

*"Never doubt that
'small groups' of
thoughtful, concerned
citizens can change the world.
Indeed it is the only thing that
ever has."*

—Margaret Mead



CHAPTER **18** **Connecting in the
Organizational
Context**

THIS CHAPTER WILL HELP YOU:

- Understand the role organizations have in our lives.
- Describe what an organization is.
- Know and understand important management theories and their connection to communication within the organization.
- Explain the influence of an organization's culture on communication.
- Be aware of the impact of technology on organizations.
- Understand the issues facing organization in the 21st century.

CASE STUDY

Olivia is a marketing analyst at Cyberspace Labs, an innovative satellite firm near Cape Canaveral. Although she typically works about 45 hours a week, her schedule is extremely flexible and can vary according to her responsibilities toward her son, Jason. The thing Olivia loves about her job is that she can come and go as needed; some days she comes in very early in the morning, and other days she might not come until late in the afternoon. Dress is extremely casual, as is most everything with Cyberspace Labs. It is not unusual for people to drop into other people's offices without appointments and often the discussions are not business related. The lines of communication are very informal.

Ralph loosens his tie briefly behind his closed office door, hoping that no one will knock for awhile so he can relax a little. His company, Ozone Air, has a very strict dress code requiring either blue or gray suits with ties for men, heels for women, and no exceptions. About a week after he started at Ozone Air, one of the vice-presidents mentioned to him that a recent hire "didn't fit well" and was let go because she didn't dress professionally. Ralph got the message. It was not unusual, according to other employees, for people to receive a low performance evaluation for being late once or twice in a six-month period. When Ralph offered a way to improve sales, he was told new people shouldn't be making such suggestions without first talking to their immediate superior. The lines of communication are very formal. ●

Questions to think about

- 1 If you could choose only one of those organizations in which to work, which would it be and why?
- 2 If you could create your own organization what would its working environment be like?
- 3 What did you learn about organizational communication from the scenario?

Two very different organizations are represented in the above scenario—one seems to have very relaxed rules and the other very rigid rules. One of the organizations appears to have very open communication while the other doesn't. If you are the kind of person who does not like rules, enjoys informality, and can tolerate ambiguity, then Cyberspace Labs may be the place for you. However, if you like clearly defined rules and policies and a more traditional working situation, Ozone Air may be the place for you. Neither company is better off than the other in terms of its success. In fact, those who work for each of the two companies appear to be very happy with their jobs and with their company.

It is, of course, the goal of each of us to work in an organization whose philosophy and work environment is compatible with our individual needs. It is communication that is the connecting link between organizations and us. In this chapter, we examine the role organizations have in our lives, what an organization is, the role that communication has in organizations, important management theories and their relationship to communication, organizational culture and its influence on communication, the role of technology in organizations, and the issues facing organizations.

Organizations—What Are They?

There are several ways of answering the question, “What is an organization?” When a group of people work together to achieve specific goals, the context in which they work is referred to as an organization. Organizations can be small, involving only a few people in one location, or they can involve thousands of people scattered throughout the world. They can be very simple in structure, or they can be extremely complex. What separates organizations from other activities is that organizations usually operate within a defined structure and have a socialization process that is determined by the people who control them.

Organizations can also be defined in terms of the products and services they offer to consumers. For example, corporations such as Ford Motors and the American Express Corporation provide us with both products and services. General Motors builds and sells cars while American Express provides us with credit cards and financial advice. Each is an organization but they are vastly different in what they do.

Another way to define an organization is by the particular roles individuals play in them. This type of definition implies that understanding what an organization is depends on knowing how and where individuals fit into the organization. For example, you are in a role right now in one of the largest organizations in the country; you are a student in an educational system. At the same time, you may have the role of president of the Marketing Club, a part-time sales representative for a department store, which provides you with cash for college, a member of a church organization, or a participant on an athletic team. All of these roles generally require a different set of behaviors; and at the same time, they contribute to your basic understanding of what an organization is.

As you see, it is easy to define organizations by giving examples of what they produce, by illustrating the service functions they perform, or by examining the roles

individuals perform. Edgar H. Schein, a behavioral scientist who specializes in the study of organizations, defines an **organization** as follows:

An organization is the rational coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal, through division of labor and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility.¹

Schein further characterizes the organization as “a pattern of rules and a blueprint for their coordination.” Thus organizations have structure, are purposive, have interdependence, and depend on communication to hold them together.

The term interdependence means that units within an organization depend on each other for their existence. As organizations grow in size, people are usually assigned specialized roles or positions with a specific task or tasks. Organizational interdependence can be illustrated by a company that must have a marketing department in order to attract clients by making them aware of the products and services it has to offer and a technical staff to generate the products and services for their clients. Both the marketing staff and the technical staff depend on each other to reach their goals. They are interdependent. To carry this one step further, the marketing staff and the technical staff are also dependent upon clients or customers to purchase their services and products. Without people and tasks they carry out, the organization would not exist.

Purposive is a term used to indicate that organizations have a purpose and are goal directed. For example, most business organizations have the goal or purpose of making a profit while nonprofit organizations, such as the American Red Cross, may have a goal of service to mankind. Professional organizations, such as the National Education Association, pursue the goal of serving their members by providing special programs, training, insurance, teaching tips, and public information related to teaching. Having a purpose is one of the elements that make a group of people an organization.

