAY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Essay writing has been a part of the Advanced Placement (AP) English tests for decades, and Educational Testing Service (ETS), as well as the GMAT developers, have developed an extremely sophisticated assessment method over time. A discussion of the GMAT reading process from 1994 to 1998 follows with a preview of the readings process of the future.

Until fall of 1997, approximately 400 college and university professors (about 90% of whom are from English) "read" (evaluate) for a three- or four-day weekend beginning the Friday after the GMAT was administered. Each "reader" (evaluator) was assigned to a table of eight in either the issue or the argument room and read only that writing assignment for the entire weekend. Each room had its own leader (one proficient in argument scoring, for example, and with an extensive reading history) to train and direct readers throughout the three-day process, individuals to tally sample grading, persons to hand out needed materials, and monitors to insure confidentiality and security. Table leaders had arrived earlier in the week and read hundreds of essays, assigning a grade to each. For the training of readers, about 50 of these have been photocopied and packaged in an introductory packet with scoring guidelines and placed at each chair. The packet also included the following: scale for assigning a grade; samples of possible arguments, both successful and unsuccessful; guidelines for reading; notes for interpretation; and hints for newcomers.

For the first two hours on Friday, the room leader selected sample previously graded essays and asked readers to read and assign scores to them. After all had completed evaluating the chosen essays, readers were asked to divulge by raised hand which score (0-6) they assigned to each paper. These scores, holistically derived, were 6=Outstanding, 5=Strong, 4=Adequate, 3=Limited, 2=Seriously Flawed, 1=Fundamentally Deficient, and 0=Unscorable (Perrin, 1995, pp. 10-15). The room leader discussed why each paper should receive its assigned score based upon the scale provided, and allowed time for individual table discussions to clarify scoring decisions. Essays were referred to as either "upper half" (4-6) or "lower half" (0-3) quality. After reading and scoring several groups of essays that table leaders had evaluated earlier in the week, the training was considered complete, and assessment of unread essays began.

The 0 through 6 scores are differentiated by the writing skill of the test taker. Factors considered necessary for excellence are the usage of correct English grammar, multisentence paragraphs with topic sentences, varied sentence structure, logical organization of information, and in-depth development within the assignment. As the grammatical skills decrease, the organization or development becomes randomized or nonexistent, or the discussion or analysis grows more vague, the score drops. When the serious evaluation began, readers received a folder with 10-20 essays, each with a coded number. Each table received its own grade identification as well. For example, one author's table had 0=a, 1=v, 2=m, 3=f, 4=c, 5=t, and 6=k; a cohort at another table later divulged that hers were 0=m, 1=r, 2=d, 3=w, 4=g, 5=k, and 6=q. The assigned letter score was marked on a sheet in the essay reader's folder containing a list of the essay-coded numbers. After reading and scoring all essays in a packet, readers raised their hand for a new folder. Each essay was read by at least two readers. Since the 40-50 tables receive different scoring codes, a reader who gets a folder of previously scored essays was usually unable to match scores without taking a lengthy time comparing with those already recorded. If the two reader scores were equal or touching (for example: 4,4; 4,3; or 4,5), the two were averaged for an essay score. If the two scores differed by a space or more (for example: 4, 2 or 4, 6), a third reader evaluated the essay. Readers received a discrepancy rate based upon the disagreement of the third reader with their score. If the third reader gave a 4 to the 4, 2 case above, the reader who assigned the 2 had a discrepancy. According to experienced readers, if a new reader had a discrepancy rate of greater than 10%, s/he was rarely invited back.

Rarely did the readers do their evaluation of essays for longer than a two-hour time period. Breaks were provided between breakfast and lunch and between lunch and dinner. Although idle talking was discouraged, readers were encouraged to ask their table leaders for assistance when unsure of the score to be assigned an essay. Newcomers were generally seated next to the table leader, and only one newcomer was seated at each table. In this way, the number of essays read per table generally remained consistent throughout the room. Usually, readers from the business academic environment initially assigned to either the issue or the argument essay received assignment to the same type of essay in future invitations as well. The argument and the issue were evaluated a bit differently, and familiarity with a particular type may have resulted in lower discrepancy rates. The overall reading format was designed to make sure each writer received as objective an assessment as was possible.

In 1997, ETS started to use regional online readings with individuals driving to the four regional centers to read essays on computer. Holistic assessment of the essays continues. The "packet" of information to help readers understand the process is primarily on computer and can be brought onto the computer screen through "menus" at any time during the scoring process. Changes include fewer people at a reading and less social contact between readers. For example, in the Evanston, Illinois, office, 12 readers and one table leader can be online simultaneously, not even close to the 400 plus readers who used to read "live" over a three day period. Recently, ETS has developed a computer program to grade essays. In 1999, ETS hopes to have a computer and a human read each essay. If both agree, the assessment is completed; however, another human will read the essay if the computer and human readers differ (Clayton, 1999). ETS plans for human assessment to take place in an individual's office or home with hourly scales being paid. The fees for the reading of essays online (approximately $20 per hour) will in all likelihood discourage business faculty who are paid significantly higher salaries than English professors, thereby continuing or even increasing the under-representation of business faculty in the writing assessment process.

EVALUATION OF THE ESSAY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Although the holistic process has been the focus of writing researchers for decades (see *Validating Holistic Scoring for Writing Assessment: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations*, W. M. Williamson & B. A. Huot, Eds., 1993 for in-depth discussions), no more efficient way exists to evaluate such a great number of written essays in such a short period of time. The function serves the need and is basically a sound principle. Holistic scoring procedures were initially developed to use experts (writing teachers) to evaluate the relative merits of written essays. And therein lies the major problem with the GMAT writing assessment. English professors are reading the tests utilizing, primarily, the same guidelines used for the AP English Exam.

In the guidelines for scoring or evaluation of the essays, readers are told to consider the following factors as critical in the assessment process. For the argument, the suggestions include:

1. Analysis of the logic used in the prompt to support the basic premise must be found in the essay.
2. Recognition of the unsound reasoning used in that logic must be supported.
3. In-depth identification of other ways in which the premise could have been supported should be supplied. A single example could be used but must be extensively developed.

For the issue, suggestions include:

1. Statement of the position taken by the writer must be clear.
2. Consideration of different perspectives regarding the issue should be contemplated in the analysis.
3. One or two in-depth examples to illustrate support for the position chosen must be developed.

In the computer assessment menus, there are samples of inadequate, adequate, and well-developed ways in which these goals can be accomplished by the writer. Also included is a screen with interpretation suggestions. With either essay, the writer is not supposed to be penalized for taking the unexpected side of the issue or argument (except if the writer does not understand an illogical argument). If the essay is well-written and logically developed, the writer should receive full credit. On the argument interpretation sheet, the reader is reminded that extemporaneous factors unrelated to the argument itself may become the focus of the essay and this transgression was not a proper response even if well-written.

Within the scoring guide, each of the seven (0-6) grades are broadly described. Mentioned as criteria for success are grammar, mechanics, word usage, idea development, organization, reasoning, control of language, and sentence structure. From the 6 paper that shows the essay composer has mastered all elements of writing to the 0 paper that is unreadable or about something totally unrelated, readers are given descriptions of gradually decreasing evidence of writing skills. Because every essay will be different, these descriptions are intentionally vague while being precise about certain writing skills. For example, the readers of both the argument and the issue are told that the writer receiving a 4 ". . . must demonstrate adequate control of language . . . but may lack syntactic variety" (Perrin, 1995, p. 11 & p. 14).

For the most part, these scoring characteristics are ones which all business professors, just as their English cohorts, also examine when evaluating writing skills of students. However, English professors as a general rule encourage their writing students to write in a somewhat different manner than do business writing professors. Methods that business or management communication professors promote may, in fact, be counted as deductions by GMAT readers. The primary difference between writing for an English class and for a business communication class is what business writing experts refer to as concise, yet complete, writing.

