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MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES
A Certified Construction Associate course

2014

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MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES
Section A – Motivation and Communication

Lesson 1 - What is Management?

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define management

☐ Distinguish between managerial efficiency and managerial effectiveness

☐ Explain what makes management a science and what makes it an art

☐ Name and describe four management functions

☐ Distinguish between management functions and management skills

What is Management?

If you were asked to explain how management influences your life, you would probably think of a broad range of activities. You might start with the ways you manage your own experience – your time, your money, your feelings, your household, your work, and your play. Your list might be long and, as you were putting it together, you would probably find that it could be organized in more than one way. You might then conclude that the very act of thinking about management could be considered a form of management, and begin to wonder if all efforts to organize could be called management.

You might next look around you seeing clusters of activity that all seemed to be connected in some conscious way – clusters like patterns of communication, patterns of traffic, groups of people doing different things, but all directed toward pre-planned results. To your initial thoughts of management as organization you might then add the idea that management is purposeful, characterized by a sense of direction.

If you continued your exploration, and if your experience has been very wide, you might finally conclude that management is a universal activity, existing wherever and whenever someone organizes people and other resources to accomplish purposes. You would have arrived at a workable definition of a very complex activity, a definition applicable to the process of management wherever and whenever it is happening.

While management goes on in many different ways and at many different levels, it is generally studied as it exists in organizations. This course follows that pattern. Its value to you will be enhanced if, as you read, you think about what you are reading and apply it to your experience in construction industry organizations with which you are most familiar. You could do this by asking questions: Is this idea meaningful in terms of my experience? If I were to think of an example to explain this idea, what would it be? How can I use this information to be more effective at my job and in my career? You know much about management in the construction industry. This course will suggest some topics around which you can organize the knowledge you have developed through experience.

Lesson 2 - Understanding and Maintaining Motivation

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Understand what motivates people

☐ Understand the various motivational theories

☐ Understand how planning and communication affect motivation

☐ Explain how positive and negative reinforcement affects motivation

Motivation is the impetus for organizational as well as individual action. Why people do what they do, and why groups do what they do, can sometimes seem to be a mystery. Theories of motivation can help us to replace mystery with understanding.

Action is usually motivated. That is, it is usually purposeful, not meaningless. Purposes are not always clear even to the person performing an action, but obscurity does not mean that purposes don't exist. Purposes are often not only obscure, but also complex and idiosyncratic. An apparently identical action performed by two or more people may be motivated by as many different factors as there are individuals performing the action. There may be multiple factors involved for each individual. Thus, several people doing the same job may do it effectively, but all of them may be doing the job well for different reasons, and valuing different rewards from their work.

These differences constitute one of the major challenges of human resource management. Anyone directing others and the work of others is involved with motivation and needs to understand it. This is not to say that a manager or supervisor can learn enough about motivation to predict accurately and consistently the probable performance of his or her subordinates in every situation that is likely to occur. But he or she can be a constant student of motivation in two ways: by being aware of important theories through which it can be explained, and by maintaining a level of communication with subordinates that helps him or her to know as much about the personal factors motivating them as they are willing and able to explain.

Theories of motivation are efforts to explain behavior. Several such theories have been particularly influential, among them those of A. H. Maslow, Douglas McGregor, and Frederick Herzberg. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, McGregor's theories X and Y, and Herzberg's two-factor theory are efforts to categorize common human needs and explain ways these needs are satisfied through drives toward goals. Motivation occurs when a conscious or unconscious need causes an individual to act.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

A. H. Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs to explain how people are motivated by different aspects of their experience. He believed that human needs are generally satisfied in a fixed order, and that unsatisfied needs are more likely to motivate than satisfied ones. In his view needs can be explained in five levels: physiological needs, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. He further

Lesson 3 - The Manager As Communicator

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- ☐ Distinguish among data, information and communication
- ☐ Explain the communication process
- ☐ Explain how to achieve clear expression
- ☐ Identify and describe three skills of careful listening

Communication may well be the most important of management processes. Certainly it pervades all of the management functions. It is difficult to imagine planning, organizing, staffing, and control being done without constant communication in both the preparation and implementation phases, and in all aspects of decision making. Indeed, some studies have reported that managers spend as much as 95% of their time communicating. It is not possible to be an effective manager without being an effective communicator.

Data, Information, and Communication

The importance of communication to management results from the importance of information and data. Sometimes these are talked about as if they were the same thing, or at least interchangeable. They are not, but they are related in ways that help explain the significance of each. Data refers to facts or to statements of opinion based on facts. Information refers to facts related to each other in meaningful ways; meaning, of course, results from values assigned to facts by people. The difference between data and information is clear to anyone who has received a group of facts from a computer program and realized that without interpretation or a statement of relationship among the facts, the data had little meaning. In other words, it was not information.

Information, or meaningfully related facts, is essential to management. No action can be taken or even thought of without it. A manager is constantly receiving information, receiving data and making information of it, and storing both data and information in his/her mind for future use. Going a step beyond this, communication is the process of receiving and sending information. For communication to occur there must be a sender, a mode of transmission and a receiver.

SENDER ⟶ TRANSMISSION ⟶ RECEIVER

The sender is the person in whose mind the information has been generated or is stored. The receiver is the person to whose mind the information comes. Communication has occurred when the information in the mind of the sender and that in the mind of the receiver are the same. Transmission is the method chosen by the receiver to use in sending the information; often writing, telephone equipment, or similar means.

It is difficult to transmit information just as it occurs in one's mind. Some of us think essentially in pictures, others in words. For information to be transmitted, it must first be translated into a code

Lesson 4 - Organizational Communication

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Give an example of an organizational, communication policy

☐ Identify three elements that should be included when organizations announce organizational policy or organizational change

☐ Distinguish between formal and informal communication channels

☐ Outline a strategy for individual performance communication, including six essential kinds of communication

☐ Identify two basic principles of effective performance communication

Everyone's life is one communication after another or several going on at once. In organizations communications are equally unruly and equally constant. The effects of the interweaving of many communications seem especially obvious to us today because of the speed and volume of our receipt of information. The power of computers to bring us a great deal of information very rapidly grows almost daily. In organizations, where the nature and timing of information determine decisions that will be made and actions that will be taken, the communication processes used require careful attention.

