

Course Narrative Example  
Department of Management

MGT 349 Principles of Management. (3) Study of the managerial process in an organizational setting with emphasis on decision making, planning, organizing, and controlling including discussion of motivation, leadership, communication, and interpersonal dynamics in an organization context. (2004-05 WIU Undergraduate Catalog)

I believe the knowledge I gained from the extensive training and experience I received during my career, especially during my employment as Manager of Ancillary (Business) Services at Jones Community College (Western State Community College District) is comparable to the subject matter covered in MGT 349.

Through reading and the various management classes I have taken I have become familiar with the nature of organizations, the nature of management, the history of management thought and organizational culture. I've learned that various societal needs give way to various types of organizations and that organizations are not just structures, but social systems that link people to people. I have learned that organizations exist to transform inputs including raw material, capital, human ideas and efforts into goods that meet the needs of the society. I've learned that management is a process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling an organization's resources to meet its goals. There are different kinds of management: Upper management may deal more with longterm goals with more emphasis on planning for the future; however, lower-level managers may deal with more day-to day operations and time frames. I have learned there are many different organizational charts each depicting a certain hierarchical relationship among employees in the organization. I have seen and worked under several organizational structures during my years of employment .

Differences in structure and processes require different management approaches. Differences in management style affect the employees and their behavior.

Frederick Taylor is considered the father of scientific management. Taylor (1856-1915) listed four principles of scientific management: First, each individual's work was analyzed "scientifically," and the most efficient method for accomplishing the task was used; secondly, the most suitable person to do the job was chosen; thirdly, managers and workers had to cooperate to ensure the work was done in the scientific way; and lastly, a division of labor existed between workers and management and each did their part. Taylor's prescription for success also included applying a financial incentive program to encourage efficiency.

I studied McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y and took a self-assessment to profile my beliefs about employees. Theory X is based on the assumptions that people dislike work and



satisfaction and employee recognition. All employees of the district were (and new hires still are) trained in CQI and have an opportunity to serve on various college teams.

As a supervisor and a subordinate, I learned and understood the importance of the managerial process in my particular organizational setting. People skills are one of the manager's most important skills. I understand that training in and application of all aspects of management including but not limited to management theory, organizational culture, decision making, planning, organizational skills, control, leadership, teamwork, interpersonal dynamics, communication, change, performance evaluations, and motivation are all enhanced by excellent people skills. I used the people skills learned over the years to effectively serve as the business manager at Jones Community College. These people skills have also helped me in other aspects of my life such as while serving on various committees and in volunteer capacities in my community.

My position summary at the college stated "The manager of ancillary services is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating college ancillary services and is also responsible for recommending for employment and evaluating all ancillary services personnel.

The manager of ancillary services is responsible for the developing, implementing and evaluating a safe and accountable system for income management and the banking activities of the college." Decision making, planning, both long- and short-ranged, organizing, controlling, motivating, leading, communicating to and with employees, and dealing with the dynamics of various personalities in the workplace were an everyday occurrence for me.

Decision making was a major part of my job. I was responsible for the oversight of the business office, the print shop/mailroom, the bookstore, the telecommunications system and the evening college administrator's office. I supervised all of the staff (8-10 employees) in those areas. Decisions weren't made in a vacuum, but wherever possible, were made at the lowest possible level. As many of my staff members as possible were included in the decision making process. I relayed information about decisions that were handed down from upper management expeditiously. Through the mutual trust that came from working together effectively for many years, I knew that, in my absence, my staff could be trusted to make appropriate decisions affecting their immediate work situation. All employees participated at some level in the district's ongoing master planning process. They were also trained in Continuous Quality Improvement. Both of these avenues provided them with the opportunity to participate in the decisionmaking processes of the college. They also felt empowered because they knew their input was considered and often implemented and rewarded.

The CQI process saw natural work teams formed to study the effectiveness of the



practiced our skills through role-playing. Recognizing positive results, dealing with emotional behavior, getting your ideas across, giving constructive feedback, and getting good information

enabled me to control the phone system, make changes to phone extensions, move them from location to location, change routing of calls, add back-up extensions, increase the number of voice mail messages that could be left, set up features for users, allow access to long distance and track long distance calls. This enabled me to respond quickly to the needs of all of the employees at the college. I was able to analyze the data available on this system and to make decisions based on that data. The new system and my ability to monitor it saved the district several thousand dollars on service agreements and long distance expenses.

Planning and organizing in the print shop/mail room involved keeping current with printing technologies. I was instrumental in the recommendation of several large print shop/copy room purchases. I was instrumental in setting up a charge-back system where departments used codes and were charged monthly for their printing. Because of tight budgets and increased printing charges over the years, some departments decided to have class notes reproduced and sold in the college bookstore. This saved departmental budgets and passed the charges along to the customer.

One of the planning and organizing projects that I am most proud of is computerizing our college bookstore. With the retirement of a long-term manager in the bookstore, I had an opportunity to take a closer look at the operations and effectiveness of that area. As the interim manager, I attended a training program on the new E-Z Text system sponsored by Nebraska Book Company in Lincoln, Nebraska, and implemented the first computerized ordering system at Jones. Several years later, through a district-wide CQI effort that I was involved in, all of the college bookstores installed a point-of-sale system. Prior to making a decision on a new system, the team visited Lincoln Land Community College, Illinois Central College and College of DuPage to investigate the pros and cons of several systems. Using techniques I had learned in past training, I was able to analyze the data that gave me valuable information and allowed me to make an informed decision and recommendation regarding the system.

