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Building Effective Conceptual Skills

Exercise Overview

Your conceptual skills reflect your ability to think in the abstract. This exercise will help you extend your conceptual skills by identifying and analyzing situations that call for

different kinds of management functions, roles, and skills in different kinds of organizations.

Exercise Background

This chapter includes discussions of four management *functions*, ten management *roles*, and seven management *skills*. It also stresses the idea that management activities are necessary in many different kinds of organizations.

Start by identifying five different types of organizations: one large business, one small business, one educational organization, one healthcare organization, and one government organization. You might choose organizations about which you have some personal knowledge or organizations that you simply recognize by name and industry. Next, put yourself in the position of a top manager in each of your five specific organizations.

Write the names of these five organizations across the top of a sheet of paper. Then list the four functions, ten roles, and seven skills down the left side of the sheet. Now put your imagination to work: Think of a situation, a problem, or an opportunity that fits at the intersection of each row and column on the sheet. The dean of your college, for example, must perform a leadership role and apply interpersonal skills. The manager of an all-night diner must perform an organizing function and play the role of monitor.

Exercise Task

1. Do you notice any patterns of meaningful similarities in functions, roles, or skills across the five columns? Are there, for example, similarities in performing leadership roles or applying communication skills in most or all of the five types of organization? Do you notice any patterns of meaningful differences?
2. Based on your assessment of the patterns of similarities and differences that you identified in task 1, give two or three reasons why managers might find it easy to move from one type of organization to another. Give two
- or three reasons why managers might find it difficult to move from one type of organization to another.
3. Identify two or three places on your grid where the intersection between a type of organization and a function, role, or skill suggests something at which you might be particularly good. How about something at which, at least right now, you think you wouldn't be very good. Explain your reasoning.

Skill-Building Personal Assessment

How Do I Rate as a Manager?

This self-assessment will help you understand your current understanding of the practice of management and your own approach to management. This assessment outlines four important functions of management: planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. You should respond to this in one of three ways:

- (a.) respond based on your own managerial experience if you have any;
- (b.) respond about effective (or ineffective) managers you have observed in your work experience; or
- (c.) respond in terms of how you think an ideal manager should behave.

Instructions: Recall a situation in which you were a member of a group or team that had a specific task or project to complete.

This may have been at work, in a class, or in a church, club, or civic organization. Now assess your behavior in each of the functions. For each question, rate yourself according to the following scale.

Rating scale: Insert your score from one of the following five options for each of the statements that follow:

- 5 *Definitely true of me*
- 4 *Probably true of me*
- 3 *Neither true nor not true, or undecided*
- 2 *Probably not true of me*
- 1 *Definitely not true of me*



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