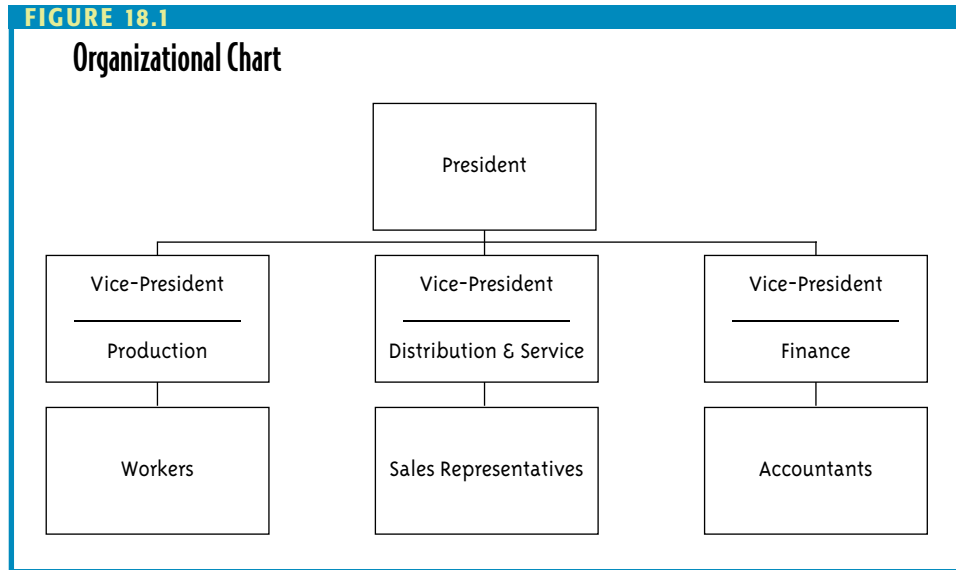
Another characteristic of organizations is that they usually possess some form of status hierarchy that exists in order to coordinate and control those within the organization. The term hierarchy implies several things. First, it suggests that organiza-

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Organizations Communicate Images

If you'd like to learn more about the Ford Motor Company, American Express Company or the American Red Cross please click on the following addresses: Ford Motors www.ford.com/default.asp?pageid=4, American Express Corporation www.americanexpress.com/homepage/home.shtml, the National Education Association www.nea.org, and the American Red Cross www.redcross.org. You will find many interesting things about each of these organizations via the information they provide in their websites.

1. What did you learn about these organizations that will help you better understand how organizations communicate about themselves?
2. Which organization in your opinion gives the best image of itself through what it communicates on its website?



tions have some kind of structure that is usually depicted by an **organizational chart**. See Figure 18.1 for a sample organizational chart. Second the term hierarchy suggests that organizations usually have different levels of command. These levels are illustrated in the organizational chart. For example, the president is at the top, the vice-president of production is next, with the workers below. From the chart you can see that there are both superiors and subordinates. For people at all levels of the organizational hierarchy, communication is the vital link. Your potential success in an organization will depend, to some extent, on your awareness of how communication is used in organizations as well as your own ability to communicate.

Organizational Communication

Communication in organizations takes two forms: formal and informal. **Formal communication** means that interaction flows or follows prescribed paths within the organization, such as the chain-of-command that is illustrated in an organizational chart. Formal communications are those sanctioned by the organization itself and usually deal with the operations of the organization. These might include official memos, policy statements, press releases, or newsletters. **Informal communication** means any interaction that does not follow prescribed paths or the official channels of the organization. Informal communications are often socially sanctioned interactions and can occur at any time from anyone at any level in the organization. These communications are not directly related to the organization itself, but to individual members and could include personal events such as birthdays or personal problems.

Making Connections

Knowing Your Communication Skills

Select any one of the organizations mentioned above and then try to determine which communication skills mentioned in the text will help you to be successful in that organization. Be able to explain your choices.

As organizations increase in complexity, so too do the communications. In organizations that are small and have one location, the communication is relatively simple, but in organizations where there are hundreds or thousands of employees and locations all over the world, communication becomes highly technical as well as complex. The types or purposes of communication, however, that occur in organizations are often very similar. For example, organizational communication includes such activities as interviewing potential employees, motivating employees, giving directions, counseling, evaluating, analyzing and solving problems, resolving conflicts, negotiating, giving orders, leading, selling ideas, and so on. Organizational communication relies on everything we have discussed in our text and thus all the preceding chapters provide a prerequisite to effective communication within organizations.

Role of Organizations

Most of us don't realize the importance that organizations play in our lives, but they continually affect us, as you will see. Although there are many people who work alone, most of us work with others. We are usually conceived in the most basic of all organizations—the family. Our birth usually takes place in another organizational environment—the hospital. We are certainly affected throughout our lives by a large organizational structure called “government” that passes laws to keep us organized and collects taxes to pay for services. And, during our lifetimes, a majority of us spend our time studying, working, and playing in organizations. For example, most of our formal learning takes place in an educational organization, such as the University of Northern Iowa; we may work for organizations like Microsoft, KPMG, Proctor and Gamble Corporation, or the US Bank; and we play in organizations such as the YMCA, the tennis club, or the local softball league. Finally, a large organization called the National Funeral Directors Association helps to find a final resting spot for us. Obviously, it is impossible to list all of the ways in which organizations affect us. It is important, however, for you to realize that organizations play a dominant role in our lives. If we were to ask, what single activity fills most people's time more than anything else? The answer besides sleep for most is the dreaded four-letter word: work. Organizations are where most people work, and people form organizations.

Making Connections

Learning about Organizations

Select one of the organizations listed above and go to its Web pages listed below.

Examine the Web pages to determine its organizational structure. Is it an organization that would fit your needs and style? Explain your answer.

University of Northern Iowa (www.uni.edu); Microsoft (www.microsoft.com/mscorp), KPMG (www.kpmg.com), Proctor and Gamble Corporation (www.pg.com), the US Bank (www.usbank.com/corp_relations); the YMCA (www.ymca.net); or the National Funeral Directors Association (www.nfda.org)

Theories of Managing People in Organizations

Ever since people began to work collectively toward accomplishing various goals, they have had to communicate with each other in order to establish lines of authority—for example, management to worker. It is through communication that people are able to organize and accomplish greater tasks. For example, for the Egyptian pyramids to be built, people had to be organized through communication. While most of us would not agree with the kind of management technique and communication that was used, we have to agree that the job got done and communication was involved in the management process.

Looking at management theory or how organizations are run from a historical perspective, there are two schools of thought. The first is the “classical” school, which essentially is concerned with authority, control, job position, job performance, rewards, and the organization’s structure. The second is the “human relations” school, which primarily is concerned with people, their roles, their status relationships, their morale, their attitudes, their social and psychological needs, and their informal group affiliations within the organization.