Communication Policy

A communication policy can be a helpful guide to an organization in generating information for employees of the organization and for others. A policy is a broad definition of philosophy, or a statement of general guidelines. A communication policy for an organization might state the kind and degree of communication expected: "This Company is committed to open communication about its performance. Our employees will always be the first to know about our economic progress and our economic problems." A policy might state preferred methods of communication: "Communication with employees about matters concerning their employment is the responsibility of the direct supervisor". Most organizations have communication policies; however these policies are not always articulated. But it is useful for an organization to state the policy being followed because then it can be discussed, examined, adjusted if necessary, and followed more consciously. It can then serve as a guide for everyone's communications.

Explaining Organizational Policy in General

One important kind of organizational communication is explanation of various kinds of organizational policy, which sometimes includes explanation of organizational change. Policy manuals and memos announcing changes often explain too little or too much; too little, by stating too few aspects of the policy or change; too much, by giving so many details that technical expertise is necessary for understanding.

Lesson 5 - Making Meetings Productive

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define the purposes of meetings

☐ Describe the various components of a successful meeting

☐ Understand the differences between task and maintenance functions in facilitating a meeting

Much of an organization's communication goes on in meetings. Meetings can be effective if the communications process is understood, effective communication skills are used, and meeting planners are sensitive to the effect that surroundings can have on people who are meeting.

Why Are Meetings Necessary?

Meetings are often referred to as a necessary evil. Some management books lament how little they accomplish, particularly in relation to how much they cost, and suggest ways to reduce the amount of time they waste and make them more productive. Additional complaints come from meeting attendees who sometimes wonder, before and after, why the meeting was held. Despite this meetings continue to proliferate, which indicates that they serve purposes. In fact meetings are held for several purposes, among which are gathering and sharing information, planning and coordinating, solving problems, making decisions, developing policy, instructing and training, motivating, and building support and cohesion.

This incomplete list covers three general kinds of purposes for holding meetings. Some meetings are held on a regular basis, such as those that are essentially for sharing knowledge and information and providing for coordinated planning. Some are one-time sessions for dealing with a current situation. Most meetings serve an additional purpose, that of permitting an organization to transmit its particular culture, or its way of getting things done.

The interest in organizational culture that surfaced in the early 1980s led to the considerable popularity of several books that emphasized the importance of the values, often unwritten and unspoken, by which organizations do their work and judge their members. These values determine the patterns of the organization's activities, and the patterns are more often instilled in employees through example than through formal articulation in orientations and training. While meetings sometimes do fail to accomplish the stated purposes for which they are held, they often provide a rich medium for transmitting the values and patterns of organizational culture. That is, they provide periods of time during which people who might not otherwise see each other can communicate, telling the stories and anecdotes that reflect the organization's culture, and sharing through face-to-face communication the subtle patterns of behavior that are successful in the particular organization, even to how people express values through dress and language.

Lesson 6 - Constructive Interaction with Your Coworkers

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define negotiation

☐ Understand the difference between learning someone's interests vs. perception

☐ Learn the techniques of negotiating with coworkers

The lessons in this course have focused on general management and human resource management. Part of their focus has been an emphasis on the role of the persons involved in the management functions, and their point of view has been that of the manager. Not all of us are managers of resources and people, but almost all of us who work have coworkers and bosses with whom we need to interact effectively if we hope to work to the level of our full potential.

What is Negotiation?

In negotiation, what is the difference between understanding the positions of each party and understanding their interests?

In negotiation, what is the difference between understanding the interests of each party and seeking common interests?

How can techniques such as brainstorming be useful in negotiation?

You probably don't think of yourself as a negotiator. Few of us do. We use the term when we speak of discussions among nations or between labor and management, and we often think of a negotiator as a participant in a game with sides, one of which must lose if the other wins. Because we know that our experiences aren't always so formal or so adversarial we don't imagine ourselves negotiating. In fact, we are wrong. Negotiation is much broader than stereotypical views suggest, and it is a daily process for most of us, especially when we work. We negotiate when we decide with friends where to go for dinner; when we determine with a potential employer the conditions of a job offer for ourselves; and when we work out with our coworkers how a job will be done or the office organized. There are many facets to the experience we have as we interact with our organizational peers, but few of them are as pervasive or have as much impact as our effectiveness at negotiation.

We negotiate whenever we meet with someone else or with several others in an effort to reach agreement about something. Generally, we and the other (or others) have some common interests and some divergent interests. If we didn't have something in common, we probably wouldn't bother to meet. If we didn't have some differences, we probably wouldn't need to meet. The search for agreement is what makes negotiation different from other discussions and from a win-lose game. In negotiation, all good-faith participants seek a joint conclusion that will benefit all.

Lesson 7 - Constructive Interaction with Your Boss

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Learn how to effectively communicate with your boss

☐ Identify the types of information an employee should give the boss

☐ Learn how to effectively present suggestions to the boss

Negotiations among coworkers are undertaken with different kinds of expectations than those among employees and their bosses. Coworkers start from positions of relative equality; employees and bosses, however constructive their relationships, start from unequal positions, and they have different responsibilities to each other than coworkers do. Most of the lessons in this course have had something to do with what bosses owe employees. This lesson is focused on some of the responsibilities employees owe their managers and supervisors.

Why is it important for employees to maintain regular communication with their bosses?

What kinds of information should an employee provide for his/her boss?

How can an employee present a suggestion effectively to his/her boss?

The work that you do, while it is in fact your own, is also the work of your manager or supervisor. He or she has delegated the authority to do it to you, but even if it requires skills that you have and your boss doesn't have, it is still his/her responsibility. In the best of worlds, the best of companies and it is hoped in your situation; managers and supervisors respect their employees and demonstrate their respect by acting in accordance with sound human resource management principles. Employees, of course, play an equal role in making the relationship constructive.

Communicating Regularly

A particularly important aspect of this role is employee effort to provide information for the boss. You are the expert on the part of your manager's or supervisor's work that you do. One responsibility that accompanies your expertise is that of deciding what kinds of information, and how much, he/she needs in order to fulfill his/her role and to help you to fulfill yours. As the expert, you are yourself a source of information and ideas. An additional responsibility that you have, therefore, is to provide your boss with ideas for doing new things or doing things better. Both responsibilities call on your communication skills.

