

Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 12, 1985

LET'S TALK TO THE EXPERIENTIAL AUTHORS

Lane Kelley, University of Hawaii

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this panel discussion is to provide an opportunity to provide a dialogue between the authors and users of experiential textbooks. The panel will consist of authors from three popular experiential texts:

Developing Management Skills by David A. Whetten & Kim S. Cameron, Scott, Foresman & Company, Glenview, 1984.

Experiencing Modern Management by Samuel Certo & Lee Graf, William C. Brown Company, Dubuque, 1980.

Personnel Management in Action, 3rd edition by Lane Kelley & Arthur A. Whatley, West Publishing Co., St. Paul, 1984.

The above books represent a continuum of experiential texts in the management area: management theory, management behavioral skill development, and personnel management.

DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT SKILLS

David A. Whetten
Kim S. Cameron

The impetus for writing Developing Management Skills grew out of our frustration with teaching management courses following conventional methods. When we used texts based on the traditional "principles of management" framework, we felt uncomfortable with their lack of theoretical and research grounding. Because principles of management have been generally derived from the recollections and interpretations of practicing managers, empirical research and theory regarding their validity in modern organizations is limited. When we used a "watered-down organizational behavior" approach, colleagues teaching the OB courses reported that students complained about redundancy. The same topics were covered in organizational behavior and management books, and neither considered ways to make students better managers. When we emphasized the "experiential learning" approach centered around simulations, case discussions, and games, students complained they weren't gaining enough substantive knowledge about how to be effective managers. Few students brought enough practical experience, theoretical knowledge, or self-analytic skills to those exercises to get much meaning from them. The exercises were entertaining, but not very useful. We determined that each approach had its place in management education, and each could contribute to a student's education, but none could, taken alone, help students develop into competent managers.

In our search for alternatives, we asked recent graduates to evaluate the organizational behavior and management curricula in terms of their experiences as managers. In general, these graduates criticized behavioral science courses for not teaching them job-relevant skills. They were acutely aware of the challenges posed by "people problems" in their

work, and they felt that their education had not prepared them for that component of their job.

Based on this feedback, we began an experiment to develop an approach to teaching management based on skill competency. In formulating the teaching methodology, we examined the ways skills are taught in other professional schools, such as education, social work, engineering, medicine, and law. We also drew heavily on recent innovations in training programs for practicing managers that emphasize behavior modification through role modeling. To identify the relevant management skills, we surveyed over 400 managers in public and private organizations and combed the professional literature for statements by management experts regarding the characteristics of effective managers. As our teaching model began to evolve, it became apparent that a supporting textbook would need to be developed, since none existed. Further, it would necessarily have to be a hybrid, containing diverse teaching methods and materials that gave equal emphasis to theory and practice.

We also recognized that a book devoted to developing management skills would have to adopt a radical view regarding what behavioral science courses should offer management students. These courses typically present an array of general principles and concepts derived from research in industrial/organizational psychology, sociology, OB, industrial administration, and so on. They describe management practice and provide students with frameworks for analyzing common people problems encountered by managers. While this exposure to conceptual and analytic frameworks is useful and necessary, it is an incomplete method for developing skilled managers.

We have found that focusing on behavioral skills rather than theories of behavior not only increases students' interest in and acceptance of the theoretical material, but also significantly increases their ability to apply the concepts they have learned.

EXPERIENCING MODERN MANAGEMENT

Samuel C. Certo
Lee A. Graf

This workbook was designed specifically for you, not for your instructor. If used as suggested in figure 1, the workbook should make you more self-confident of your newly developed knowledge base and also give you a number of opportunities to apply this knowledge.