The **classical school** of management theory emerged as societies progressed into the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In its infancy, the industrial revolution brought with it an era that allowed those who ran organizations to say to their employees, “If you don’t like it, you can leave it.” The managers of the classical era were more concerned about themselves and the organization than the people who worked for them. Thus, the communication that took place in the organization was usually in the form of orders and directives. There was little, if any, upward communication. That is, communication from people on the bottom of the organization was either non-existent or filtered dramatically by the time it reached the top. If workers complained too much to supervisors, they risked losing their jobs. Communication was one-way, from top down, and not the reverse.

As more labor industries began to develop, so did the supply of and demand for laborers. The work force became an important issue to management. Also, many organizations were feeling the pressure of the growing strength of unions. The confrontation between unions and management resulted in modification of the classical theory. Prior to World War I (1914–1918), the classical school’s theory began to change to a “scientific management” movement that held people were rational and economically motivated. Scientific managers believed that the failures of management to produce effectively were due to their lack of control and inappropriate use of rewards with employees. Those who advocated the scientific management approach believed that workers would produce at peak efficiency if they were primarily motivated with money. This belief was also the result of the times. It was easy to motivate workers by appealing to their most basic needs of food, security, and health. Accordingly, this meant more money, which the workers could acquire these basic needs. There was little concern for the workers beyond the basic needs, however, and thus communication between management and labor was used only to get the job done and as token recognition.

Chester Barnard, in his 1938 book entitled “The Function of the Executive,” dealt specifically with the nature and significance of managerial communication.² He stated “The first function of the executive is to develop and maintain a system of communication.” (p. 226) Barnard also recognized the implications of the “span-of-control” theory that suggests that a supervisor can manage only so many people before the effectiveness of communication and control are diminished.

In addition, Barnard was concerned with the factor of “acceptance,” and was one of the first scholars to state that the authority of the message source alone would produce acceptance of it. Barnard provided four conditions that must be present for someone to accept a communication as authoritative: (1) the person must understand the communication; (2) it must be congruent with, and not inconsistent with, the purpose of the organization; (3) it must be compatible with the person’s personal interest; and (4) the person must be able to comply with it both mentally and physically.³

The **Human Relations School** began approximately ten years after the scientific managers began publishing their recommendations for rewarding and controlling workers. The Human Relations School was concerned more with working conditions and people than with the organizational structure, rewards, and control. In 1927, a group from the National Academy of Sciences began a study to determine the effects of the physical environment on employees’ production and morale. The studies concerning lighting intensity took place at the Hawthorne Plant of the Western Electric Company in the Chicago, Illinois area. When the results revealed that there was no relationship between specific lighting intensities and production, Elton Mayo and a group of researchers from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration began another series of experiments. Primarily, these experiments dealt with the effects of other working conditions, such as job monotony, length of rest periods, length of workday, and environment in general. Mayo’s group also found no relationship between working conditions and workers’ productivity.

In was during the 1940s and 1950s that research focused on the individual and two-way communication. In this era, emphasis was upon employee participation as a method of improving job satisfaction and thus productivity. Paul Pigors, in his 1949 booklet entitled “Effective Communication in Industry,” stressed that “communication is a joint process.”⁴ Essentially, what he was saying is that effective communication requires the active participation of all concerned, that a give-and-take type of atmosphere is necessary, and that management must not only listen to employees, but also try to understand them.

The philosophy behind human relations management style was to increase involvement of employees by making them feel a part of a team. Workers were to be involved in decisions, to be considered friends, and generally to be part of one happy family, thereby reducing resistance and improving relations between labor and management. This, more or less, marked the beginning of recognition of interpersonal communication within organizations. Interpersonal communication is discussed in more detail in Chapters 13 and 14 in the text.

As with any approach to management the human relations movement is not without criticism. Fredrick Herzberg in his classic article in the 1968 *Harvard Business Review* entitled “One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?”⁵ indicates that the human relations movement was manipulative, insincere, and not concerned with the realities of the economic variables. Harold Rush, an organizational theorist, further wrote the about the human relations movement: “To some . . . this represents a naïve and simplistic view of the nature of man. They hold that, on the contrary, ‘there are a lot of happy but unproductive workers.’ ”⁶

There are numerous examples of organizations and supervisors who have taken on the human relations approach and have found that the large outlays of money for parties, supplemental income for favored employees, and the rewarding of incompetent employees with token salary increases have resulted only in a somewhat happier, but often no more productive, organization. While it would be easy to condemn the human relations approach to management as a complete failure, it must be pointed out

that that it is not. There are instances when this approach, used in the right doses, has brought on increases not only in morale but also in production. And more important, with some success in motivating employees, the human relations movement also provided the foundations for other approaches to management that have met with high success. Probably the most important result of the human relations movement was the informal organization, which uses two-way communication.

Theory X and Theory Y were introduced in the 1960s by Douglas McGregor as a way of characterizing management types within organizations and a way of indicating an organization's culture (organizational culture will be discussed more fully in the next section).⁷ Theory X is essentially a theory of management that ascribes to the direction and control of employees through the use of authority.

Theory X states that the "average man" [person] is unalterably immature and thus needs to be told what to do and how to do his work. The theory parallels the "scientific management" approach discussed earlier in that motivation is to be derived from satisfying low-level needs. Characteristics of organizations with Theory X management would be as follows:

1. Decision-making in the organization would be by a few, select people at the top of the organization.
2. Most communication would travel from those few individuals making decisions downward to those who would have to carry out the decisions.
3. The messages coming from the top would be limited to orders and directives about decisions that were made. Little reason for certain decisions would be provided, thus creating conditions for a grapevine (informal communication not via the assigned lines of communication) to provide supplemental information.
4. Upward communication would be limited to indirect methods such as suggestion boxes, grapevines, or employees who had been asked by management to secretly report information about employees.
5. With little or no upward communication, decision making would often be based on partial or inaccurate data.
6. Fear and distrust would often accompany the rare occurrences of two-way interaction between management and employees.

This approach to managing people and these communication behaviors generally creates an atmosphere of distrust, fear, and lack of understanding between management and employees. This in turn leads to low morale and eventually to ineffective production.