When you think about providing information for your boss, it can be useful to realize that this is an action that serves a broader purpose. This purpose (and what you are actually doing when you plan what you will report) is to frame a way of thinking for your boss. You are providing the structure on which he/she will build future action. Thinking this way can help you give form to the information you provide.

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES
Section B – Corporate Structure and Management

Lesson 1 - Planning – Purposes, Goals, Objectives

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Explain the relationship between planning and coordination in organizations

☐ Describe a planning system based on goals and objectives

☐ Distinguish between goals and objectives

☐ Construct a well stated objective

Without a plan, individual and organizational activity is likely to be random and functionless, unclear and uncoordinated. Unplanned activity is subject to unpredictability. Planning, the first managerial activity and the first applied to any organizational activity, brings predictability, clarity, and coordination to organizations. Planning's major characteristic is concern for the future. It is an attempt to determine in the present what the future will be and to assure that the anticipated future will come into being. Planning is also the means through which complex and diverse activities are brought together to fulfill agreed upon purposes.

Planning and Coordination

Planning produces coordination. This coordinative function of planning is almost inevitable. When one part of an organization begins to anticipate the future it must begin to consider other parts of the organization. The discussions that generally follow have at least two important results: the original planning group adjusts its vision of the future in light of what it learns about other parts of the organization, and connections are formed among all the groups that ultimately participate in the planning effort. These adjustments and connections can influence other parts of the organization as well. When numerous planning efforts are going on simultaneously the organization's direction and purposes are formed and changed. The effect is somewhat like that seen in children's toys that consist of a flat plastic form filled with colored fluids. The child who touches the form on the edge or elsewhere sees all the fluids slowly form a new design in response to the touch. People in organizations cause similar changes, when they change purposes and patterns of relationships and develop new kinds of coordination as a result of planning. Sometimes the changes are almost imperceptible.

Planning Systems

Effective planning is likely to be more systematic than random. That is, it is likely to be part of an all organization planning system. In such a system, the plans of each part of the organization are related in clearly defined ways to the plans of other parts of the organization. The top level of an organization is responsible for developing the purposes and plans for the organization as a whole. Each organizational level, beginning near the top, then articulates its goals, and its objectives for reaching the goals, thus supporting the general purpose and plan. In hierarchical organizations, those

Lesson 2 - Strategic Planning

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define strategic planning

☐ Distinguish between strategic or long-range planning, medium-range planning, and short-range planning

In Lesson 1, we looked at planning as a way of thinking coherently about an organization's future. In Lesson 2 we will look at planning differently, as a way of determining the organization's place in its environment. The kind of planning system we focused on in Lesson 1 can assure that all parts of an organization serve the same general purpose. The kind of planning we will focus on in Lesson 2 can help the organization identify what that purpose should be and how to move toward it. The planning described in Lesson 1 can lead to organizational efficiency, or doing things well; strategic planning can lead to organizational effectiveness, or doing the right (most productive) things.

Strategic planning is concerned with basic questions that can be applied to any organization or enterprise. The first of these is, "What are we trying to do?" This question may seem startlingly simplistic when applied to the large, complex and sophisticated organizations with which we are all familiar; certainly after even minimal observation anyone could say why they exist: to provide a specific service, or produce a particular product, and to make a profit. At second glance however, the question appears less simplistic. This is because the activities of an organization may bring forth many different results, some expected, some unexpected. Which results are defined as purposes? Only the expected ones? Do the unexpected ones sometimes become valued as purposes? It is not surprising to see a byproduct become a major purpose, as unexpected results supersede expected ones and are proven to have greater value in changed times than the results originally planned.

Statement of Purpose

The way the question "what are we trying to do?" is answered can profoundly affect the present activities and future life of the organization. Consider two familiar industries, transportation and communication. How does the airline industry define its purpose? Two possible answers are "to move airplanes from one location to another" and "to transport passengers and freight". What kind of activities would an industry supporting the first purpose emphasize? Probably those related to the development and maintenance of aircraft, airports and charts of flight. An industry governed by the second purpose, on the other hand, would probably emphasize people and companies and their needs for travel. Similar examples could be constructed hypothetically about the communications industry. Do communication companies define themselves in terms of the methods they use, or in terms of the ends they want to achieve? A newspaper company in the first category would remain a newspaper company and might nevertheless achieve continuing success. But a newspaper in the second category would act in terms of the general purpose of communication and diversify methods

Lesson 3 - Elements and Tools for Control

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define control

☐ Identify and explain aspects of control

☐ Identify and explain three criteria for effective control

☐ Discuss human factors in control

☐ Name the factors necessary for an activity to be a control tool or control system

☐ Describe one control tool based on finances, time, and quality

Our survey of management processes – communication, decision making, problem solving – has shown us some activities made complete through feedback or evaluation. We haven't seen this kind of closure in our survey of management functions – planning, organizing, staffing – but we are going to see it now, because we are turning our attention to control, the fourth of the management functions, and the one that provides feed-back and evaluation about the effectiveness of the other three. Control is a way of closing the loop. Although the loop may begin with any of the three initial management processes, control is most clearly associated with planning, the first of the three, because planning establishes the foundation for the actions that are evaluated through control.

A Definition of Control

In fact, control can be defined in terms of planning. Control is comparison of what is done with what was planned. It comprises efforts made to develop measures for comparison, and action taken to remedy unacceptable discrepancies between the plan and the results. It is therefore more complex than simply "checking up". It begins when standards are developed during planning, continues when measures to assess performance are added, and after the comparison of performance with plans, ends with evaluation of the comparison and determining necessary adjustments to the performance or to the standards.

Standards of Control

Standards are answers to questions about the way something should be done. When individual or group performance is being discussed, the questions that elicit the standards often have to do with how well, eliciting levels of proficiency, how important, eliciting priorities, and how long, eliciting deadlines. This is one way to explain standards; there are many others. In practice, anything that defines how things should be done can be used as a standard. This very broad definition of standards includes policies, procedures, schedules, rules written and unwritten, financial projections, even instruction for tasks. Of course standards that are articulated clearly as standards usually foster more effective control, because such articulated standards help everyone involved in an activity to

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Lesson 4 - Mastering Time

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Explain how an individual can manage time effectively

☐ Learn the various ways of improving time management

☐ Learn how to overcome procrastination

Planning and human resources management meet whenever one person in an organization tries to improve his or her management of time. Indeed a single individual's time management effort is a kind of human resources management, whether the individual is part of an organization or working alone. Time itself is often said to be a resource, all too often a scarce one, which merits our best efforts at conservation.