In memorandum and letter writing, business students are encouraged to get straight to the point (neither an argument nor an issue is a bad news message; therefore, routine messages with deductive writing are all one need consider). Getting the idea across as quickly as possible is important in business, where individuals have little time to read lengthy paragraphs. A one-sentence first paragraph is emphatic; it gets the reader's attention. A simple sentence is more understandable than a compound or compound-complex one. These are critical factors in business writing. In many manufacturing firms, a production line employee may have an eighth grade reading capability. For companywide messages, writers are encouraged to use easy to understand words and avoid writing "over the head" of that person with little education. For longer documents such as progress reports or proposals, business writers are warned to avoid having lengthy paragraphs. In fact, at least one business communication textbook advises students to keep typed paragraphs to about 10 to 12 lines. Long paragraphs are perceived as "difficult reading," and, to encourage the reader, business documents should be perceived as easy to read and understand.

These business writing methods of brevity, conciseness, and understanding in many ways contradict what the English professors, who make up a minimum of 90% of those reading for the GMAT, are going to view as mastery of writing. Effective writing by the English reader will include well-developed paragraphs with syntactic variance--in other words, use all different types of sentences in long (by business standards) paragraphs with topic and transition sentences. While dissertations within the business disciplines should be encouraged to follow these guidelines, the doctoral student's committee members may have more time than the average businessperson. At the GMAT, the student who remembers business writing class rather than freshman English and writes a one-sentence, opening paragraph will probably receive an automatic deduction or, at least, a have made a 'bad' impression upon the reader resulting in a score that reflects the halo/horn effect.

Another characteristic of business writing that was specifically brought to the readers attention by room leaders as acceptable (and a way of writing that was not to be given a deduction) was enumeration with bullets or listings of ideas. Business writing classes encourage itemizing points for emphasis of specific issues within a long document or for easier understanding of a number of concerns within shorter documents. Then the writer is to develop each point in greater detail if further amplification is needed. Readers from English departments would prefer to see paragraph form used with items in a series within the sentence. Bullets, in particular, are considered intrusive; after all, from English teachers' perspective, paragraph development is a major part of effective writing. For those readers from English who truly dislike enumerations in any format, a business undergraduate may be assessed with a resulting horn effect--the reader unconsciously is more critical of the overall essay because of the listing format used.

Another problem that was noted by readers with business writing backgrounds was a contradiction between the directions and the scoring. In the issue while writers were told to use one or the other (for example, "Explain your position, using relevant reasons and/or examples drawn from your own experience, observations, or reading" (Perrin, 1995, p. 3), the room leader and examples inevitably used both reasons and examples as an example of an essay that should receive a top score of 6. Business students are being trained to follow directions to avoid wasting production time. By not going off on a tangent, one can complete a job more efficiently. In this case, following directions and using "or" as it should be considered, could result in a lowered score as several essays with simply reasons had received in the training.

Perhaps one of the most critical areas having an impact upon business undergraduates is related to the argument writing assignment. Case study teaching methods have geared business students toward solving the problem presented in the written text. The format of an argument is unfamiliar to business students. Understandably so, all test takers are expected to read the directions and to follow them. However, in a test situation, where time is scarce, students tend to fall back on familiar ways of writing. Once in 1995, when the argument included illogical statements about a copycat manufacturer, marketing majors attempted to solve market share problems through advertising and sales promotions. These writers forgot to identify the illogical reasoning used in the prompt. Because of that omission, they were immediately bumped to a 3 or down to the "lower half." The essays could have been well-written, used excellent syntactic variety, been organized logically with fully developed paragraphs, and yet the act itself defeated the test taker. While it is true that each issue or argument has no single correct answer, the methodology behind the writing assignment itself is also being evaluated and is weighted heavily. An English undergraduate major definitely has an advantage from this standpoint, and the weighting is illogical from a potential MBA perspective.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS EDUCATORS

As previously stated, the concept behind the GMAT is sound; the assessment process, overall, viable. The assessment uses two writing assignments to develop an overall writing grade. Each time these authors attended a reading, new changes had been incorporated into the process and both new and old changes (factors that differed from AP English readings) were mentioned in the training. The reason for a critical need for business educators to become aware of the problems surrounding the exam rests with factors that others do not think are valid criticisms. ETS has been scoring essays this way for many, many years and can "prove" the reliability and validity of the methods used. However, none of this proof addresses issues related to the use of English guidelines for assessment of potential skill in business writing.

Although the impact of business professors upon the essay evaluation process is almost nonexistent, some effort can be made to improve business undergraduates' success in the GMAT Analytical Writing Assessment. Business professors should make an effort to contact ETS about reading for the GMAT. Taking part just once would provide business professors with an ability to develop assignments that would enable business undergraduates to compete successfully in GMAT writing assessment.

While the basic rules of grammar are the same in both writing for English and writing for business, development of thoughts and format for organization are not. Business needs graduate students who can organize their thoughts logically, a feat the issue essay writing assignment can measure. However, responding to an illogical argument may be penalizing students when what needs to be measured is the student's ability to analyze points and develop alternative solutions to a problem, such as in case study analysis. Even though the functional value of the test and its relevance within a business education framework are questionable (Rogers & Rymer, (1995a, 1995b), ETS will continue to invite readers to assess the GMAT writings. To prepare undergraduate business majors for taking the test in the future, business professors must develop writing assignments that will better prepare the students for the demands of an unusual writing task. Mention of the GMAT can be made when describing the assignment in class.

For the issue, a good selection might be emphasizing the descriptive development of detail in a message such as a memorandum informing employees that complimentary or "comp" time is good or bad. The students could take either the company or the employee point of view. This type of assignment is not just for business communication classes but can occur in a compensation class (human resource managers debating pros and cons) or a collective bargaining class (presenting the management or union sides). Information necessary to support or oppose comp time could be stressed with mention made of the GMAT test writing requirements. Being able to develop an idea using point-by-point identification, specific business examples, or personal experiences is superior to simply stating a fact. For business communication classes, this would fit well in persuasive writing assignments.

For the argument, using a message such as one in which a customer has demanded a refund when some critical factor(s) in the situation make it a definite *No* would require the logical thought processes necessary to identify an illogical argument. Writing a response that takes specific points within such a request and builds upon them to develop the logic for the negative reply (implied or otherwise) will also help students identify sound rebuttal to illogical reasoning used within an argument in the GMAT. In other communication analyses in business classes, effort must be made to discuss writing assignments from the GMAT perspective.

When evaluating case study reports, reward writing that uses logical development of important information. Omitting critical factors in analysis will always receive a deduction from strategy professors, but organization of ideas might not. Now is the time to add that component to an evaluation. The current under-representation of business faculty in the reading process gives business little input into changes that might be made in the GMAT assessment. If more business professors participate and voice their concern, perhaps GMAT will consider the criticisms that have been made by business writing professionals regarding the AWA. Contact:

Educational Testing Service
ATTN: Essay Reading Office
P.O. Box 6666
Princeton, NJ 08543-6923.

In any business school, the KISS (Keep It Short and Simple) principle should continue to be the primary factor in evaluating writing assignments since brevity is a hallmark of business writing. The key is to be sure to add the word *complete* when discussing information to be included By training students to analyze the situation and include all relevant or necessary information, we can know their organizational skills in the writing process will improve. Students who are trained to write effectively can do well in a future GMAT assessment.

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WHAT HOLDS THIS COMPANY TOGETHER? A STUDY OF CORPORATE CULTURE AT BELIZE TELECOMMUNICATIONS LIMITED (BTL)

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ABSTRACT

Six foci of organizational culture (teamwork, morale, information flow, involvement, supervision, and meetings) as identified by Glaser, Zamanou, and Hacker (1987) were analyzed for the organization as a whole and also for subcultures within the organization. Organizational employees identified qualities of supervision as having the greatest presence in the organization. Positive qualities of meetings, teamwork, and morale were also identified among respondents as having a recognizable and solid presence in the work environment. Information flow and employee involvement, however, were of relatively weaker presence. Significant differences between organizational subgroups were indicated for a) management and non-management employee groups, who differed in their views about supervision qualities, b) Belize nationals and non-nationals, who differed in their views about information flow qualities, and c) employees by years of company service, who differed in their views about the presence of teamwork in the organization. The study was helpful in better understanding a foreign corporation that seeks to build positive and productive relations among its national and international constituents.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Like families, villages, schools, and clubs, businesses rest on patterns of social interaction and the pursuit of shared objectives. These are the essence of a corporate culture (Goffee & Jones, 1996).