As a result of Elton Mayo's research discussed earlier, McGregor became convinced that Theory X would seriously impair motivation and ultimately worker morale and production. Therefore, McGregor believed that management could no longer ignore the individual. He, therefore, hypothesized that the "average man" [person] is at least potentially mature. He refers to this assumption as Theory Y. He believes that members of an organization can be motivated through achieving their own goals by directing their efforts toward success of the organization. This, however, would mean that management had to open communication to include employees' thoughts and concerns. In other words, interpersonal communication was once again seen as needed, allowed for and encouraged.

Theory Y is based on the assumption that people want to achieve higher-level needs than just the basic physiological and safety needs. McGregor believed that there

was more to motivating a person than just salary and organizational titles. In addition he indicated that people would prefer not to be controlled externally all of the time but would rather be able to employ self-control and self-direction. Thus Theory Y suggests management behaviors that would work with, rather than against, human nature. The basic goal under Theory Y is to allow people to set and achieve their own goals by directing their efforts toward the organizational objectives. The manager who uses the Theory Y assumptions would probably create or allow the following communication behaviors:

1. Decision-making would be spread throughout the organization. Important decisions by upper management would also include input from all levels within the organization.
2. Communication would travel not only downward but also up and across the organization.
3. Supplemental information sources would not be necessary because feedback would be encouraged, and management would listen.
4. Information coming downward would be sufficient to satisfy the needs of everyone.
5. The information would be frequent and open, thus creating confidence and trust in the employees.
6. With information coming from all levels, decision making would be improved; and decisions would be carried out more effectively.

The Theory Y approach should result in open communication in all directions, creating an atmosphere of trust, mutual reciprocity, and interpersonal growth. While McGregor's theory is no longer popular and is dated, it does provide some principles that should aid in understanding what creates a free and open environment for communication. There has also been some criticism of McGregor's theory, and probably the strongest criticism centers on the apparent polarization of Theory X and Theory Y. The polarization was seen as a simplifying of a complex situation by indicating there are only two extremes, with no middle ground and no combination of these two extremes. McGregor clarified this by stating that he was not trying to create an either-or-position but that leadership could blend the two assumptions as needed.⁸

Systems 4 Theory was introduced in 1961 by Rensis Likert and his colleagues from the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan as another approach to management within organizations.⁹ The Likert theory is similar to McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. Likert, however, believes that most management styles can be classified within one of four "systems." System 1 and System 4 are the two that are similar to Theory X and Theory Y, respectively; and the other two, Systems 2 and 3, represent styles somewhere in the middle of the two extremes.

Like those who use Theory X or the scientific management approach, System 1 managers have no confidence or trust in employees and believe subordinates need to be told what to do and how to do it. Many of the communication behaviors of Theory X are also used in this system, thus leading to an atmosphere of fear, threat, punishment, and little reward within the organization. Like Theory X, System 1 leads to the development of informal communication among the employees; and conflict exists between their goals and the goals of management.

System 2 managers tend to have a condescending confidence and trust in their workers. Most of the communication and decisions are still from the top down, but

there is some latitude for decision making and goal setting at some lower levels. Some upward communication is present, but it is usually only what the boss wants to pay attention to or needs to receive. Most of the communication that comes down from top management is still received with some suspicion by subordinates. Thus, informal structures usually develop; however, employees' goals may not be in conflict with management's goals.

System 3 managers have greater, but not complete, trust and confidence in their employees. As a result, subordinates feel more comfortable discussing work-related matters with their bosses. There is a greater amount of interaction, which means that there is two-way communication. The informal organization is usually not developed very well; but when it is, it is generally supportive of management's goals and objectives.

System 4 managers have complete trust and confidence in their employees. The communication is wide open throughout the organization; it flows up, down, and across channels freely. There is much openness and questioning when differences appear between superiors and subordinates. Decision-making occurs throughout the organization with little or no limitations on who can make decisions. System 4 generates considerable interaction among all the people within the organization, thus creating an atmosphere of trust and openness. Management's use of feedback is both sincere and responsive. Thus employees under this system are motivated by their active involvement in the organization, and they are seen as important contributors to the success of the overall organization.

Likert and his colleagues in their research of organizations found that organizations that are high in System 4 characteristics are also highest in productivity. These organizations place confidence and trust in their employees; the subordinates feel free to discuss their jobs with their superiors; ideas and opinions are tried; rewards are determined and agreed upon; responsibilities are real and are assumed at all levels with these organizations; frequent, accurate, and candid communication travels in all directions; interactions are friendly and meaningful; decision making is integrated, and there is involvement in all aspects related to the job; and formal and informal channels are one and the same. As you can see, one of the significant aspects of an organization with high productivity and high morale, according to Likert, seems to be effective communication.

Management by Objectives (MBO) is a method of managing people through communication of expectations and setting results for individuals and groups. It is an attempt to tie individual performances to quantifiable organizational consequences. Peter F. Drucker and Douglas McGregor were two of the earliest advocates of using MBO.¹⁰ Drucker, who set the stage for MBO's popularity, expressed the importance for management to balance needs and goals to get results. Douglas McGregor, the developer of Theory X and Theory Y, was more concerned with optimizing the superior-subordinate relationships by emphasizing performance, participation, and commitment, rather than personality, and with stressing future action, rather than past behavior.

These two MBO viewpoints stress a number of important considerations. First, an important responsibility of managers in organizations is to achieve results. Second, there is a need for many managers to take on responsibility and exercise a high degree of self-control in job performance. Third, managers and their subordinates are directly involved in planning, organizing, and controlling their jobs. If set up properly, the involvement should lead to commitment that, in turn, should lead to motivation to perform. Finally, and perhaps most important to us, MBO calls for a continuous and systematic communication between superiors and subordinates. It is the continuous involvement and participative experience that encourages and rewards participants.