The distinction between efficiency and effectiveness that was made in Lesson 1 suggests why time management is so often included in courses of this kind. While efficiency has to do with the rate at which things are accomplished, effectiveness is related to accomplishing the right things, or those that are most productive and useful. What are the right things? Are they always the same? In a world of change yesterday's effectiveness may be today's waste, and it can be difficult if not impossible to know what will be required tomorrow. The best use of time at any given moment is the use that will help meet the requirements of priority purposes. Time management, then consists of determining purposes and goals, organizing them in order of priority or relative importance, and finally, scheduling their accomplishment.

Determining Goals and Objectives

Because of the complexity of modern life many time management consultants suggest a holistic approach to planning, which involves looking at one's total life (work, relationships, even thought) and determining purposes and priorities for the whole. This approach is certainly valid if somewhat overwhelming and may be necessary for some people. However, it is also possible to plan for the use of time in experiential segments, or according to specific parts of one's life; indeed to control one aspect of time is likely to result in surprising carryovers to other aspects. The ideas suggested in this lesson may be used either way.

Time management begins with determination of purposes. Whether these purposes are long-term is up to the person intent on getting more out of time through managing it better. Some people identify some of their purposes as eternal, while others choose from time frames; often, five years, three years, or even one year or less. A workable period for any given person is one for which he or she can state purposes with some degree of certainty that they are appropriate and achievable. Purposes can include maintenance of ongoing activities because these take time. Therefore, an executive listing the three major contributions he or she plans to make during the next five years could also list purposes related to continuing the operation of the company.

Lesson 5 - Selecting the Right People

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- ☐ Explain what constitutes staffing
- ☐ Briefly describe the history of human resources management
- ☐ Distinguish between forecasting human resource needs and finding available sources of people and skills
- ☐ Describe the relationship between staffing and personnel selection
- ☐ Distinguish between a job and a position
- ☐ Distinguish between job enlargement and job enrichment
- ☐ Explain how legal considerations affect staffing
- ☐ Understand how to prepare for an effective interview

We have defined management as the conscious organization of people and resources to accomplish purposes. Bringing together resources is necessary for implementation of plans. Bringing together people to apply the resources is the first step in the implementation of plans. Staffing is the process of selecting people to implement plans, and it includes all the activities that determine how people and their skills are brought to bear on organizational purposes.

People are obviously a kind of organizational resource different from those that appear in the "assets" column of a financial report. No manager would view employees as organizational possessions, and the field of human resources management is governed by principles different from those that govern the management of capital and physical resources like land, buildings and equipment. This seems obvious to us, but it wasn't always so. Assumptions about the relationships between employers and employees have changed as society has changed. For much of history, domination of "employees" by their employers was accepted. Indeed, systems such as slavery went beyond domination to ownership of human resources. As agricultural society gave way to industrial society employers, at least some of them, still took limited views of workers, seeing them only as elements in the production process.

Current views about people at work are markedly different from these. In the early 1930's worldwide depression and the growth of the labor union movement fostered conditions that helped employers to see employees as more than cogs in a machine. At the same time, experimental work in the growing field of social science showed that greater productivity was one result of treating employees as responsible adults instead of units of production. Gradually there developed what has been called the human relations movement; a concern with employees as people, individually and in groups, and with their needs, motivations, and work satisfactions. This movement was the source of many worthwhile and enduring changes in employer-employee relations. It also produced some paternalistic approaches, and sometimes masked problems with a veneer of friendliness and doing things only to make people

Lesson 6 - The Employment Interview

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Identify the specific skills required for interviewing

☐ Identify the characteristics of an effective employment interview

☐ Understand the types of questions that can and cannot be asked in an interview

As we saw in the previous lesson, the employment interview is central to the selection process, which is the first activity that makes staffing a human resources management function. General communication skills are important to an interviewer; also, the employment interviewer requires skills specific to the process of matching people and jobs.

The Ideal Setting

Although employment interviews are relatively predictable in purpose and format, they can be organized to suit the needs of particular interviewers and jobs. Nevertheless, the first part of any employment interview is likely to be an effort to put the applicant at ease and build an atmosphere in which both applicant and interviewer can play their roles effectively. The apprehension that naturally accompanies the meeting of two people in which one will judge the other in some way can impede the flow of conversation that is essential for information exchange; the interviewer can lessen this apprehension by providing a supportive atmosphere environmentally and emotionally.

The interview setting should encourage communication. A private office is best. In addition to permitting confidentiality, it allows for a conversational tone of voice. The interview should be scheduled at a time when there will be no interruptions, with the interviewer able to give his or her undivided attention to the applicant. Furniture can be arranged to provide comfort as the interviewer and applicant face each other; chairs can provide some room for movement, so neither feels trapped or is limited in expression.

Establishing Rapport

Rapport between an interviewer and applicant can enhance communication and produce a better interview. Achieving rapport depends largely on what happens in the first few minutes of the meeting. A genuinely warm greeting and a few minutes of small talk are important to the development of rapport. This conversation shouldn't last more than a few minutes or the purpose of the meeting will be sidetracked. Nevertheless, it is essential for giving the applicant some time to become familiar with a new place, and the interviewer and applicant can both practice talking to each other. Most interviewers develop their own ways of achieving rapport because the process is useful only to the degree that it is natural.

Lesson 7 - Organizing for Results - Principles

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define organization

☐ Describe hierarchical organization

☐ Define classical hierarchical principles of unity of command, span of control and delegation

☐ Distinguish between line and staff organization

☐ Define accountability, responsibility, authority and power

These lessons began with a view of management as a universal activity, happening not only in the organizational context in which we are studying it, but in individual experience as well. Organization can be looked at in the same way. When we think of an organization, we see something large and multifaceted, but when we think of organization, we can also see our own experience and our personal efforts to produce coherent structures or patterns; to make the parts work together in a meaningful whole. This effort to impose order is what organization is about. Lesson 7 is an overview of classical principles of organization. Lesson 11 is an outline of some current organizational structures, and factors that affect them.