The culture metaphor has been adopted by scholars from many disciplines as a means of understanding the complexities of an organization. As a result, a variety of definitions for culture have emerged, as well as a variety of ways to measure it. However, the work of scholars Glasser, Zamanou, and Hacker (1987) has been helpful in sorting out the complexities and providing a basic framework on which other studies are built. Their work resulted in a standardized questionnaire, the Organizational Culture Survey (OCS), which represents six central foci of culture common to various disciplinary fields and types of corporations. The OCS contains 36 items, and these items are grouped into six subscales representing the six foci of organizational culture: *Teamwork, morale, information flow, involvement, supervision, and meetings*.

Teamwork is defined as the coordination of effort, honesty, support, conflict resolution, teamwork, concern, and cooperation; it is a feeling of open group communication. **Morale** is defined as good working relationships, respect for workers, fair treatment, as well as a sense of family, trust, and organizational character. **Information flow** refers to being provided with sufficient information to do one's job well, sufficient communication to understand changes, and adequate contact with other work areas.

Involvement is the input of ideas and participation in decision making. If an employee experiences involvement, his/her thoughts and ideas count and the employee is encouraged by management to offer them. **Supervision** is defined as the amount, valence, and clarity of job-performance information as it is provided to employees by their supervisors. The **meetings** subscale refers to the productivity and democratic process of meetings.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to identify a profile of culture that could be assessed and used to further develop the organization and help ensure a stable work force. This written report presents the results of a survey taken among 74 Belize Telecommunications Limited (BTL) employees. The basic question in regards to shared values and common objectives (the foci of corporate culture) was: What holds this company together? Related questions included: Do all BTL employees share the same sense of corporate culture, or do perceptions change along the lines of corporate rank, nationality, gender, and longevity with the company?

Rationale

According to *Info-Line* (1993), assumed similarity of perceptions within the organization is one of the greatest pitfalls in organizational operations and management. Shared values and goals among different types or categories of employees are a strength upon which the organization can grow and prosper. However, if values and goals are not shared, differences and friction have the potential to impede productivity and organizational growth. Consequently, it is important to know the areas in which employees are in agreement and the areas in which they are not.

Additionally, the study of Belizean organizations has been largely ignored. Management and organizational research in Belize is scarce, which makes it very difficult to draw valid conclusions about organizational life. Knowing where organizations share cultural values and goals with Western organizations (and other organizations of the world) is expected to aid business relations. The present investigation of organizational culture within a Belize organization is patterned after a similar study conducted in Nigeria (Onwumechili, 1996).

The study of an organizational culture must be viewed overall as well as by subgroup. As *Info-Line* (1993) has stated, assumed similarity among employees regarding company beliefs and values is dangerous for the company's operations. As different subgroups are identified, company leadership then has the opportunity to assess the extent of differences and take strategic and tactical actions as needed. Organizational rank, nationality, genders, and longevity with the company are employee categories within which organizational subcultures and differences are likely to be found.

METHOD OF COLLECTING DATA

The cultural study of BTL used the Organizational Communication Survey (OCS) instrument to collect information. Glaser, Zamanou, and Hacker (1987) developed this instrument after extensive research in organizational culture and subsequent years of corporate consulting. Through the years, the OCS has gathered well-established validity and reliability. The OCS is especially suited for the BTL study because it explores the relational aspects of organizational culture, which are the foci of numerous other equations of culture. Other equations might involve stories and myths, symbols, and metaphors representing the company's culture.

The OCS has 36 items. Items 1-8 represent the subscale for qualities of **teamwork**; Items 9-15, **morale**; Items 16-19, **information flow**; Items 20-23, **involvement**; Items 24-31, **supervision**; and Items 32-36, **meetings**. Additional items were added to the BTL survey to gather demographic information regarding a respondent's organizational rank, nationality, gender, and longevity with the company.

Seventy-four employees of BTL completed the survey. Employees were presented with the survey and completed it during regular work hours. Of the 74 survey participants, 14 were managers or supervisors, 55 were non-managerial, and 5 gave no response to this item; 72 were Belizean, 2 were non-Belizean; 46 were females and 26 were males, 2 provided no response; and 44 were employed with the company for five or fewer years, 28 have more than five years as BTL employees, and 2 declined to answer.

Employees were presented with the survey and completed it during regular work hours. They were given rationale and encouragement for their participation. All forms were returned to the supervisor in a sealed envelope then delivered to the researchers.

RESULTS

Correlation analyses and T-tests were selected as the most appropriate statistical procedures to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics, which included means and standard deviations, indicated that employees of BTL are in general agreement regarding the presence of six foci of corporate culture (*information flow, involvement, meetings, morale, supervision, and teamwork*). However, as statistical T tests were performed to investigate possible differences by organizational rank, nationality, gender, and longevity with the company, significant differences were identified. The following paragraphs provide the details.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for survey items representing each of the six cultural foci (subscales of the OCS). The OCS uses a scale of 1 very little, 2 little, 3 some, 4 great, 5 very great to indicate the level of extent each statement applies to the respondent or respondent's work environment.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations (sd) for organizational culture foci of the BTL			
Cultural foci and related survey items		Mean	Sd
Teamwork: Members of my team	**Overall**	**3.09**	**.82**
1. Are direct and honest with each other		2.84	1.21
2. Accept criticism without being defensive		2.70	.99
3. Resolve disagreements cooperatively		2.99	1.12
4. Function as a team		3.51	1.04
5. Are cooperative and considerate		3.26	1.02
6. Constructively confront problems		2.96	1.09
7. Are good listeners		3.28	.94
8. Are concerned about each other		3.19	1.12
Morale: This company,	**Overall**	**3.01**	**.74**
9. Facilitates productive work relationships		3.03	.96
10. Motivates me to put out my best efforts		3.31	.78
11. Respects its workers		3.03	1.01
12. Treats people in a consistent and fair manner		3.01	.84
13. Makes working here feel like being part of a family		2.82	1.03
14. Has an atmosphere of trust		2.66	.98
15. Motivates people to be efficient and productive		3.19	1.06
Information Flow I am,	**Overall**	**2.93**	**.71**
16. Provided with enough information to understand the big picture		3.26	.83
17. Given clear reasons for change		2.51	.86
18. Provided with knowledge about happenings in other offices		2.50	1.08
19. Given information I need to do my job well		3.46	.88
Involvement: I feel involved in this organization because,	**Overall**	**2.81**	**.88**
20. I have a say in decisions that affect my work		2.81	1.13
21. I'm asked for suggestions about how to do my job better		3.23	1.08
22. This organization values ideas of workers at every level		2.77	.99
23. My opinions count		2.45	1.06
Supervision: My supervisor,	**Overall**	**3.68**	**.80**
24. Makes job requirements clear		3.91	.97
25. Tells me when I do a good job		3.42	1.03
26. Delegates responsibility		3.76	.92
27. Is approachable		3.97	.96
28. Gives me criticism in a positive manner		3.72	1.05
29. Is a good listener		3.84	1.05
30. Tells me how I'm doing		3.53	1.05
31. Takes criticism well		3.30	1.19
Meetings: During or as a result of company meetings,	**Overall**	**3.27**	**.92**
32. Decisions made at meetings are carried out		3.30	1.14
33. Everyone takes part in discussions		3.20	1.27
34. Discussions stay on track		3.12	1.13
35. Time in meetings is time well spent		3.20	1.18
36. Meetings tap the creative potential of people present		3.07	1.21

Table 1: Means and standard deviations (sd) for organizational culture foci of the BTL			
Cultural foci and related survey items		Mean	Sd
Note: All items were scored using the following categories from 1 to 5. Ratings indicate the extent each statement applied to the respondent or respondent's work environment. Statement applies: 1 – Very Little 2 – Little 3 – Some 4 – Great 5 – Very Great			

As indicated by Table 1 means, the foci most favorably represented at BTL was *supervision*. *Supervision* received an overall mean of 3.68 and item means between 3.30 and 3.97. Respondents felt these positive statements representing qualities of supervision were representative of the respondent or to his/her work environment to "some" extent or to a "great" extent. Similarly, favorable statements about *meetings* (overall mean 3.27), *teamwork* (overall mean 3.09), and *morale* (overall mean 3.01) were judged by the respondents to be representative within the company to "some" extent or to a "great" extent. However, *Information flow* (overall mean 2.93) and *involvement* (overall mean 2.81) received relatively lower ratings, as respondents indicated only "little" to "some" agreement with statements reflecting the presence of these two cultural foci of the OCS survey.