Making Connections

Learning about Managing People

After having read the section above on Managing People in Organizations write a one to two page review about what you learned about managing people. Then describe in a few paragraphs the type of manager you'd like to work under in your first job. For additional information about the different theories or the originators of each, please see the following websites to learn more:

1. **Classical school** http://ollie.dcccd.edu/mgmt1374/book_contents/1overview/management_history/mgmt_history.htm
2. **Scientific management** www.cba.neu.edu/~ewertheim/introd/history.htm#scimgt
3. **Chester Barnard** <http://albie.wcupa.edu/ttreadwell/group1/99spring/feb/messages/1470.html>
4. **Hawthorne Studies** www.cba.neu.edu/~ewertheim/introd/history.htm#HR
5. **Elton Mayo** www.accel-team.com/human_relations/hrels_01_mayo.html
6. **Fredrick Herzberg** www.accelteam.com/human_relations/hrels_05_herzberg.html
7. **Douglas McGregor** <http://sol.brunel.ac.uk/~jarvis/bola/motivation/mcgregor.html>
8. **Rensis Likert** http://westrek.hypermart.net/mngmnt_artcls/likert_av.htm
9. **Management by Objectives (MBO)** <http://choo.fis.utoronto.ca/FIS/Courses/LIS1230/LIS1230sharma/plan4.htm>
10. **Peter F. Drucker** www.innovation-award.ca/html/about_peter_f_drucker.html
11. **Fred Luthans** www.cba.unl.edu/faculty/fluthans.html

Organizational Behavior Modification (O.B. Mod.) was first coined by Fred Luthans and was further expanded by Luthans and Robert Kreitner and other colleagues.¹¹ This approach is based primarily upon the work of B. F. Skinner. The O.B. Mod. approach is an attempt to integrate organizational behavior with behavior modification. The fundamental assumption on which this approach is based is that all behavior is learned. Thus those behaviors that are performed in organizations must also be learned. Based on this assumption, Luthans and Kreitner believe that instead of having an understanding of internal reasons for behaviors, practicing managers should possess a sound theoretical understanding and the ability to shape, change, and direct organizational behaviors toward the attainment of objectives. Thus, the O.B. Mod. approach is an attempt to help workers know what is expected of them. The O.B. Mod. approach was considered the beginning of a new era for management and management communication.

Organizational Culture

Organizations are traditionally viewed in terms of lines of authority, purpose, products, services, organizational charts, channels of communication, and other aspects of structure. To complement the traditional view of organizations today many communication scholars focus on organizational culture or the socialization process that occurs within organizations. The culture of an organization consists of ways of thinking, acting, and viewing work that are shared by the organization's members. Organizational communication scholars have claimed that organizational culture is de-

veloped, fostered, and comprised of communication, arguing that culture is a socialization process. Just as when people join any new group they are socialized into pre-existing meanings and traditions, so are new members of an organization socialized into an organization's culture.

Just as individuals have personalities, so, too, do organizations. In earlier chapters in the text, we suggested that people have relatively stable traits that predict their attitudes and behaviors. Organizations are a lot like people, in that they can be characterized as, for example, closed minded, friendly, cold, innovative, or liberal. These traits, in turn, can be used to predict how organizations behave and communicate to those in them and to others outside of them. An organization's culture is communicated to members through symbolic activities. These activities include rules, policies, rites, rituals, narratives, stories, material symbols, and tradition among many others. These processes are both symbolic and shared by members, and are created, sustained, and expressed through communication. The relationship between communication and organizational culture is interchangeable. One does not exist without the other. For example, it is communication that creates culture and it is the organization's culture that influences what is and what is not communicated in an organization. The relationship is reciprocal. One can not exist without the other and vice-versa.

Any time organizational members interact, they are directly and indirectly producing and reproducing their organization's culture.¹² An organization's culture is communicated and learned through its symbolic activities, which include narratives and stories, rites and rituals, structures, and networks which are unique to the organization. Through these symbolic behaviors organizations define and reinforce their cultures as well as provide meaning that keeps the organization coherent.

Narratives and Stories

In the early days when Henry Ford II was founder and chairman of the Ford Motor Co., there probably wasn't one manager who had not heard the story about Mr. Ford reminding his workers, when they got too arrogant, that "It was *his* name that was on the building." The message was fairly clear as to the fact that Henry Ford II ran the company and was the boss.

Stories are a means of passing on traditions and important experiences in an organization's culture. One of the important functions of stories is to socialize newcomers into the culture of the organization. They also serve to socialize new members into the culture of an organization. Three types of stories have been identified within the organizational context.¹³ There are corporate stories, which convey the values, style, and history of the organization; personal stories, which are accounts about how the members see themselves and how they would like to be seen by others; and there are collegial stories which assert identities for others in the organization. Stories are part of the culture and a means by which the culture of the organization is communicated.

Rites and Rituals

Rites and rituals are verbal and nonverbal events that illustrate and represent how an organization celebrates its values. These are everyday activities that have meaning for an organization and provide some sense of what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior for its members. They become norms or standards by which organizations maintain their values and identities to their members as well as separate them from other organizations. An organization that values innovation may develop a ritualistic

way of rewarding employees' new ideas. **Rites** are collectively produced, structured, occasions or events which help to 'frame' or provide a definition of reality to an organization's values and identity.¹⁴ Members are influenced by rites and are expected to conform to them. By conforming individuals are showing their solidarity to the organization and that they belong to the community of members that make-up the organization. Rites are intended to influence the lives and perceptions of members and maybe seen as a mechanism to control members' behaviors or at least keep people consistent with the company line.

Rites have been classified into six different types.¹⁵ The first is the "rites of passage," which include those activities that provide a transition from one role or status to another. For example, when a person is hired into an organization they may be given the key to office space, or if a person is promoted they may be moved into a larger office or an office on a higher floor. The second is the "rites of degradation," which are acts or symbols of punishment of a member who has not performed up to the standards or expectations of the organization. Degradation might include a demotion or firing. The third is the "rites of enhancement," which are rites of praise or reward. These are often associated with award ceremonies or banquets where employees are honored. Examples may include the top salesperson of the month, the most creative advertising design, the outstanding attendance record, or the highest productivity award. The fourth is the "rites of renewal," which are designed to update or change members or the organization itself. These rites are often seen as re-tooling or re-designing activities to reassure members that something is being done to address competition or a problem. Training seminars, consultants, educational opportunities, physical fitness programs, or retreats all are geared to improve interaction and operations. The fifth rite is "conflict resolution rites," which are activities or behaviors that attempt to reduce conflict or aggression between and among members. An example of these rites included mediation, arbitration, collective bargaining, executive decision or rule, or avoiding, ignoring, or denying any problems. Finally, the "rites of integration" are those rites which encourage and foster a sense of community or binding together. Examples of this rite would be such events as holiday parties, picnics, or other gatherings that create a feeling of belonging.