Looking at Organization

Organization is the process of grouping activities in productive patterns of interaction; making structures through which information can flow. One such pattern or structure known to all of us is the hierarchy. Hierarchical organization is characterized by activities grouped by level and probably by nature or type, with each level down the hierarchy being increasingly specialized and narrow. Hierarchies are often shown as pyramids, with the top level at the apex. This is an accurate representation of the whole; the narrowness at the top represents the smaller number of people who hold positions at higher organizational levels. What it doesn't attempt to represent is the breadth of concern that must characterize the higher levels. Those levels are responsible for activities of the organization generally while lower levels have increasingly specific responsibility.

Hierarchical organization is sometimes called classical organization, in part because this form of organization has been accepted as standard for a long time. Because of this and because of the familiarity of hierarchical organization, it is a useful place to begin our overview of organizational characteristics. We will look at unity of command, span of control and delegation; three principles of classical organization theory that explain how hierarchical structures work.

Principles of Organization

A hierarchy is a chain of command, characterized by the accountability of each link to the next. Hierarchical organizations make clear charts. It is possible to show who is accountable to whom from the bottom to the top of the chart. Within this chain of command rests the principle of unity of

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Lesson 8 - Assigning Work

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Explain how to effectively match people with work assignments

Organization is a way of defining relationships through which work flows, of drawing boundaries around activity. It is static, while the activity and the work flows are dynamic. The tension or balance between the static organization and its dynamic activity determines the nature of the organization. Work assignment is the beginning of the activity.

The activities beginning with work assignment and continuing up to a complete delegation of authority are major aspects of human resource management. Everything that has to do with arranging for another person to do work is important to management, whether the management is of one small task or of an international conglomerate. The conglomerate is maintained by countless episodes in which work is assigned and authority delegated. But the assignment of single tasks is also important and interesting because, accomplished well, it is often not only the foundation for something larger (in concert with many other, similar assignments), but also the beginning of an individual career in supervision or management.

Work Assignment Considerations

Work assignment is often thought to be difficult, because it is seen as "giving orders", a function which some supervisors, especially those promoted from their own work groups, find distasteful. A good way to move from this point of view to a broader, more productive perspective is to realize that work assignment is not just giving orders, but is a process of determining what needs to be done and who can do it best, then transmitting this understanding to the person or persons to whom the work is assigned. Ideally the process is one of clarification by and for the person assigning the work, and of participation by the person to whom the work is assigned. For the supervisor work assignments can be done in two major parts: matching tasks and people, and communicating the match. Even from the beginning the supervisor of only one person has to consider both parts. While there is only one person to consider in assigning work, there are usually many tasks and parts of tasks to be done, and the supervisor has to choose which tasks to assign and when to assign them.

In matching tasks and people, a supervisor's chief consideration is to assure that the skills of employees are being used effectively in ways that foster maximum productivity. In other words, that people will be able to get the things done that need to be done with the least effort possible. This is not a prescription for sloth, but for efficiency. It is likely that almost anyone could do almost anything; a draftsperson, for example, could do the work of an accountant, and the accountant could do the work of the

Lesson 9 - Delegating Authority

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Explain how delegation of authority is different from assigning work

☐ Understand what can and cannot be delegated

☐ Understand the role of communication in delegating work and expectations

The process of assigning work and delegating authority are essential to human resources management. They bring together the needs of a job and the skills of a person, epitomizing human resources management. Effectiveness in delegating authority is generally an index to effectiveness in human resources management.

An early explanation of delegation of authority is found in the stories of the legendary leader Moses, who according to the Old Testament record found himself burdened from morning through evening instructing the people he led and judging their conflicts. Only a visit from his father-in-law, Jethro, saved Moses from a serious case of burnout. Observing his tired son-in-law trying to deal with all the issues and problems himself, Jethro suggested that Moses select a group of able assistants to do some of the work. He proposed further that there be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. Jethro added that the great questions should be brought to Moses, but the smaller ones could be taken care of by the assigned rulers. The account of Jethro's work as consultant to Moses concludes with Moses accepting his father-in-law's advice. Presumably the new system worked.

Delegation of Authority

Like assignment of work, delegation requires both planning and communication. However, it is a more complex process than work assignment, and usually occurs over a longer time span. Delegation has been defined in these lessons as the process through which a person responsible for work gives another person authority to do it while keeping ultimate responsibility for completion of the work and its results. This relationship between responsibility and authority is the key to delegation and is the factor that distinguishes between delegation and assignment.

What Cannot Be Delegated

The thoughtful planning that precedes effective assignment of work is therefore even more important in delegation, and suggests several kinds of activity that cannot be delegated to others. Responsibility, obviously, cannot be delegated; the responsibility for a person's job rests with that person, and while he/she may delegate and assign almost the entire job to others, the responsibility for its completion remains where it starts, with him/her. It is also impossible to delegate essential parts of a job. Many parts can be done by others without changing the nature of the job of the supervisor or manager, but if he/she were to ask others to do the planning, or any other kind of conceptual thinking, or to do the supervising and managing, the managerial or supervisory job would

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Lesson 10 - Understanding Power

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Explain the sources of power

☐ Explain how power can be used and abused

Power has been, until rather recently, a sort of dirty word. Especially in human resources management we have been hesitant to speak of power. The notion that some individuals have more of it than do others is somehow anathema to us. In the past few years, however, power has been discussed and studied, with the result that we understand power as a situational phenomenon rather than something some have and others are subject to. This understanding can help all of us use our power more effectively.

Definition of Power

In human resource management and in organizations generally, power is the ability to make action happen and even more precisely, to make it happen as one wishes it to happen. An individual's power can therefore be measured by the degree to which he or she can influence others to act, and by the number and kind of actions he or she can make happen.

Power is often thought to reside in charismatic individuals who in some mysterious way can move others to follow their bidding. Personal magnetism is indeed one source of power. A certain mix of personal characteristics, or abilities particularly suited to a certain society's needs, or a combination of characteristics and abilities all may contribute to how someone is perceived by others and to the power he/she can derive from that perception.