The following presents the results of T tests that identify significant differences among employee groups based on organizational rank (managers/supervisors and non-managers), nationality, and longevity as an employee of the company. No significant gender differences were indicated among BTL employees.

Organizational Rank

Managers and non-managers differed significantly on their answers to survey Items 24-25 and 27-31, which represent qualities of *supervision*. Table 2 illustrates the statistical findings.

Table 2
Organizational rank—Differences between managerial and non-managerial personnel
on characteristics of *supervision*

Supervision qualities	Managers mean / sd	Non-Mgrs. mean / sd	F value	Sig
24. Job requirements are made clear by my supervisor.	4.50 / .76	3.71 / .96	4.86	.011
25. When I do a good job my supervisor tells me.	4.07 / 1.07	3 27 / 1.01	3.50	.036
26. My supervisor delegates responsibility	4.21 / .98	3.62 / .89	2.44	.095
27. My supervisor is approachable	4.71 / .47	3. 78 / .99	6.33	.003
28. My supervisor gives me criticism in a positive manner	4.43 / .65	3.47 / 1.07	5.96	.004
29. My supervisor is a good listener	4.71 / .47	3.56 / 1.05	8.70	.000

30. My supervisor tells me how I'm doing	4.29 / .73	3.36 / 1.06	4.85	.011
31. My supervisor takes criticism well	4.00 / .96	3.13 / 1.12	3.59	.033
Statement applies: 1 – Very Little 2 – Little 3 – Some 4 – Great 5 – Very Great				

As the means of Table 2 indicate, managers felt more positive about qualities of *supervision* than did non-managerial employees. Item 26 was the only item representing *supervision* qualities where both groups similarly agreed--supervisors delegate responsibilities.

Belize Nationals and Non-Nationals

Nationals, who are originally from Belize, were not in agreement with non-national employees, who were from other countries, on Item 17, one of the four items representing quality of *information flow*. Item 17 states, "When changes are made, the reasons why are made clear." As Table 3 illustrates, Belize nationals only agreed a "little" or "some" on this item. Non-nationals were in total agreement with this item (mean of 5.0 on a scale of 1 very little to 5 very great agreement), but only two non-nationals were included in the survey. Therefore, these results must be taken cautiously. The most important point for management is the indication that the overall group of employees tends to not agree with Item 17 (mean 2.47).

Table 3
Nationality—Differences between Belize national and non-national personnel on a characteristic of information flow

Information flow	Nationals Mean / sd	Non-Nat'ls Mean / sd	F value	Sig
17. When changes are made, the reasons why are made clear	2.47 / .82	5.00 / .00	9.33	.003
Statement applies: 1 – Very Little 2 – Little 3 – Some 4 – Great 5 – Very Great				

Longevity-Company Service in Three Categories (two years or less, three to five years, and more than five years)

Depending on length of service with the company, employees differed in their perceptions regarding four of the eight items representing qualities of *teamwork*. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedures were used to analyze this item since there were three categories based on service. Table 4 presents these findings.

Table 4
Longevity with the company—Differences among employee groups based on service with the company (2 years or less, 3 to 5 years, and more than 5 years) and perceptions of teamwork

Teamwork	Service 2 yrs or less Mean / sd	Service 3 to 5 yrs Mean / sd	Service Over 5 yrs Mean / sd	F value	Sig
3. People I work with resolve disagreements cooperatively.	3.71 / .77	2.52 / .97	2.96 / 1.10	6.75	.00
4. People I work with function as a team.	4.06 / .75	3.22 / .97	3.46 / 1.10	3.84	.03
5. People I work with are cooperative and considerate	3.82 / .95	2.74 / .76	3.36 / 1.06	7.41	.00
7. People I work with are good listeners	3.76 / .90	3.00 / .73	3.21 / 1.03	3.84	.03
Statement applies: 1 – Very Little 2 – Little 3 – Some 4 – Great 5 – Very Great					

As indicated by the means in Table 4, employees with service between three to five years were less able to identify the presence of *teamwork* in the company than was true for other groups of employees. These employees had less agreement on statements that people resolve disagreements cooperatively, that work associates function as a team, that people are cooperative and considerate, or that coworkers are good listeners.

Post hoc tests were performed following the ANOVA results. Post hoc results indicated that for all OCS items entered in Table 4 (Items 3, 4, 5, and 7), two employee service categories were responsible for the differences: a) two years or less and b) three to five years of service. However, the groups responsible for the significant findings differed in diverse ways when compared to the group of employees with the longest service (more than five years service). The level of agreement with OCS statements about the presence of teamwork in the company was "some" to a "great" degree among employees with two or fewer years with the company (means ranged between 3.71 and 4.06).

On the other hand, employees with three to five years of service agreed only a "little" or to "some" degree with the OCS *teamwork* statements (item means ranged between 2.52 and 3.22). The group means for the employees with over five years of service fell between the means of the other two groups (item means between 2.96 and 3.46). In other words, the greatest extent of recognition for the teamwork foci was among employees in their earliest service years. The least extent of recognition for the *teamwork* foci was among employees with three to five years of service. Between these two extremes was a "middle-of-the-road" agreement level for employees with more than five years of service.

Other Findings

Findings in addition to results presented in Tables 1 through 4 included the identification of significant variance among certain members of the same group, as well as the types of employees requesting a copy of this report. This disagreement among employees within the same group or category was revealed by statistics based on Levene's test of homogeneity.

Employees with service of less than five years with the company showed significant internal variance for their answers to questions of *involvement* in the organization's idea generation and decision making processes. These results suggest that newer employees do not agree among themselves on the level that the company encourages input of ideas and participation in decision making.

Similarly, the group of employees with more than five years of service were more dispersed in their ratings for *supervision* qualities than was true for other employees. The results suggest that longer-term employees do not agree among themselves on the amount, valence, and clarity of job performance information provided by the supervisors.

The final finding identified categories of employees most frequently requesting a copy of this report. These employees indicated high agreement with specific statements representing a) *involvement*, Item 23, "My opinions count in this company," b) *supervision*, Item 24, "Job requirements are made clear by my supervisor," and c) *supervision*, Item 31, "My supervisor takes criticism well."

DISCUSSION

Employees of the BTL share, to a large extent, the organization's basic values and objectives; that is, they are in general agreement regarding the existence of basic foci of BTL's corporate culture. Strength of the foci, however, was not consistently high. Characteristics of *supervision* were reported to have the strongest presence for the respondents or their work environment. Statistical means for *Supervision* items ranged between 3.30 and 3.97, with an overall mean of 3.68, indicating "some" to a "great" extent of agreement for the positive qualities of *supervision* represented in the OCS.

Qualities of *meetings* (overall mean 3.27), *teamwork* (overall mean 3.09), and *morale* (overall mean 3.01) were also identified among respondents as having a recognizable and solid presence in the company. *Information flow* (overall mean 2.93) and employee *involvement* (overall mean 2.81), however, were of relatively weaker presence, according to the respondents.