Rituals are formalized ceremonies and are usually structured events or occasions where honors and awards are given to organization members in recognition of their accomplishments or achievements. One of the best-known corporate rituals is seen in the annual awards presented by Mary Kay Cosmetics. The awards are presented during the annual company meeting. The ceremony is a cross between a circus and a Miss America pageant; the meeting usually runs a few days in a large auditorium with all the salespeople present. All are dressed in their best, and those receiving awards are paraded in front of a cheering audience of fellow workers. The rewards are varied but clearly significant; for example, such items as pink Cadillacs, gold and diamond pins, fur stoles, etc. are given based on meeting sales quotas. This "ritual" serves as a motivator by publicly recognizing high achievers. It clearly indicates to others that if you work hard and reach your sales quota, you too will be rewarded.

Material Symbols

While in Austin, Texas, on business for a few days, a businessperson was told that there were two restaurants that she should try to get to while in town. Both restaurants are highly rated and expensive. One was only 10 blocks from the other and both were short cab drives from the hotel where the businessperson was staying. The two

Making Connections

The Culture Club

Interview a manager of a local business or company to determine how employees are socialized into the culture of the organization. Develop a set of questions that will help you to determine the culture of the organization. You should consider asking the person you interview about company rituals, stories, narratives, or material symbols that illustrate the organization's culture. Then write a brief report that could be shared with others in class.

restaurants conveyed two very different atmospheres. The first was formal almost to the point of being “stuffy.” It had an institutional quality décor. The staff was formally attired, serious, focused, and rather stiff. In contrast the other restaurant was casual and very informal. It had a stylish but unassuming décor. The staff was dressed casually and their style was consistent with the décor.

Both restaurants have received many honors for their food and service, require reservations often days and sometimes weeks in advance, and cost at least \$75 for dinner for two. Yet each restaurant has a very different culture as reflected by their individual décor and employees' dress. You can imagine what messages these two restaurants are sending not only to their customers but also to new employees. At one restaurant the message is that we're serious, formal, and conservative. At the other restaurant the message, conversely, is that we're relaxed and open. These messages are ways that culture and expectations of behavior are communicated both within and outside of the organization.

Messages can also occur when companies use uniforms or required dress as material symbols. Sometimes these messages are in rewards given to executives or upper management which may include cars, vacations, golf club memberships, and so on. Other material messages could include location or size of an office, furnishing provided in the office, parking spaces, lounges, dining facilities, or reserved parking for certain employees. Material symbols convey to others the importance of certain members, the degree of status desired by top management, and the kinds of behavior that are appropriate by those in the organization.

Because an organization's culture is made up of relatively stable characteristics, it is very difficult to change. The culture of an organization develops over many years and is rooted in deeply held values to which everyone in the organization is committed. The most recent dynamic influence on an organization's culture is technology.

Role of Technology in Today's Organizations

Today's modern organizations can not exist without the use of technology. In fact, information technology is not only changing daily but it is booming in today's organizations. Those organizations that are not using technologies such as voice mail, e-mail, the World Wide Web, cellular, networking, videoconferencing, faxes, and other electronic media are likely to find themselves far behind their competitors. It is generally

accepted that the technology now available provides a means for companies to communicate not only with employees but also with customers throughout the world. James Barksdale, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Mountain View, California-based Netscape Communications Corporation, refers to “the beginning of a whole new attitude in business about how to communicate—within the business, among employees and managers, as well as between business and its external constituents: partners, customers and vendors.”

The digitization of information such as words, pictures, and data provides seemingly limitless applications. For example, there soon will be widespread use of “smart” phones, a technology already available in Japan. Within the year, tens of millions of users in Europe and Asia will enjoy handheld access to the Web whenever they turn on their cellular phones. Other more imaginative scenarios include technologies from the home: the refrigerator that knows when it is low on milk or eggs and places an order with the local supermarket, or the microwave oven that checks a database of a family’s allergies or eating habits and issues an alert if an unwanted ingredient is detected when a package’s bar code is waved in front of it.

Like railroads in the 19th century and automobiles in the 20th, this technology revolution is pervasive, affecting virtually every industry. It can boost productivity, reduce costs, cut inventories and facilitate electronic commerce. It is transforming how organizations are managed, how products and services are produced and distributed, how consumers manage their finances and purchasing; in fact, it affects most areas of the economy either subtly or directly.

Companies and prospective employees can now locate each other via the Web virtually 24 hours a day. As seen in the Appendix of the text on the employment interview, most prospective employees now have their résumés placed into databases. Thus, when a manager needs to fill a position, he or she can search keywords and find top prospects. Some if not all of the interviewing can now be done via technology without a face-to-face meeting. It is estimated that this past year alone more than one-quarter of new hires come to the organization via cyberspace.

Not only are companies using the technology to advertise positions they have open and hire people from all over the country, they are using technology to manage information as well as people. “Knowledge management” was coined by Samuel Greengard, a writer and consultant, and is one of the hottest ideas in information dissemination throughout organizations.¹⁶ Storing, synthesizing, and trading information is not new within organizations, but many companies are now using “knowledge management” as a means of promoting organizational-wide communication. Your university or college, like many organizations, is probably using on-line forums, connected knowledge bases, electronic bulletin boards, libraries, virtual conference rooms, and chat rooms to share information. These technologies can save time as well as keep the organization more competitive and at the forefront of what is happening throughout the organization, the community, and the world.

Issues Facing Organizations

There are numerous issues facing today’s organizations including how technology can best serve the organization, how organizations can adapt to change, relationships and their effects on the organization, and sexual harassment within the workplace. Each of these impacts the organization and ultimately can affect the communication and climate of an organization.

Making Connections

Data on Employee Abuses of Technology

Examine the following survey information on employees' abuses of the Internet and what employers are doing to combat it by going to the following website www.amcity.com/sanantonio/stories/1999/10/18/focus3.html

1. What did you learn from the website to help you use technology in the workplace?
2. What should be an organization's responsibility to communicate what employees can and can not do with the technology the organization owns?
3. If you were to do a report to your class about abuses of technology in the workplace, what would you report?