The significance of the perception of others as a source of an individual's power can be explained in simple examples that show how someone's power can change when the people surrounding him change. A medicine man in a primitive tribe might have great power among his constituency. The people with whom he exercises the power probably believe that the power resides in him, while other non-believers, might either ignore his power or explain it in other ways. A rock singer who could lead thousands of teenagers to behave in a certain way might be less influential in the General Assembly of the United Nations. This could happen even if the power were based less on charisma than on other foundations. For example, a university physics professor might be less powerful describing some aspect of literature to a group of writers than when describing physics to a group of scientists. A general contractor might be more powerful describing the methods and sequence of construction activities, but less powerful when discussing the aesthetic qualities of the building. The way that an individual's power can wax and wane, depending on circumstances, suggests that charisma or personal magnetism is

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Lesson 11 - Organizing for Results – Structures

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Distinguish between centralized and decentralized organizational structures.

☐ Describe matrix organization.

☐ Distinguish between the rational and systems approaches to organization.

Hierarchical structure, which we have used as our basis for exploration of principles of organization, is not the only kind of structure into which people can be grouped. Indeed, there is no "right" structure that can be applied uniformly to organizations. Effective structures are those that respond to environmental constraints and opportunities as well as to internal organizational needs, which means that the "right" structure for an organization may change as the organization's internal and external realities change. We will begin this lesson by looking at two common forms of hierarchical organization, and will then move to another kind of structure (matrix) and to a way of thinking about organizations (organizations as systems).

Centralization and Decentralization

A centralized organization is one in which most of the power, authority, and responsibilities are concentrated near the top. A decentralized organization is one in which they are delegated to lower levels. No organization is likely to be totally centralized or decentralized. If everything happened at the top there would be no need for the rest of the organization. Conversely, if everything happened at lower levels, there would be no organizing element or principle, just everything going its own way. On a continuum with total centralization and decentralization at either end, most organizations would be somewhere near the middle.

How can you tell the degree to which an organization is centralized or decentralized? The organization chart will not provide answers. It may suggest kinds of activity as well as functional levels, but it cannot describe the meaning of actions that occur. To determine where an organization places itself on the centralization-to-decentralization continuum, you can ask how many decisions are made at lower hierarchical levels, how important they are, and how closely they are monitored. Answers to these questions will give you insight into how far the organization has been decentralized.

Which is better centralization or decentralization? There is no constant answer, because circumstances determine how centralized or decentralized an organization should be. Centralization produces uniformity, thereby lessening the possibility of error. Decentralization may produce quicker action, because decisions are made where they will be implemented. More centralization is called for when there is expertise at the top, when enough information to make decisions can reach the top rapidly, when uniformity of decisions is important, and when people at the top wish to have control while those

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Lesson 12 - Building Teamwork

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define the characteristics of an effective team.

☐ Explain the techniques for building effective teams.

Team building can be as large and complex a process as establishing a huge matrix organization to fulfill a government contract, or as small and relatively simple as a conversation between a supervisor and a single employee. Large or small, team building is human resources management. If it is done well, it is highly effective human resources management that enriches the organization in which it occurs.

In today's organizations, team building is a regular function. This is a result of the increasing rate of change that characterizes so many organizations. If everything stayed the same, teams could be put together once. Revisions and adjustments would come with new members, but repeated team building efforts would be unnecessary. Everything doesn't stay the same, however, and change, brought about by forces external to the organization or by the organization itself, necessitates reconstruction of working teams, which often leads to a need for attention to how the group works together.

Healthy Working Groups

Two events clearly require special team building efforts: formation of a completely new working group, and trouble in an existing group. Team building is not usually needed in a working group that is healthy. What constitutes health in a working group? Generally, such a group is characterized by agreement about its general purposes, as well as specific goals and objectives; clarity about roles of the group members, including leadership roles and styles; clear processes for getting things done, especially decision making and conflict resolution; and clear ways to communicate, whether formally, as in meetings, or informally. There is a climate of trust, and members of the group see themselves as full participants in its work.

One of the major, and perhaps most important, tasks of a new working group is to develop these characteristics rapidly. Waiting for them to grow can result in lost time and diminished productivity. Failure to pay attention to them at the outset of a group's work almost inevitably leads to backtracking later.

Established working groups also need to pay attention to the qualities of effective team effort. Unfortunately, problems that arise in a working group are often defined within the group in terms of the behavior of individuals in the group, sometimes even as "personality conflicts". Remedial efforts are then directed toward changing the attitudes or behavior of individuals. While such efforts can

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MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES
Section C – Employee Performance

Lesson 1 - Confronting Conflict

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define the various stages of conflict emergence.

☐ Understand the importance of knowing what a conflict is about.

☐ Discuss the various pitfalls faced by conflict managers.

In human resources management, conflict has often been viewed in a manner similar to power; we always knew it was there, but we didn't really want to see it or talk about it. Like power conflict has come into the open, and is recognized for its constructive potential. Whether this potential is reached or not depends on effective application of human resources management principles.

Conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life. People striving to reach organizational and personal goals find themselves at odds with others who are also moving toward goals. When the efforts of one person or a group of people are seen by others as barriers to their own efforts, conflict arises. The result can be either harmful or helpful to the organization and the people, depending on how the conflict is managed. People who have a negative view of differences and conflicts may try to ignore the issue, or to smooth over it with persuasion or humor; while others whose view is more positive may see possibilities for clarification, change, and other kinds of development. Either approach can be productive or dysfunctional, depending on the situation and the people involved. In any case, conflict management is an important organizational skill, certainly for managers and supervisors, but also for anyone whose job requires regular interaction with others.