Although many employees agreed on the level that these foci were represented in the company, significant perceptual differences were identified among certain employee groups. Perceptions differed between groups in three areas.

First, the manager/supervisor group and the non-management group of employees differed on their perceptions regarding the qualities of employee supervision. Management/supervisors indicated higher levels of agreement to positive OCS statements about *supervision* qualities than was true for non-managers. If managers seek to achieve the perception of quality *supervision* among all employees, they may want to take actions to increase that awareness among employees. For example, management could increase the efforts to clarify job requirements and work expectations for all employees, increase the amount of positive feedback for work well done, and reinforce the reality that managers are approachable and can be trusted.

Second, the national and non-national groups differed on qualities of *information flow*. Nationals were significantly less in agreement than non-nationals with statements about the presence of *information flow* in the workplace. *Information flow* is an element of organization communication, and communication may be considered as the "oil for the wheels" that keep the organization running. Further analysis of communication qualities in the company is recommended by use of the Communication Audit (Downs, 1988), administered and analyzed by a communication professional.

Third and finally, the employees with two or fewer years of service identified *teamwork* statements of the OCS as being highly representative in their work place; but employees with three to six years identified *teamwork* presence in the workplace as being relatively low. Employees with more than five years of service showed results that fell between the other two groups. Based on the OCS items that represent *teamwork* and differ across these groups, conflict resolution training and team development may be key approaches to increasing shared values and goals for *teamwork* qualities. Workshops with scheduled follow up and feedback activities may be helpful. During the training, employees need to feel they are a part of the solution and not the problem. Active and committed employee participation in the change process would be important.

Additionally, perceptions differed significantly *within* the group of employees having five or fewer years with the company on qualities of *involvement* and among the more tenured employees on qualities of *information flow*. As suggested by *Info-Line* (1993), shared values and goals of organizational culture are strengths for the corporation . The perceived differences on specified basic cultural foci may represent issues that need to be addressed by management.

The relatively low ratings for recognition among group members for the presence of *information flow* (2.93) and employee *involvement* (2.81) suggest that more information may be needed for employees to do their job well, understand changes, and have sufficient communication with people of other work areas. Similarly, employees may feel more involved if they knew their ideas counted and if they were encouraged to offer them. Any action on these findings, however, depends on the type of culture the organization's management is willing to support and enhance.

Prior to taking any specific action to change cultural foci of the organization, BTL management should initially consider the following:

- ♦ Be clear about the type of culture the organization is willing to support and enhance. Will management recognize and/or be willing to support a networked, communal, fragmented, mercenary, or some other type organization (Goffee & Jones, 1996)? Additional analysis as well as training could be conducted regarding the desirability of these alternatives and their advantages and disadvantages for the ongoing development of the BTL. An important consideration is that management clearly determines the mid-term to long-term goals and desired profile for shared values and objectives of the organization.

- ♦ Seek answers to a) are the differences between group or categorical perceptions of the organization's cultural values, as identified in the OCS survey findings, problematic? If so, what strategies and tactics for change are desirable over the long-term?

♦ Periodically survey BTL employees for cultural perceptions of cohesiveness regarding the basic cultural values and cultural objectives. Assess the results, and take strategic action toward shaping and maintaining the type of organizational culture which best serves BTL's mission and business objectives.

Notes

Caution should be taken regarding the interpretation of these results or results of other instruments. The OCS should not be thought of as a set of values the organization should follow. More importantly, by use of the OCS, management has been provided with data, which can be used to assess the degree to which the survey results actually represent the ideal values of the organization. Furthermore, the study of organizational culture using the OCS explores only the sociological dimensions of the organization. The OCS could be supplemented with instruments that reveal additional representations of culture, such as stories and myths, symbols, and metaphors.

In conclusion, the specific values and perceptions held by BTL employees and revealed in this study should be further confirmed by on-going surveys and by additional methodologies. Face-to-face interviewing, focus group interaction, and alternative instruments which have established and acceptable levels of validity and reliability, could be of considerable benefit to management as it adapts and uses corporate culture to meet its organizational mission and business objectives.

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BUSINESS COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTION OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine which nonverbal topics and methods business communication instructors use in teaching nonverbal communication. A questionnaire was developed and mailed to members of the Association for Business Communication members in the Southwest and West regions.

"Facial expression" and "eye contact" were the topics most frequently reported by respondents. The respondents of this study reported that "audio/visual material" was the most valuable method for teaching nonverbal.

INTRODUCTION

How important is nonverbal communication? Studies suggest that 65 to 90 percent of our communication is transmitted nonverbally. If this is true, then business communication instructors should be placing emphases on nonverbal communication. Nonverbal consists of the following: body language, tone of voice, gestures, physical appearance, space/territory, facial expressions and the clothes we wear.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine which nonverbal topics and methods business communication instructors used in teaching nonverbal communication. Specifically the objectives of this study are:

- to determine the age and sex of the respondents.
- to determine the value of nonverbal communication as perceived by business communication instructors.
- to determine the number of assignments and materials used to teach nonverbal.
- to determine the topics taught in nonverbal.
- to determine the methods used in teaching nonverbal.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was developed and mailed to members of the Association for Business Communication in the Southwest and West Regions. A total of 298 questionnaires were mailed. One hundred thirteen questionnaires were returned for a 38 percent return rate. However, some respondents did not teach nonverbal and some were retired; thus, there were 74 usable questionnaires.

RELATED LITERATURE

Nonverbal communication is a relatively new field of study and is defined as "everything but the words used to communicate." "Nonverbal communication" is just one label. Others include "body language", "kinesics," "paralanguage", and "proxemics."

Mary Ellen Guffey defines nonverbal communication as including "all written and unspoken messages, both intentional and unintentional."(Guffey, p. 50) Researchers have found that "an astonishing 93 per cent of the meaning of a message comes from nonverbal cues."(Guffey, p. 50) "Only seven per cent ...of a message comes from the words spoken."(Guffey, p. 50)

A recently published book, Nonverbal Communications, Forms and Functions by Peter A. Anderson is based on "current theory and research in the field of nonverbal communication." Anderson states that "most researchers believe that nonverbal communication is considerably more important" (Anderson, 1999, 1) than verbal communication. Although researchers may disagree with the percentage of a message that is carried nonverbally "numerous studies show that all the various aspects of nonverbal communication-body movements, interpersonal distance, touch, facial expressions, and all other components ... of nonverbal communication ...are very important" (Anderson, 1999, 2).

Anderson defines nonverbal communication as "includes all communication other than language." (Anderson, 1999, 2) Nonverbal communication is a part of the broader category of communication. "Verbal communication and nonverbal communication...exist side by side as two human processes that are part of the same system" (Anderson, 1999, 2).

The coverage of nonverbal communication in the business communication textbooks has increased over the past two decades. Business Communications by Himstreet and Baty published in 1973 and used as a text in a business communication course devoted a few lines to nonverbal communication. They reported that "facial expressions, gestures and other bodily actions can tell when a person is pleased or upset." (Himstreet & Baty, 1973, 10) Also, listeners can recognize when "a person's speech does not convey his true intentions." (Himstreet & Baty, 1973, 10)

Recently published business communication books devote much more space to nonverbal communication. A recently published book Lesikar's Basic Business Communication by Lesikar, Pettit and Flatley (1999) devoted approximately three and one-half pages to nonverbal communication and included the nature of nonverbal communication, types of nonverbal communication which includes body language, space, time, paralanguage, and other types of nonverbal communication.(p. 434-437)

Lehman and Dufrene's book Himstreet and Baty's Business Communication, 1999, included nonverbal communication, metacommunication, kinesic communication, overcoming barriers created by nonverbal messages, and cultural differences in nonverbal messages in their book.(Lehman & DuFrene, 1999, 49-52)

Even popular magazines such as McCalls, Readers Digest, Good Housekeeping, Mademoiselle, Tennis and Career World include nonverbal communication articles.

