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MGMT 645.01: Contemporary Issues in Human Resources Management

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MGT 645, FALL 2003

5 weeks, 1 credit
Thursday evenings, 6:10—9:00
Thursdays mornings, 8:10—11:00 a.m.

Contemporary Issues in Human Resources Management

Required Reading:

1. Harvard Business Review On Managing People, Harvard Business School Press (1999).
2. Harvard Business Review Special Issue, January 2003. *Motivating People: How to Get the Most from Your Organization*.
3. Articles assigned below (provided to you)

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IMPORTANT NOTE: THIS CLASS IS ONLY 5 WEEKS LONG. COME PREPARED THE FIRST CLASS BY READING THE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK 1 SO WE CAN EFFECTIVELY COVER THE MATERIAL IN OUR LIMITED TIME TOGETHER.

In its review of our selected text, the Harvard Manager's Bookshelf describes *Managing People* as a collection of articles addressing how to build organizations with "judicious and effective systems for managing *people*." The editors' note for the second text, the special issue of the Harvard Business Review, January 2003, *Motivating People*, talks about "the most intangible asset: *"How can you manage what you can't even see? Whenever executives attempt to influence employees' attitudes and emotions, that's the question they have to wrestle with....Pull the right motivational levers and your company is halfway down the road to success. Pull the wrong ones, and you're stalled at the starting line. This special issue of HBR offers both timely and timeless insights into personal and organization motivation."*

These readings provide the foundation for addressing two important themes in managing people--those intangible assets we hear more and more about: 1) the distinction between extrinsic incentives like pay and promotion and intrinsic ones that lie deep within human nature and 2) the creation of incentive systems appropriate to a knowledge economy.

Management 645 will use the HBR articles and other assignments as a springboard for exploring ways in which organizations can improve the quality of work life, create learning organizations, and help the organization maintain profitability and productivity through strategic management of its important people assets. Day-to-day management practices augmented by institutional human resource practices will be the focus of reading and discussion.

A critical part of this class will be your own contributions each week. All students are expected to **read** and digest the assigned readings in preparation for each class and **be prepared to discuss** the readings and **relate** them to their own experiences in the world of work.

Week I: Introduction to Managing People: The Human Resources and Intangible Assets of an Organization

(Many of you will have already completed Mgt. 640 so we will not be doing basic “HR Management”):

Required reading:

- *Accounting for People* (provided)
- *What Holds the Modern Company Together?* (Text 1)
- *Making Differences Matter: A New Paradigm for Managing Diversity* (1)
- *Moving Mountains* (Text 2)

Week II:

Required reading:

- *The Alternative Workplace: Changing Where and How People Work* (1)
- *Beyond Empowerment: Building a Company of Citizens* (2)
- *One More time: How Do you Motivate Employees?* (2)
- *Fair Process: Managing in the Knowledge Economy* (2)

Discussion Assignment: Come to class prepared to discuss where your organization fits with the concepts of the first two weeks’ reading. Does your organization “fit” any of the models? How so? Why, or why not? Think out of the box. Could things be done differently, can work be accomplished in a different way for your employees? Be prepared to discuss your organization in class. My recommendation for strong contributions to class: take notes as you read, make an outline of points you want to cover in class when we discuss the readings. Be insightful and analytical, and address specifics about the organization you work with now or in a former life.

Week III:

Required reading:

- *Emotional Intelligence* (provided);
- *Pygmalion in Management* (in both 1 and 2)
- *Empowerment: The Emperor’s New Clothes* (1)
- *The Set-Up-to-Fail Syndrome* (1)
- *How to Motivate Your Problem People* (2)

Writing Assignment I Due: analyze a situation in your organization/managerial life where the readings from weeks I, II, and III apply. It may be a situation with an employee you are working with as a manager, it may be yourself! Example: have you ever evaluated yourself in light of EQ and feedback or interactions you have had with your staff?) Where do you have strengths and weaknesses and how have you used them in managing people? Have you been set up to fail, or have you, unknowingly, set

someone else up to fail? Or you may have a situation you are familiar with related to another manager or colleague. Incorporate the readings. Don't just tell a story—dissect the problem, analyze. Cite these articles and the text as resources. THIS IS an INTEGRATIVE PAPER. Your papers must incorporate *multiple* readings, not just rely on the information in one article. Be prepared to discuss your paper along with the readings in class. **30% of your grade**

Week IV:

Required reading:

- *Management by Whose Objectives?* (2)
- *Power is the Great Motivator* (2)
- *Black Hawk Down at Work*(Research Brief)—(2)
- *The Necessary Art of Persuasion* (1)
- *How Presidents Persuade*(2)

Week V:

Required reading:

- *Six Dangerous Myths About Pay* (1)
- *What's Wrong with Executive Compensation?* (also look at the one page chart about Pay Scales, circa 1973) (2)
- *The Best-Laid Incentive Plans* (2)

Writing Assignment II: What is going on in your organization with management of people? MBOs? Are corporate/department/personal goals made clear? Are they attainable? What about your organizations' incentives? Are there any? Are they incentives for real peak performance? What are you doing right/wrong according to our reading? How have these readings influenced your thinking about incentives and intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation? **This should be a capstone paper.** 45% of your final grade (there is no final exam).

Grading:

Assignment I: 30%

Assignment II: 45%

Class contribution 25%

Why this distribution?

- a. writing/analysis is an important area of management and managers too often can't write/discuss/dissect a problem so this requires you to integrate your knowledge and information.
- b. Requiring only one paper means all your eggs are in one basket. Students in the past have not liked this alternative.

- c. Your contribution: 3 hours of class is a long time. How much more fun, interesting, and diverse in terms of contributions if we all talk! Besides, this is an APPLIED course at the graduate level, and all of you have experiences to share, questions to ask, debates to wage with your fellow students and me.

Note: these are high quality, well written papers with proofreading and solid grammatical construction. This is a graduate class so I expect graduate level writing. Treat it like a report to your CEO: if you were making a presentation at work, you would insure its perfection! No sending it back for clean up or editing.

Final comments: I am really excited about using both HBR texts this semester. Previous students have loved On Managing People, but I wanted to update it and diversify the reading a bit. Neither text is expensive compared to a hard back text and while one provides exposure to management classics, the other incorporates classics with contemporary thought.