Stages of Conflict Emergence

Timing is particularly influential in the success of conflict management. In a <u>Harvard Business Review</u> article that has become a classic ("Management of Differences," November-December 1960, pages 107-115); Warren H. Schmidt and Robert Tannenbaum describe five stages through which conflict emerges. The first state is anticipation, in which a manager receives information that he or she can anticipate will ultimately lead to conflict. In the authors' example, the manager learns that new equipment is going to be installed, changing the nature and the number of jobs in the department. The second stage is characterized by conscious but unexpressed difference. In this stage, unofficial information begins to move through the grapevine, resulting in equally unofficial discussions and building of tension among people and groups. In stage three, information is presented officially, and discussion begins, with questions asked and differing opinions expressed openly. Stage four is the stage of open dispute, in which meetings are held and differences firmed into clear positions. Finally, stage five is open conflict, with positions taken and efforts to win being made by each disputant or group of disputants. The authors of the article point out that the manager who gets involved in the dispute at stage one is likely to have more influence on the outcome than if he or she waits until stage five, and that appropriate conflict management strategies will differ from stage to stage. Because of this, a manager, supervisor, or

Lesson 2 – Decision Making

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Explain what decision making is.

☐ Outline a series of steps for decision making.

☐ Explain the importance of deciding to decide.

This course is built around two kinds of management elements: the basic functions, which are planning, organizing, staffing, and control, and some of the processes that managers are usually involved in when they are performing any of the basic functions. Now we are going to turn our attention to two additional processes that, like communication, pervade the experience of managers and happen all the time in organizations. These processes are decision making and problem solving. Like the management functions, these two processes seldom occur independently. They are quite markedly connected to each other; decisions are often made necessary because of problems, and the actions to which decisions lead often carry problems with them. Despite this close connection, we will look at decision making and problem solving separately; you will probably be making your own connection between them as you go through Lessons 2 and 3.

Decisions

A decision is a choice among alternatives. What makes a decision happen? How does someone know that he or she needs to make a decision? Usually, someone perceives a gap; notices that something is not as it is expected to be, as it should be, or as it could be. Or there is no important gap, but there are two or more alternatives available for action.

Steps for Decision Making

After the decision to decide has either been made or has presented itself, there are several steps that a decision maker can take to move toward action.

Gather information. The information gathering phase of decision making serves two purposes: it helps to clarify the nature of the decision to be made, and it provides data for alternatives. Information takes several forms, and at this point in the decision making process, all forms can be accepted. Facts are sought, but opinions are also valid. The decision maker may seek advice and guidance from others, particularly if they have had relevant experience. The earliest part of information gathering doesn't have to be systematic. A fact-imposed system at this early point could unduly emphasize some of the alternatives and obscure others. While some screening to remove obviously unproductive ideas is helpful, early information gathering should provide a wide range of possibilities.

Lesson 3 – Problem Solving

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Distinguish between problem solving and decision making

☐ Explain how problems, causes, and consequences can be confused, and distinguish among them in a problem situation

☐ Outline a series of steps for problem solving

Problem solving and decision making are almost always related. It is difficult to imagine an episode of either without the other woven through it. The reason they are artificially divided in this course is to give us an opportunity to focus on one aspect of the dual process that is the key to the success of both, identification of the problem. If this step is not accomplished effectively the form is likely to be formless, or a situation characterized by backtracking and repetition of work already done.

What Is the Problem?

Think for a moment about how people talk about problems. Think about the last time you discussed a problem with someone else. Where did you start? How did the conversation progress? The example below is not atypical of such conversations.

Jane:	*We've really got a problem with the specifications. They've been late three times this week.*
Larry:	*I don't know what's the matter with the drafting group. They're really lagging.*
Jane:	*Well, we can't keep to our due dates because of it. We're going to get later and later. We've missed one deadline on the Santa Maria project already, and we're going to miss one on the Bernstein project today. I'm really concerned about the schedule.*
Larry:	*I think at least half of the drafters need more training. Most of them have just been trained here. I think they should be required to take some outside instruction to get some new ideas about how to organize their work.*
Jane:	*I guess I'll put the rest of the due dates back two days. That will solve the problem for a while.*

Lesson 4 – The Performance Appraisal Discussion

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Explain the role of performance criteria in a performance appraisal.

☐ Understand the difference between employment interviews and performance appraisals.

☐ Understand the elements of and how to conduct an effective performance appraisal discussion

Definition

Performance appraisal is the major control tool of human resources management. It can be made effective through application of general principles of control. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that performance appraisal is essentially a discussion between people, and appropriately includes judgment and subjectivity as well as analysis and objectivity.

Performance appraisal discussions and the employment interviews are similar in several ways. Both induce a certain amount of tension because they are times of judgment; the employee whose performance is being appraised is being judged, as is the applicant seeking a position. In both conversations, the interviewer is placed in a judgmental role, which is never comfortable. The importance of establishing a supportive atmosphere and of using interviewing skills effectively is as characteristic of the performance appraisal discussion as of the employment interview. Finally, both conversations are systematic in approach and both are documented.

Interviews vs. Appraisals

In another way, employment interviews and performance appraisal discussions are different. In a strategy for performance communication, they have different purposes. In a sense, the employment interview can be said to begin the cycle of performance communication; it is the employee's first discussion about the performance required on the job, and even though it occurs before the employee has brought performance to the job, it introduces the "what" and "how" of the job. Other kinds of performance communication intervene prior to the first performance appraisal; the employee and his supervisor talk about problems, recognition is given for completed work, and standards are reset. All of these kinds of performance communication focus on specific aspects of the work, usually in specific and short time frames.

The performance appraisal, in contrast, involves the whole job and how the job was performed throughout a given time frame that is relatively long, perhaps a year. In this way it has something in common with the employment interview, which also covers the whole job. If the performance

Lesson 5 - Managing Careers

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Explain three elements of career management.

☐ Describe strategy in career growth

☐ Explain the mentor role in career management.

With this lesson we turn from management functions, processes, and skills to some concerns of managers – careers, change, and current issues, including stress at work. Each of these categories is important to successful management, because each is always present in managerial work and because decisions about each determine the future for individual managers and for management in general. Questions about careers, change, and current issues, including stress at work have no right answers, even no definite answers, but the way managers think about the questions can have great impact on their success in management. In this lesson we will survey some elements of career management. This subject has a twofold significance for anyone who manages people. He/she needs to have some ideas about both personal career development and effectiveness in fostering the career development of others.

Elements of Career Development

Our initial definition of management emphasized consciousness of its process and functions. These activities can be implemented without awareness; that is, planning can be done without being identified as such. But good communication in an organization usually requires greater clarity and identification in what is being done. Career management can similarly appear to be an unconscious process, but if it is unconscious, it is not really management. A managed career is, by our initial definition, a consciously organized career.