Each chapter is divided into three sections. The chapter summary reviews in-depth the major subject areas of the text and should refresh your memory of the material you read in the text chapter. The "Knowing You Know" section provides a solution for a common problem faced by almost every student. You probably have said to yourself: "I think I know the material in that chapter well enough to do well on the exam, but I just wish there was some way of

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knowing that I know it well enough." The "Knowing You Know" section is a series of objective questions (true-false, multiple choices matching, or completion) that you can use to test your understanding of the text and to identify the weaknesses in your knowledge base. The correct answer to each question and the corresponding text page number where the correct answer can be found are provided at the end of the "Knowing You Know" section so that you can quickly reference areas of weakness. This section should also familiarize you with the type of examination questions asked in many schools. The activities and projects in the "Applying What You Know" section help you to apply the chapter concepts. Your instructor will select activities for individual and group analysis. You should regard these projects as job assignments by an employer rather than as classroom assignments. Full expenditure of effort is necessary if you hope to master the concepts of the modern management system.

The following step-by-step explanation indicates how to use this workbook in conjunction with your text (see figure 1):

Step 1 Read the Chapter in the Text

A good grasp of the text material is the starting point for understanding the modern management system. Highlighting, underlining, or note taking frequently improves comprehension because these methods re-expose you to the text after the initial read-through.

Step 2 Have You Met the Student Learning Objectives?

Student learning objectives are identified at the beginning of each text chapter. You should assess whether you have met each objective successfully. If not, you should reread the section or sections of the text that are applicable to the objective

Step 3 Can You Answer the Questions in "Issues for Review and Discussion"?

You should be able to successfully answer the questions at the end of each text chapter. If you feel uncomfortable with a particular question (or questions), refer to that section in your text. At this point you probably will think you know the text material, but there is a significant difference between thinking you know and knowing you know.

Turn to the chapter in this workbook that corresponds with the text chapter you just studied and:

Step 4 Read the Chapter Summary

Does everything make sense? Are you sure of the meaning of all concepts and ideas? If your answer is no, reread those sections of the text.

Step 5 Test Your Knowledge and Understanding of the Concepts in the Chapter

Answer the questions in the "Knowing You Know" section. If you cannot answer a particular question, refer to the text page cited to find the correct response.

Step 6 Is Your Understanding Above Average?

If you answered fifteen or more questions correctly, your understanding of the text is probably above average. Reread only those pages of the text that correspond to missed questions. You should feel quite confident in knowing you know the material.

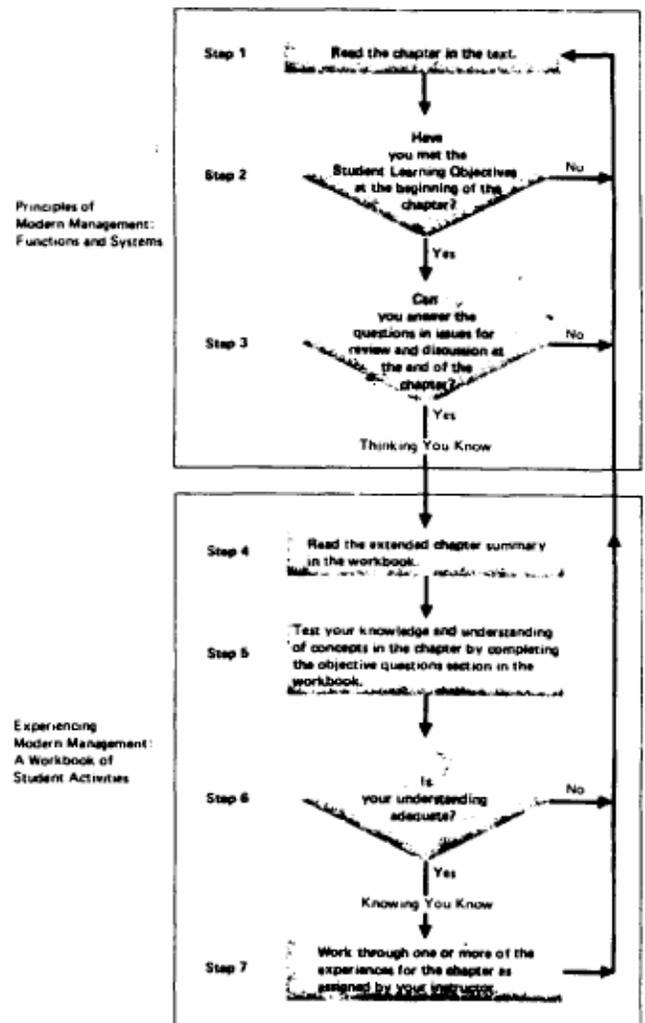
If you missed more than five questions, your understanding of the text is probably below average and you should repeat