Technology. Although the technology revolution has brought many new ways for organizations and their employees to communicate, it also has its problems. An article in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1998 stated that many workers are finding that the new technology has created more work and in many instances what is referred to as "information overload."¹⁷ Between e-mails, voice mails, phone calls, and faxes employees are exposed to more messages than they can often respond to, according to Jeannie Glick, an employee communication consultant. A study done by Pitney Bowes Inc. showed that 71 percent of the employees at the nations top 1,000 firms are being overwhelmed by the number of messages they receive in a given day. To further the problem of too much information, employees, according to Glick, are also interrupted in their work by messages at least three to four times in an hour. Thus, Glick concludes that technology is able to disseminate information much faster than we can process it, let alone act on it or make use of it in a meaningful way.

Because information is so easily and quickly generated and disseminated it is difficult for those receiving the messages to determine which messages need immediate attention and which do not. It is also difficult for employees to know which messages should be discarded and which must be retained or acted upon.

Privacy is a concern of many organizations, because messages sent via e-mails or other information on the Internet for the private use of the company are not necessarily secured messages. Thus, many organizations are warning employees to be very careful as to what they are sending and to whom. It is also important for employees to know that what is on their company computer may not be personal. Many companies have access to what their employees have on their computers, how often they use them, and for what purposes.

It is imperative that employees know how to use today's technology, but they also must know when and how technology can be abused. Change in how organizations operate and use technology will be a challenge for all organizations as we move further into the technology era.

Adapting to Change. Another issue for organizations is to find individuals who can communicate in a variety of situations not only today but tomorrow as well. Effective communication in most modern day organizations requires interacting with members

of teams that may form and dissolve quickly. It is clear that today's organizations are looking for the team player.

The skills that have been discussed throughout the text should help you meet the changes that are confronting most organizations today. For example, you should be able to interact with a variety of people because you perceive differences more carefully, listen better, understand yourself more thoroughly, use verbal and nonverbal communication more effectively, know when organizational climates are conducive to open communication and when they are not, and how to adapt your style of interacting to others who may differ from yourself. Those who have a variety of communication skills are also more likely to move in and out of teams more effectively and efficiently, which is another asset that organizations are looking for in their employees.

Relationships. Relationship formation within organizations is an issue that has faced organizations since their inception. Although management has traditionally discouraged personal relationships among employees, relationships often develop anyway. Because most workers spend a great deal of time together, often at least forty hours a week, it shouldn't be surprising that relationships with people who work together occur.

Personal relationships are usually not a problem unless those relationships occur between supervisors and subordinates. A supervisor, for example, may find evaluation of a personal friend difficult. There is the possibility of overrating the work contributions of the personal friend's competencies or more harshly judging them because the superior does not want to appear to be showing favoritism. In either case, the relationship is creating a tension between role expectations by the superior and the subordinate as well as other workers who know of the relationship.

If the relationship is more than a friendship and is seen as a romantic relationship, this can pose other challenges. Romantic relationships often create many of the same tensions as friendships between superiors and subordinates, but they are especially likely to arouse coworkers' resentment and discomfort. John Dillard and Katherine Miller, two organizational communication researchers, found that two myths about work related romantic relations might not be true.¹⁸ The first myth is that organizational romance relationships occur because of work related motivations, and the second myth is that organizational romance relationships are harmful to work performance. The discomfort and harmful effects, if any, may be more prevalent when romantic relationship's break up. In fact, according to one researcher, there is little evidence that the performance of the romantic partners is adversely affected. However, there is no evidence as to the impact the relationship has on work performance and its affect on other employees when one partner is the superior and the other the subordinate.

Sexual Harassment. In 1980, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued guidelines stating that sexual harassment is a violation of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. (*Federal Register*, 1980, p. 25025)

Clearly the Federal Government's definition is open to much interpretation. Sexual harassment therefore includes a wide range of communicative behaviors, many of which are quite subtle. Gary Powell, Ackerman Scholar of Management at the University of Connecticut, found that while close to 80 percent of women consider sexual proposition, touching, grabbing, and brushing as harassment, only 50 percent thought that sexual remarks and suggestive gestures were sexually harassing.¹⁹ Many also thought that staring and flirting were perhaps the most frequent form of female-directed attention, but most did not view such behaviors as harassment. Most people see only serious offenses such as requests for sexual favors in exchange for career opportunities as harassment. However, a person need not suffer severe psychological damage or extensive adverse work outcomes to be a victim of sexual harassment. It is important to note that while a majority of sexual harassment incidents involve women, it is not uncommon for women to sexually harass men, for gay workers to harass other gays, for subordinates to harass managers, or for outside vendors to harass customers. Most people consider, however, only the most serious offenses harassment.

Sexual harassment no matter how subtle or how blatant should not be tolerated in the work place. A work environment that is hostile to employees must be avoided at all levels. In order to do this employers and employees must be trained how to recognize sexual harassment, how to avoid sexual harassment messages, and what to do about sexual harassment should it occur.

Making Connections

Sexual Harassment Quiz

The consequences of sexual harassment can destroy many careers. Thus it is important that all employees know what might constitute sexual harassment. Test your knowledge by going to the following website: www.businessweek.com/1997/41/b3548040.htm

1. How well did you do on the quiz?
2. What advice would you give to someone who is being sexually harassed?

Summary

Organizations are contexts in which many types of communication skills are required in order to be successful. When a group of people work together to achieve specific goals the context in which they work is an organization. Organizations vary in size and can involve a few people, or they can involve thousands of individuals and be scattered throughout the world. Organizations almost always operate within a defined structure and have a socialization process that is controlled by those in charge.

Organizations usually have purpose, interdependence, and must have communication to hold them together. Most organizations have a status hierarchy, which exists in order to coordinate and control those within the organization. The structure of an organization can usually be depicted in what is referred to as an organizational chart, which shows the internal hierarchy or levels of command. All organizations have superiors and subordinates, and it is communication that links them together and makes the organization run.

Communication within an organization can be either formal or informal. Formal communications are those messages sanctioned by the organization itself and usually are concerned with the operations of the organization. Informal communications are

often socially sanctioned interactions, which can occur at anytime and at any level in the organization.