The February, 1998 Readers Digest in an article entitled "The Healing Power of Touch" records that touch is our "most intimate and most powerful form of communication." George Colt further states that "a simple touch-a hand on a shoulder, an arm around a waist-can reduce the heart rate and lower blood pressure." "Even people in deep comas may show changes in their heart rates when their hands are held. Positive, nurturing touch appears to stimulate the release of endorphinas, the body's natural pain suppressors." (Colt, 1998, 89)

An article in Tennis, May, 1993, Jim Loehr discusses how nonverbal behavior on the tennis court can communicate win or lose. He says "body language may be the most underused weapon in tennis. With the right body language, you can summon the emotions that help players perform at their best, such as confidence and relaxation." (Loehr, 1993,. 118) Wouldn't it be great to become exceptionally confident right before you return your opponent's serve on break point?"(Loehr, 1993, 118)

An article in 1994 issue of Career World by Pamela Kramer says "It's true what you say in an interview has a lot to do with whether or not you land a new job. But what you don't say tells a potential employer even more." (Kramer, 1994, 14) No matter what you say, " the interviewer will have a hard time believing your words when your 'body language' is screaming the complete opposite." (Kramer, 1994, 14)

Dianne Hales' article, The Secret Language of Success in Reader's Digest, January, 1994 contains information about nonverbal communication in the family and on the job. The main theme of nonverbal communication on the job "centers on the theme: power." (Hales, 1994,166) "...humans have their own way of signaling who is in charge."(Hales, 1994, 166) Ms. Hales discusses how power and lack of power is communicated on the job. Also, she discusses how to "look for discrepancies in what you are seeing and what you are hearing."(Hales, 1994, 166) She emphasizes the importance of working on the handshake and establishing good eye contact.(Hales, 1994, 165-169)

Karen Berg, CEO of New York City-based CommCore which specializes in communication training, wrote an article for McCalls, June 1993, entitled "How to Get What you Want." Karen writes that "the majority of interpersonal communication occurs through body language."(Berg, 1993, 90) She includes pictures which includes recommended body language that will get people to tell a secret, will get the job, will keep pickpockets away, and will get people to ask opinions at a board meeting. (Berg, 1993, 90-92)

In "How to Tell When a Person is Lying", Good Housekeeping, June, 1994, D. Glenn Foster and Mary Marshall teach how to read the subtle nonverbal cues. When adults can't express their real feelings "we have learned to 'behave' ourselves and how to hide our true feelings."(Foster & Marshall, 1994, 46) The article "goes through a set of signals that a husband sends out when the wife suspects he is being unfaithful."(Foster & Marshall, 1994, 46)

The July, 1995 issue of Mademoiselle contains an article entitled "Do you Give Good Body Language." by Alicia Rodriguez. A body language self-discovery test (a test of your visual vocabulary) is included. Photographs are shown of people at a party and at the office. Then questions concerning nonverbal communications are asked to determine the reader's nonverbal savvy. The answers and discussion are given. (Rodriguez, 1995, 75-77)

FINDINGS

Shown below is the sex of the respondents.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents		
	Number	Percent
Male	31	42
Female	43	58

As shown in Table 1, 31(42%) of the respondents were male and 43 (58%) were female. Table 2 indicates the age categories of respondents.

Table 2: Age Categories of Respondents		
Age	Number	Percent
Under 30	0	0
31-40	2	3
41-50	21	28
51-60	40	54
Over 60	9	12
No Response	2	3
Total	74	100

As revealed in Table 2, 61(82%) of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 60. Twenty-four of the respondents indicated that they did not teach nonverbal. Those respondents were asked if they anticipated incorporating nonverbal in their classes. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Do you anticipate incorporation of nonverbal?		
Response	Number	Percent
Yes	1	4
No	12	50
Undecided	6	25
No Response	5	21
Total	24	100

As shown in the table above 12(50%) of those not teaching nonverbal do not anticipate including nonverbal in their classes. Those respondents that were not going to include nonverbal were asked why not? The results are shown in the table below.

Table 4: Why do you not teach nonverbal?		
Reason	Number	Percent
Too much material to cover	6	25
Lack of interest on part of teacher	2	8
Don't feel qualified to teach nonverbal	2	8
Lack of interest on part of students	1	4
Inadequate instructional material available	1	4
Subject inappropriate for BC	1	4
Other	5	21

Other responses:

1. Emphasis on writing
2. Outside boundaries of written communication
3. Taught in another class

"Too much material to cover" was the response given most often to the question "why do you not teach nonverbal?" Respondents were asked "how valuable is nonverbal?" Shown in Table 5 are the responses.

Table 5: How valuable is nonverbal?		
Response	Number	Percent
Very valuable	46	62
Valuable	25	34
Little Value	3	4
No Value	0	0
No Opinion	0	0
TOTAL	74	100

Respondents did believe that nonverbal was valuable. Seventy-one (96%) believed nonverbal to be "very valuable" or "valuable." The number of assignments given in nonverbal is shown below.

Table 6: How many nonverbal assignments per semester?		
Response	Number	Percent
Zero	11	15
1	18	24
2	19	26
3	10	13
4	3	4
More than 4	2	3
Integrated	11	15
Total	74	100

As shown in Table 6 most respondents give either 1 or 2 assignments in nonverbal per semester. Shown in Table 7 are the types of materials used in teaching nonverbal.

Table 7: Materials used to teach nonverbal		
Response	Number	Percent
Teacher-made material	50	68
Textbook	49	66
Supplementary material	39	53
Other	9	12

Respondents used "teacher-made material" and textbooks most frequently in teaching nonverbal. The number of class periods spent on teaching nonverbal is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: How many class periods spent on nonverbal?		
Response	Number	Percent
Zero	1	1
1	13	18
2	30	41
3	16	22
4	3	4
5	1	1
More than 5	4	5
Integrated	6	8
Total	74	100

Most respondents 46 (63 percent) spent either 2 or 3 class periods teaching nonverbal. Following are the nonverbal topics that respondents taught in nonverbal.

Table 9: Which topics do you teach in nonverbal?

Response	Number	Percent
Facial Expressions	69	93
Eye Contact	68	92
Personal Appearance	66	89
Gestural Activities	65	88
Dress	62	84
Smiling	61	82
Hand Shake	60	81
Posture	59	80
Making a good First Impression	58	78
Tone of Voice	58	78
Spatial Relationship	57	77
Attitudes about Time	56	76
Leaning Toward	56	76
Nodding Head	53	72
Leaning Away	50	68
Vocal Qualities	50	68
Touching	49	66
Vocal Characteristics	41	55
Meaning of Colors	36	49
Slouching	34	46
Vocal Segregates	13	18

"Facial expressions" and "eye contact" were the topics most frequently taught by respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate what they believed to be the appropriate methods to use in teaching nonverbal. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Methods in teaching nonverbal

Methods Used	Number	Percent
Lecture	66	89
Discussion	63	85
Textbook Reading	47	64
Audio/Visual Material	44	59
Role Playing	36	49
Case Studies	33	45
Group Project	29	39
Current Events	25	34
Guest Speakers	16	22
Student Term Papers	13	18
Panel Discussion	8	11
Debate	5	7

Sixty-six (89 percent) of the respondents indicated the "lecture" was the most used method. "Debate" was the method least frequently. Respondents were asked to rate the value of each teaching method. The results can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11: Value of method used (Number responding)
Very Valuable = 4, Valuable = 3, Little Value = 2, No Value = 1

Method Used	Very Valuable	Valuable	Little Value	No Value	Weighted Average
Audio/ Visual Material	32	12	0	0	3.73
Role Playing	25	10	0	1	3.64
Discussions	30	32	1	0	3.46
Group Projects	15	13	0	0	3.41
Current Events	12	10	0	1	3.16
Case Studies	14	15	1	1	3.15
Lectures	16	45	4	0	3.14
Guest Speakers	20	30	0	0	3.13
Textbook Reading	9	30	7	0	2.98
Student Term Papers	16	15	6	1	2.92
Panel Discussion	12	13	2	2	2.38
Debates	4	3	2	1	2.00

According to respondents, "audio/visual material" was the most valuable method; while "debate" was the least valuable method.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. A majority of the respondents were female.
2. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 60.
3. Ninety-six percent of the respondents believed that nonverbal was "very valuable" or "valuable.
4. Fifty percent of the respondents give 1 or 2 nonverbal assignments each semester.
5. Most teachers use "teacher-made material" for teaching nonverbal.
6. A majority of respondents spend 2 or 3 class periods teaching nonverbal.
7. "Facial expressions" and "eye contact" were the topics most frequently taught.
8. Respondents indicated "lecture" and "discussion" were the methods used most frequently.
9. Respondents rated "audio/video material" and "role playing" as the most valuable methods.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The information contained in this study should be beneficial to those teaching nonverbal. The nonverbal topics that business communication instructors indicated should be taught might prove useful to those teaching nonverbal. Those teaching nonverbal should find the value placed on various teaching methods beneficial.