steps 1-5. However, since you already know the correct answers to the questions in the "Knowing You Know" section, on a separate sheet of paper write an explanation for each answer. For example, if your answer to a true-false question is "false," explain why it is false. Check your answer with the text. Because the questions cover tiny bits of the more important concepts, when you have successfully explained each question, you should feel confident of your understanding of the text material.

Step 7 Work Through One or More Experiences As Assigned by Your Instructor

These tasks support your new knowledge base and help you to apply what you know. After completing an exercise, you might want to note in your text margins any concepts or thoughts you gained from the exercise that might support statements in the text or be helpful for exam preparation.

FIGURE 1
From "Thinking You Know" to "Knowing You Know" to "Applying What You Know."



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PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN ACTION

Lane Kelley
Arthur A. Whatley

We have specifically designed this book to be used in conjunction with a traditional personnel management textbook. To facilitate this kind of joint textbook approach, we have constructed a matrix which appears. The matrix illustrates the relationship between our exercises and chapters in other personnel textbooks. We hope you find it useful. The experiential exercises in this book require you to read, write, problem-solve, and discuss - activities that are quite different from the lecture requirement of merely listening. When these participative activities are combined with listening, the likelihood of learning and understanding the material is improved.

Using experiential exercises in conjunction with lectures allows two important learning phenomena to occur. First, lectures are an efficient way to convey theories and concepts. In complementary fashion, experiential exercises confront you with realistic personnel management problems that require the use of theories and concepts learned in lecture.

Second, students often demand that business courses be "practical" as opposed to having "all that theory." It is, of course, difficult to practice running a business or to practice real management decision making in a classroom. But it is possible to simulate these various practices. These exercises do just that - they require you to act just as you might in the real world of hard knocks. You will experience being confronted with personnel management problems and responding to them.

You may find yourself a bit anxious over the new role you are required to play when engaging in an exercise; relax - this is a perfectly natural response. It is normal to feel some anxiety when faced with the unfamiliar. After engaging in a few exercises, you will find yourself looking forward to them. They will be viewed by most students as an enjoyable and effective approach to classroom education.

Organization of the Book

This book is organized into ten parts. The exercises in these parts deal with the issues as well as functional areas of personnel management. The term functional refers to those activities that managers actually do. For example, most managers recruit new employees, select employees from those recruited, train new employees, and so forth. Other exercises center around concepts and activities that are not directly performed by managers but instead are influenced by them. A manager, for example, might want to change the work environment or the climate of an organization to indirectly improve employee morale or job satisfaction.

Each exercise is independent of all others. Therefore, any combination of exercises may be used, in any order, without need for concern over continuity. For example, the instructor may choose the third exercise, "Human Sexuality in the Workplace," as the first exercise of the semester. It all depends on how the material for the course is organized by the instructor.

Each exercise begins with Learning Objectives to be accomplished by the student as a result of completing the exercise. Then the Time Suggested to complete each exercise is given for the convenience of both students and teachers. It is not to be interpreted as a limit for completing the exercise; rather, it is to be used for planning the necessary class time. All of the exercises contain a set of Procedures which should be carefully followed. Next is an

Introduction, followed by a Problems and Questions section (or, in some instances, role-playing situations or case studies), and finally, a brief list of suggested readings. This uncomplicated structure will allow you to concentrate on learning the objectives rather than spend time figuring out what to do.

In summary, please remember that your attitude is a very important -variable in determining just how much you will benefit from these experiential exercises. Try as hard as you can to get into the roles you are asked to play. When the instructions require you to discuss an issue or topic within your group, commit yourself to the discussion. Assuming part of the responsibility for fulfilling the instructions related to each exercise is absolutely necessary before the learning objectives can be accomplished. Get involved, and you will end the course having a better understanding of personnel management.