Organizations play a significant role in our lives. We are surrounded by them because they encompass all aspects of our lives. They involve government, education, recreation, health, finance, business, and most everything we do. Organizations are where most people work, and people form organizations.

It is communication that allows people to organize and accomplish greater tasks. The classical school and the human relations school are two schools of thought that emerged on how management should communicate with its employees. The classical school emerged first during the early nineteenth hundreds. The theory behind the classical school was more concerned with management and less concerned with the people who worked for them. Most all of the communication that took place between superiors and subordinates involved orders or directives. There was little or no concern with the employees' thoughts or feelings and thus little or no upward communication. The classical school of management assumed the management needed to be in control and that workers were there only to get the job done and to please management.

The human relations school in its early years followed many of the principles of the classical school but promoted the idea of rewarding workers for a job well done. It was during the 1940s and 50s that two-way communication between superiors and subordinates began to take hold in organizations. The philosophy behind the human relations' management style was to involve workers by making them feel a part of the company family or team. The human relations school did have its detractors, who believed that it was manipulative, insincere, and not concerned with the realities of the economic variables.

Theory X and Theory Y were introduced in order to illustrate that management needs to take on the attributes of both the classical and human relations schools. Theory X was essentially a theory of management that ascribed to controlling employees and Theory Y ascribed to the notion that employees were motivated by freedom in choosing and setting their own goals. Theory X managers control communication and watch over employees while Theory Y managers allow open communication and give workers all types of freedom.

Systems 4 Theory was introduced to suggest that there were at least four different combinations of management styles that should be in place for effective communication between superiors and subordinates. Systems 3 and 4 essentially parallel Theory X and Theory Y. The System 3 approach views workers with some, but not complete trust and confidence while System 4 views them with complete trust and confidence. The communication in System 3 is fairly but not completely open while in System 4 it is wide open. System 4 managers are open to any and all interactions. Thus, employees in Systems 4 have a significant voice in what is going on in the organization.

Management by Objectives (MBO) and Organizational Behavior Modification (O.B. Mod.) are two approaches to managing people where one sets expectations of what is to be accomplished and the other trains managers how to shape, change and direct behavior to obtain objectives. Both of these approaches are considered to be very innovative ways in which management communicates with employees.

Organizational culture has been coined to compliment the traditional view of organizations but focuses on how people are socialized into the organization. In other words it focuses on how they learn what is expected of them and how they are to behave within the organization. Organizational communication scholars suggest that an organization's culture is developed with, fostered by, and comprised of communication.

The culture of an organization is communicated to its members through symbolic activities, which include narratives and stories, rites and rituals, and material symbols.

Technology has taken its hold on organizations and is virtually changing how organizations are operating and conducting business. It is pervasive and affecting virtually every type of organization. Technology, according to some, boosts productivity, reduces costs, and facilitates commerce; there is no direct research to support this claim, however. It is transforming how organizations are managed, how products are produced and distributed, how organizations hire new employees, and how they communicate within and outside of the organization.

There are a number of issues facing organizations including how technology will change them and how organizations will be able to control the uses of technology. This includes privacy of information to protect the organization's data as well as how organizations are going to control how employees use technology within the organization. An issue facing organizations today is how to find employees with the skills to use the technology efficiently and effectively.

Another issue that organizations continue to face involves relationships within the workplace and how companies should monitor those relationships. Sexual harassment is a concern that organizations must face when one employee goes too far in pursuing a relationship with another employee who does not want to have a relationship. Sexual harassment simply can not be tolerated in the work place. A major issue in organizations today is the preventing of a hostile work environment for all employees at all levels.

●● KEY TERMS

classical school: A management theory that emerged during the late eighteen and early nineteen hundreds and essentially was concerned with authority, control, job position, job performance, rewards, and the organization's structure.

formal communication: Interaction that flows or follows prescribed paths or the official channels within the organization.

informal communication: Interaction that does not follow prescribed paths or the official channels of the organization.

human relations school: A management theory that began after the classical school and was more concerned with the working conditions and people than with organizational structure, rewards, and control.

management by objectives (MBO): A method of managing people through communication of expectations and setting results for individuals and groups.

organizational behavior modification (O.B. Mod.): The fundamental assumption of this the-

ory is that all behavior is learned and thus expected behaviors in an organization also have to be learned.

organization: A rational coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal, through division of labor and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility.

organizational chart: A structure that illustrates the various organizational levels of command and operations.

rites: Collectively produced, structured, occasions or events which help to 'frame' or provide a definition of reality to an organization's values and identity.

rituals: Formalized ceremonies that are usually structured events or occasions where honors and awards are given to organizational members in recognition of their accomplishments and achievements.

sexual harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature.

systems 4 theory: Is a theory that classifies management styles into one of four “systems” which place systems 1 & 4—Theory X and Y at the extremes and systems 2 & 3 in the middle of systems 1 & 4.

theory x: A theory of management that ascribes to the direction and control of employees through the use of authority.

theory y: A theory of management that ascribes that employees can be motivated through achieving their own goals by directing their efforts toward success of the organization.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Describe in your own words what an organization is.
2. In your own words, explain the major differences between the classical school approach and the human relations approach to managing people. What are the communication implications for each?
3. Of the management approaches discussed, which would you prefer to use if you were a superior and which if you were a subordinate and why?
4. What can you infer about your college’s culture based on the policies governing students including such areas as class attendance, drug and alcohol use, classroom disruptions, and dishonorable conduct?
5. Reflect on the first few weeks of a new job that you have had—try to remember the corporate, personal, and collegial stories that you heard. What did the stories tell you about the organization?
6. Think about organizations that you belong to on campus. It may be an athletic team, a work group, or a social group such as a club or fraternity. What rites or rituals do these organizations have and what do they communicate?
7. Interview a person who is in their 40s or 50s about how he/she feels technology has influenced his/her life. Ask him or her to describe changes that have occurred in his/her profession and personal life as a result of technology.
8. What do think about romance in the work place? Should it be avoided at all costs?
9. What strategies would you give someone who is being sexually harassed by a co-worker or a superior?

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