Business communications instructors not teaching nonverbal might consider adding a unit on nonverbal. Respondents might consider spending additional class periods on nonverbal.

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MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES FOR RESOLVING EMPLOYEE DISRUPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Many workers and managers are ill prepared to cope with the day-to-day problems caused by difficult employees. Indeed, much of the stress that is generated in a work setting is caused by disruptive employees. This paper will describe the characteristics of disruptive employees, some of the reasons for their behavior, the costs to employers, and managerial communication technologies that managers can employ in dealing with difficult behavior in the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

Both managers and employees need to take more than skills into the workplace; they need to take with them managerial communication technologies. These technologies provide the necessary tools to cope with difficult and disruptive employees. Many workers and managers are ill prepared to cope with the day-to-day problems caused by these difficult employees. Indeed, much of the stress that is generated in a work setting is caused by disruptive employees. Yet, little attention has been given as to how good managerial communication can help in dealing with subordinates, coworkers, and bosses who exhibit poor behavior.

Interacting with one's peers calls for a different set of behaviors than those used with superiors and subordinates. In superior-subordinate situations, organizations have systems of authority and status and power that are usually well-defined but not necessarily well-implemented (Arnold & Roach, 1992). This paper will describe the characteristics of disruptive employees, some the reasons for their behavior, the costs to employers, employment practices liability insurance, and good managerial technologies managers can bring to bear to deal with difficult behavior and enhance workplace performance.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFICULT EMPLOYEES

Sometimes characteristics of difficult people are hard to identify when first encountering them in the workplace because human behavior is extremely complex. However, some warning signs of difficult employees include:

- has difficulty accepting authority/criticism
- holds grudges—especially against managers
- sabotages company property and/or equipment
- physical/verbal intimidation
- argumentative/uncooperative
- has difficulty controlling temper
- has sense of entitlement (Johnson, Kurutz, & Kiehlbauch, 1995).

A difficult employee is viewed by his coworkers as insensitive, arrogant, abrasive and not a team player. S/he doesn't choose his/her battles, doesn't know when to quit, and ends up in numerous scrapes with peers (Marsh & Arnold, 1988). Not surprisingly, difficult employees can do a great deal of damage. Because the employee does not always complete assignments, the work is assigned to someone else. Those coworkers will directly or indirectly express their feelings in loss of respect for the supervisor, in group feelings of anger, in declining work performance and in poor morale (Sparber, 1987).

There are many kinds of difficult and disruptive employees. For example:

- ***The Rabble Rouser*** - breeds discontent and can spoil the morale of an entire group. Interestingly enough, Tom Peters, author of many management books, recommends that a manager should "within 12 months, promote to a position of significant responsibility at least one rabble rouser who often doesn't agree with the manager" (How to Handle Rabble Rousers, 1997).

- ***The Clinging Vine*** - has an excessive need to be cared for by others. Lacking in self-esteem, the Clinging Vine constantly looks to others for guidance and validation. The Clinging Vine tends to be self-deprecating and morose. The Vines are quick to accommodate others by suppressing their own feelings in order to maintain a pleasing image (McDonald & Less-Haley, 1996).

- ***The Intimidator*** - intimidates others by their loudness and abrasive behavior (Yandrick, 1997). They take center-stage at meetings and they out-shout their colleagues when presenting their point of view.

- ***The Egoist*** - has an inflated self-appraisal combined with a lack of empathy for others. They overestimate their own knowledge, importance, power, and work product. They have an inflated opinion of their abilities and accomplishments and resent the failure of others to appreciate their exceptional qualities. Yet, at the same time, they have a fragile self-image that requires constant bolstering by others (McDonald & Less-Haley, 1996).

- ***The Tattletale*** - will make an alliance with another negative person or persons. Each reinforces each other's negative perceptions about everyone else in the workplace. The Tattletale generalizes about people. S/he thinks in a negative mode and s/he engages in projection. The Tattletale has poor listening skills and sees everyone as competition. There are plenty of tattletales among the adult population. They are the plague of their managers and their co-workers (Waddell, 1997).

- ***The Green-Eyed Monster*** - is jealous of other employees' successes. Jealousy is not simply an emotion linked to love, it is often associated with work-related rewards, such as merit raises. The jealous employee sometimes tries to undermine the positions of the persons he or she hold in envy (Arnold & Roach, 1992).

- ***The Shape-Shifter*** - is inherently unstable. He/she is manipulative and mercurial. Their moods, values, goals, and self-image shift often, quickly and without warning. The Shape-Shifter is extremely sensitive to perceived rejection. For example, in response to a trivial rejection, the Shape-Shifter may become intensely angry and bitterly accuse a supervisor or coworker of some outrageous conduct (McDonald & Less-Haley, 1996).

One of the most common and troublesome behavior problems is abrasiveness or lack of sensitivity to other people. Being perceived as abrasive or lacking in interpersonal skills often prevents otherwise talented employees from meeting their own career goals and fulfilling the promise of their potential (Marsh & Arnold, 1988).

REASONS FOR POOR BEHAVIOR

There are many reasons why people act out at work. Some people have become so alienated that they feel no loyalty or attachment to their organization. They love their work, but hate their jobs (Bensimon, 1997). In addition, employees hold real fears of the future. Those fears clash with the saccharin messages too many corporate communicators hold forth. The conflict is destroying trust in management (Burger, 1995).

Another reason for poor behavior is sheer work overload. Employees feel overworked and underappreciated. In fact, it has become commonplace for interpersonal difficulties, often between supervisors and workers, to interfere with productive and healthy work environments (Ajango, 1995). Not surprisingly, work overload is just one hot workplace issue surfacing on a new wave of cutting-edge employee surveys (Shellenbarger, 1998).

Finally, stress is a major factor. Too much stress makes people sick leading to mood and sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal problems, heart attacks, difficulty concentrating, short tempers, and mental breakdowns (Grimsley, 1999). In addition, difficult employees can make an individual's workday unsatisfying and unduly stressful (Arnold & Roach, 1992). To help relieve the stress, organizational psychologist Gary Namie operates a web site called the Work Doctor at www.workdoctor.com where workers discuss their job stresses (Grimsley, 1999).

A 1998 survey by the Families and Work Institute found that 26 percent of workers said they were "often or very often burned out or stressed out by their work." In addition, a 1997 survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates found that three-quarters of employees believe the worker today has more on-the-job stress than a generation ago (Grimsley, 1999).

Anger also leads to disruptive behavior. There are people who are chronically angry. These people find themselves isolated from the flow of work and ideas, but since they hold varying amounts of power, their permanently dark moods can wreak havoc on progress (Walsh, 1995). According to Hendrie Weisniger, most working people experience some annoyance at least ten times a day (Bensimon, 1997). The underlying causes of this anger in the workplace are the diminishing self-esteem of American workers and the way that stress factors reinforce their low self-esteem.

Sometimes this anger is the result of poor management. Poor management styles often contribute to nonproductive and unhappy workplaces. Ineffective managers often supervise too closely, stifle a staff's enthusiasm, have poor interpersonal relationships with employees, and are unable or unwilling to adapt and adjust to changing conditions. In addition, managers are not trained well. Listening skills are of the utmost importance, and most managers don't really listen. Because they are not good communicators, they do a poor job verbalizing expectations and evaluations (Ajango, 1995).