What elements must be included in conscious career management? One way of looking at careers suggests three: the individual, the environment, and the process through which they are merged productively. The individual who wishes to manage his/her career needs to be conscious first of relevant personal factors. Questions he/she can ask include:

- What are my skills? That is what can I do well? In what areas have I demonstrated identifiable (measurable, observable) competence?

- What are the results of my skills, the contributions I have made? That is, in what kinds of environment do I achieve the most, contribute the most?

Lesson 6 - Managing Change

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define organizational development.

☐ Outline steps for change.

☐ Explain what a manager can do to have minimal resistance to change.

As a principle of action, management involves change. Further, change is woven through most of the management functions and processes. For example, change is clearly a part of planning; it results from the application of controls. Changes are often small, adjustments to the status quo. But sometimes general organizational change is needed, to respond to external pressures (changes in the market or a new environment), to respond to internal needs (realization that polices and practices related to human resources management are outdated or that work force motivation is lagging), or to bring new vitality. In these circumstances, an organization's future, in fact, its continued existence may depend on how rapidly and smoothly it can turn itself around.

Although the processes we have surveyed can be used in large (general) as well as smaller (specific) changes, in recent years a whole set of other processes to use in instituting major institutional changes has been developed. These processes constitute the discipline of organization development, which has become, in many organizations, an important adjunct to management. In this lesson we will survey some factors that come into play when the processes of organization development are used in bringing about change. We will also look briefly at how managers can introduce change to employees in such a way that natural resistance is minimized.

What is Organization Development?

Organization development means planned organization-wide changes brought about to increase general organizational effectiveness. It begins with an understanding of the current situation; the interaction of parts of the organization and of its system. It typically brings to bear an additional understanding of stages that an organization might go through in making change happen. What is usually changed is an organizational system. An organizational system is one function of the organization that is found throughout it. Examples are performance communication, reward systems, and accepted ways of getting things done. How the organizational system is changed includes application of knowledge from the behavioral sciences: psychology, sociology, anthropology. Organizational development is not essentially concerned with the technical processes of the organization but rather with attitudes and behaviors of people. Changes in these areas may be accompanied by changes in technical processes and administrative procedures.

*Lesson 7 - **Mastering Stress***

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Define the causes of stress.

☐ Explain the various techniques to alleviate stress.

Stress is part of everyday life and discussion about it has become equally pervasive. Recent lifestyle changes in the United States, lighter eating, more exercise, have developed partly in response to recognition that stress is not something that will go away, but has to be countered by positive action. Human resources management began when people in organizations started to understand the effects of organizational life on people and their capacity to work and create. Stress management remains an important concern of human resources management.

Time management and stress management would appear to be logical companions, and in a rather broad way they are. Both are efforts to impose personal control on one's environment, and they are generally applied when the environment seems to be presenting excessive pressures. They differ, however, in the greater range of pressures to which stress management is a response.

What Is Stress?

Although the term is used loosely to describe uncomfortable sensations of many kinds, it is more exactly defined as a physiological and psychological response to an environmental situation that is perceived by an individual to be excessively demanding on his/her ability to meet it. In other words, someone is suffering stress when he/she believes him/herself unable to meet the demands or potential demands of a situation. The experience of stress is, therefore, not based on the situation but on how the individual perceives the situation. In addition to feeling a demand the individual must also perceive a feeling of threat that something he/she values may be lost, or may not be received, because of his/her inability to respond. This means that people respond with varying degrees of stress in the same situation, depending on their perceptions of their own abilities, and on what the situation means to them. The impending loss of an expected promotion, for example, might cause severe stress for a person who had counted on it for both financial and psychological rewards, while someone who could get these rewards from other sources would not suffer the same stress.

When someone perceives a threat, his or her body responds for emergency action, to 'fight or flight' (although neither of these actions is likely to be performed overtly), with decreased digestion, increased heart rate and blood pressure, increased blood sugar, heavy perspiration, and deep breathing. If the stressor, the environmental element causing the perception of threat, is removed, the physiological responses will cease and the individual's body will return to its normal state. But if the stressor continues, the body may develop resistance through drawing on its resources for adaptation. And

Lesson 8 - Current Issues in Management

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

☐ Understand the impact of new technology on management.

☐ Understand the types of organizations that are influenced by technology.

☐ Understand the types of workers being influenced by technology, organizational structure and management practices.

When they consider the future, what do managers think about? What changes do they anticipate in the work that is expected of them? What are their concerns about their managerial roles? Like everyone else, managers are doing their jobs in an increasingly new world, and also like everyone else, they can expect continuing change in both the world and the jobs. Management's world and managers' jobs are new in several ways – in the technology that serves management (and may replace some management functions), in the organizations that are served and influenced by the technology, and in the workers who are central to the rest. We will briefly survey each of these, considering some of the issues currently important to the practice of management.

The New Technology

Computers and their companions, computer-aided robots, have changed what we mean when we speak of work. This may seem an overly sweeping statement, especially to anyone whose work has not yet been influenced in obvious ways by this technology. But if it doesn't apply now it probably will apply soon, as computer capacities and capabilities increase, bringing new and expanded services.

For example: time, always an important resource, can be given to us through wise use of computer capacity. Communications can be faster and additional time gained through computer-aided systems, scheduling devices, and teleconferencing. Databases give us the raw material for more information than we have previously had quick access to, and thus they facilitate faster, probably better, decision making. Data can also be processed as information in charts, graphs, and other clear representations.

How to use this new capacity is a major management issue. Consider the computer's capacity for gathering and storing data. Should we gather all the data that's available, simply because the computer can do it? Should we store information, simply because the computer can store it? Attempting to answer these questions, managers find themselves in an ambiguous position, gifted with powerful technology, but lacking complete understanding of the effects of using it fully. Further, different people in the same organization may be at different levels of their understanding of the technology. Some regard it as a kind of magic, seeing the machine and the information derived from it as a panacea for whatever is not working. Others regard it as a threat, and still others, as a helpful tool with limitations. Until gaps in understanding among colleagues are narrowed, the disparities may generate organizational tension. Indeed, a solitary office worker may experience the tension of being between techniques, one