Implementing this system greatly enhanced the overall effectiveness of the bookstore operation. The following year we opened a branch bookstore at the Satellite Educational Center that saved several hundred students on that campus a trip to the main campus bookstore to purchase books each semester and brought increased customer satisfaction and revenue.

Through knowledge gained in my management training I was able to take responsibility for submitting and managing an annual budget of approximately \$2 million for the business office, bookstore, print shop, telecommunications and postage. I gained the ability to see the need for change and initiated two remodeling projects in the business office to make room for

additional staff, new technology and to attempt to better serve the customers.

During my career at WSCCD I served on several master-planning committees and



Staff Member of the Year on the college level. I was fortunate to be selected as the Outstanding Staff Member for 1996 and received a plaque for "recognition of and appreciation for outstanding contributions in establishing and maintaining a climate of excellence." I nominated employees for the awards as well. I participated in a Noel-Levitz training program on Attracting and Retaining Students Through Quality Service. This was one control measure the district reviewed to determine customer satisfaction. Students were surveyed on a regular basis and key issues were addressed. One of the outcomes of this program was a system of rewards for exemplary behavior. Employees were rewarded with gold star pins. When employees were observed "going above and beyond the call of duty" the President of the college presented them with a gold star pin and a certificate. Employees were encouraged to recognize each other doing great things and to send special recognition notes called Service Champion Cards. Many employees collected them, displaying them proudly on their bulletin boards. These seemingly simple notes of recognition were a fantastic morale booster.

I recognized morale problems and problems arising from interpersonal dynamics immediately because I knew my employees so well. I had supervised several of them for over fifteen years. I had a diverse staff reporting directly to me ranging in age from eighteen to eighty three. I had male and female employees and a physically handicapped employee. I supervised employees from various social and ethnic backgrounds. I gained knowledge about working with employee diversity through seminars and through staff development activities offered by the district. My supervisors were also instrumental in providing me with wisdom in this area. If problems arose, I was able to diffuse most situations and improve the working conditions by engaging the employees involved in a dialogue about the situation. Bringing in some part-time help until the workload was again manageable also alleviated stress due to work overload. Through CQI training and experience, I learned that processes, not people, were the chief stressors in the workplace. This knowledge was beneficial for all employees, especially when interpersonal dynamics came into play.

Communication with staff members is of the utmost importance. I was trained on interpersonal communications skills including eliminating common communication barriers, providing quality feedback and practicing active listening skills. I was fortunate to be able to see all of my employees on a daily basis and worked in the same office as some of them. Through mutual trust, my employees also knew that they could come to me at any time with their concerns. They knew that I would support decisions they had made. I met twice a month with my supervisor. I met twice a month with the other administrators in my department and at least once a month with the College Council. I passed on information from those meetings to my employees





By sharing some of my tasks and teaching the employees new skills, I was able to mentor them by giving them opportunities for promotion or change their job descriptions to reflect their new responsibilities.

In Management and Organizational Behavior, Pierce and Gardner define ethics as the "set of standards and code of conduct that defines what is right and wrong and just in human actions." During my management career, I had a real desire to treat people the way I wanted to be treated. I started out as a secretary and moved into management. I didn't forget who I was or where I came from. Having integrity was of utmost importance to me. I practiced setting good examples, pitching in and helping out when necessary, demonstrating ethical behavior, being a good listener, being empathetic, being honest, having a positive attitude, and sharing my successes. I knew that I could only be successful if I had successful people working for me. I learned that having high expectations produced high results and I expected my employees to be honest and ethical. I coached my staff and helped them meet their goals. I believed in following through on promises I made. I believed in sharing as much information as possible within the confines of my position. My management career at the college spanned over twenty years. I gained valuable information on organizational skills and on managing people from Dr. Lawrence Steele, President of the College. Dr. Steele and I worked together for nearly thirty years and he was my supervisor for over ten years. Dr. Ruth Clark, Director for Student Support Services and Development, was my supervisor for the last several years of my employment. I gained information on organization, planning, leadership, decision making and managing people from her as well. In addition to leadership and quality improvement training, I attended seminars and workshops on such things as customer service, computer skills, personal organizational skills, and management and motivation. I attended conferences sponsored by the National Association for College Auxiliary Services. I gained knowledge by working with vendors of copy equipment, postage equipment and phone equipment and the United States Postal Service. I attended annual postal customer training sessions to keep up to date on the changes in mailing regulations. This knowledge aided my decision making in many instances.

I served on various committees and task forces for the college including the College Council, Student Services Council, District Ancillary Services Council, Staff Development Committee, International Committee, Master Planning Committee, Retention Task Force, Social Committee, Car Show Committee and numerous interview committees including one for President of the college. I gained invaluable knowledge and wisdom by observing the many people I worked for and with over the years. My career as a business manager was successful and

rewarding. My performance evaluations were ys exemplary. I have included a listing of some written resources I have used during my career.

I am submitting this narrative with the hope