For difficult and disruptive employees, as well as distressed coworkers, web sites are springing up offering employees a chance to vent about their unsatisfactory work life. One site, www.disgruntled.com. posts anecdotes sent in by readers about their bosses and coworkers. Another, www.myboss.com. offers tips on how to relax before job interviews. Such web sites are a way to communicate their pain. Among the companies whose workers have set up their own web sites to complain are Wal-Mart and Sears, Roebuck & Company (Sterba, 1997).

COSTS TO EMPLOYERS

Unresolved behavioral problems turn into financial and productivity losses, and interventions that are too narrow in scope will allow the same problems to burst out again elsewhere. If managers have only a limited understanding of where the people problems occur and how these problems siphon off financial resources, they are less likely to have insights on how to prevent or minimize their impact (Yandrick, 1996). In addition to lower productivity, a more significant cost to employers is legal fees. Angry workers are filing lawsuits against their employers in record numbers. It is a frightening and an expensive trend that is bound to get worse (Caudron, 1996).

A survey of 450 top HR executives and in-house lawyers conducted by Jackson, Lewis, Schnitzler & Krupman, one of the nation's leading employment law firms, confirms the increase in lawsuits. Three out of five human resources people responding to the firm's 1995 survey said their companies are being sued by an employee, an increase of 10 percent over the last two years. Throughout the country, plaintiffs' lawyers who once might have turned away an aggrieved employee now have powerful financial incentives to file lawsuits. For example, the cost of defending an employee lawsuit through trial, including attorneys' fees and expenses, typically ranges from $100,000 to $250,000. These costs, along with the fact that plaintiffs tend to prevail in jury trials, make many companies eager to settle lawsuits as soon as possible. But even settlement can be expensive (Caudron, 1996).

In addition, there are cases of "serial suers." In a sexual harassment case, Kim Gastineau had been fired from his job with Fleet Mortgage Company in Indianapolis after refusing to have sex with a female colleague who, he said, liked to perch atop his desk in skimpy outfits and tease his crotch with her foot. Recently, Gastineau lost his case. Why did the jury find against him? It may have been because the colleague said it was Gastineau who made the advances. But the verdict could have turned on the fact that the court decided to let Fleet's attorneys tell the jury of the plaintiff's history. Gastineau, it turns out, had sued three previous employers (Kaufman, 1998). There is a growing underground industry which has decided this is the way to make money.

In employment-discrimination cases, employees have plenty of legislative protection behind them. But legal experts seem to agree that nothing has fueled the onslaught of workplace litigation more than the Civil Rights Act of 1991,. Before 1991, a plaintiff in an employment-discrimination case appeared before a judge, not a jury. After the Act of 1991, plaintiffs were given the right to a jury trial, and juries are notoriously sympathetic to people who have lost their jobs. Because juries feel sorry for the person, plaintiffs typically prevail more often than the companies they sue (Caudron, 1996).

In addition, in 1991, Congress amended the 1964 Civil Rights Act to permit jury trials in employment-discrimination cases and authorized the recovery of additional emotional distress and punitive damages. In one fell swoop, Congress significantly increased the incentive for disgruntled employees to sue (Miklave, 1998).

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE LIABILITY INSURANCE

Lawsuits are a very expensive issue, so expensive, in fact, that they have given rise to a whole new form of business insurance called employment practices liability coverage. This insurance is designed to protect a company should it run up against charges of sexual harassment, wrongful termination, discrimination or similar violations (Myers, 1994).

EPL insurance is one of those new coverages specially tailored to meet the needs of changing times, the new employment-related types of claims. It is a growth market with only $30 million in premiums in 1994 and over $300 million in 1997 (Electronic Summary, 1997). The fastest-growing sales category is sexual harassment insurance. Employers who have EPL insurance can protect themselves against claims as high as $10 million, as long as they have put into place proper work practices and procedures (Odd Jobs, 1998).

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES THAT WILL HELP EMPLOYERS DEAL WITH DISRUPTIONS

Relationships are built on what people have in common; the more people have in common, the easier it is to get along with people. Conflict is built on the difference between you and the other person. Managerial communication technologies that can be employed to resolve employee disruptions include:

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Skills:

- Be organized - Have a plan and know the results you want.
- Listen with empathy.
- Choose your language carefully – Be direct and use simple language and sentence structure. Avoid using words such as: "but," "however," "always,""never."
- Regulate the tone and the flow of voice – use a tone and speed that match the message.
- Watch for body language – pause and mimic the other person's body language.
- Pace lessens the distance between you and the other person.
- Use silence - Let people have time to formulate a response. Let the difficult person fill in the space.
- Clarification – ask questions in order "who, what, where, when, how."

Listening:

"Take the cotton out of your ears, and put it in your mouth"

- Listen attentively without interrupting – "Almost everyone considers themselves a good listener, and almost nobody is as good as they think."
- Make a conscious choice about your response – try not to get angry; stay focused on problem solving.
- Acknowledge the other person's feelings make it "okay" to have an opinion different from yours.
- Try to see the other person's point of view.
- Be patient - with the difficult person and with yourself.
- Express your point of view and explain why – present your evidence without backing them into a corner. An explanation can often take the sting out of an emotional situation.
- Work for a "win-win" solution - fair workable solutions are the best.

Action Steps with Difficult People:

- Weigh the value of the difficult situation.
- Pay close attention to styles (yours and theirs)
- Think in terms of opportunities.
- Positively replay past experience of difficult people - try our behaviors; use your brain.
- Mentally believe it is possible to get the results you want.
- Give them a break - sometimes it is a person problem; it might be personal.
- Appreciate yourself - you are doing something about the difficult situation, not just whining about it.

Just about every manager has to deal with a few difficult and annoying people within their organization - an obnoxious engineer, a subordinate who creates disturbances, a moody boss (Bielous, 1996). Since we can never really shun difficult people, especially within an organization, we had better have a clear understanding of communication techniques for resolving difficult situations immediately; if not, the problem festers and magnifies (Graves, 1994).

Other Managerial Communication Techniques:

From the company's viewpoint, managers need to deal with the difficult employee for bottom-line financial reasons (Gerber, 1996). Individuals consume so much time and energy trying to do the impossible, namely, to change and control the action of others, that they wrongly believe that they cannot change and control their own thoughts and actions. Most of the pain that difficult people cause comes from one's taking their criticisms or rejection too seriously. Thus, managers can try to keep some "emotional distance" from difficult employees rather than trying to improve their behavior (Arnold & Roach, 1992).

In addition, managers can reduce the time they spend resolving conflicts if they encourage employees to be as concerned with "how" they speak as they are with "what" they say. Managers also need to encourage employees to adopt "problem-solving attitudes" when discussing sensitive issues (Cole, 1997).

Another managerial technique that can be used is better communication. Lack of communication tops many a dissatisfaction list, and yet it is the glue that binds people to a company. Institute one-hour weekly meetings to provide structure and to ensure that everyone is pulling the 'ship's sails" in the same direction (Falcone, 1997). Managers must clearly communicate, and employees must understand, the boundaries of intolerable, unacceptable, marginal and acceptable behavior (Falcone, 1997).

Finally, it is important that training be given to employees who are dealing with difficult people. These training programs can focus on increasing interpersonal sensitivity, developing team skills, and helping to manage conflict effectively and solve problems collaboratively. Past experience suggests, however, that successfully altering resistance or stubborn behavior typically takes six to 12 months (Marsh & Arnold, 1988).

CONCLUSION

The workplace isn't just more diverse than ever before, it's also more complex. As companies become more global, and as social values evolve, we must become more sensitive to how our own behavior and actions affect others. One encounters many fine individuals in the workplace, but unless one is prepared to employ managerial communication technologies to resolve employee disruptions, the likelihood of workplace satisfaction is diminished.

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