

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.

Organizational culture is defined as beliefs of members of an organization about the organization. These patterns of assumptions are either developed or discovered by the employees of an organization. Organizational culture influences how the employees handle challenges and participate in meeting the company's mission. Values that are inconsistent to those of others are a source of conflict in the work place. I am familiar with various theories of management including, but not limited to, the theories by such experts as Frederick Taylor, Douglas McGregor, Abraham Maslow, Peter Drucker, and W. Edwards Deming.

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 avoid it if possible; therefore they must be controlled with a heavy hand. Theory X also assumes people try to avoid responsibility and have little ambition. Managing theory X employees requires close supervision, threats of punishment for poor performance and often leads to mistrust and resentment from the employees. Theory Y is based on the assumption that work is as natural as rest or play and that work may actually be a source of satisfaction; it also assumes that people can be self-directed and will seek rewards and responsibility through achievement. This theory leads to better relationships and the Theory Y manager must establish an environment in which management and workers can complement each other while meeting the objectives of the organization.

A psychologist, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was known for his "hierarchy of needs" which arranged the human needs into five levels beginning with survival or physiological needs, security of safety needs, the need to belong, the need for power, prestige, and self confidence, and finally self-actualization needs. Maslow, along with McGregor is recognized as one of the founding fathers of the motivation theory -- to motivate employees, managers have to identify the types of needs the employees have in order to try to satisfy those needs.

Peter Drucker is often called the management guru and the founding father of modern management studies but prefers to be known as a writer. Drucker has published more than 30 books on the subject of management and is widely read and respected throughout the world. Drucker advocated mentoring and executive development, suggested reduction of management layers, and believed that quality was a measure of productivity and that there was no substitute for leadership.

I studied the key principles and behaviors of Total Quality Management including in-depth reviews of the quality models of Dr. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran and Philip B. Crosby. Deming believed that management needs to change in order for quality to improve and advocated the use of statistical quality control techniques. He is also known for his fourteen-point

management principles that include putting everybody in the organization to work to accomplish transformation. Juran advocated the quality trilogy of planning, control and improvement. His emphasis was on zero-defects or doing it right the first time. He convinced businesses that "quality was free" because 25-40 percent of a company's operating expenses were directly related to quality. It is less expensive to prevent mistakes than to correct them.

I learned that Walter Shewhart developed statistical process control in the 1920's, how quality control was used in the military specifications for war production in the 1940's and how Deming, Juran and others taught quality control to the Japanese in the 1950's. Imports began eroding the U. S. Economy in the 1970's and in the 1980's the United States "discovered" quality. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was established by a public law in 1987 to draw national attention to quality. Even though I worked in an educational/service environment, quality control was of the utmost importance. I gained valuable information about management, teamwork and management tools such as brainstorming, flowcharting, surveying, feedback, pareto charts, and a team process called PSDA (plan, do, study, act) taken from the Total Quality Management concept of W. Edwards Deming and discovered by Shewhart decades earlier. This systematic approach to process and system improvement included defining the problem, collecting data, brainstorming solutions, setting improvement goals, selecting and implementing solutions for improvement and evaluating and standardizing improvement. Through the use of this model I learned to plan a change aimed at improvement in a process, to carry out the change, to study the results to see if I accomplished my goals and to adopt the change if it was successful or abandon it if the results were not useful.

All of my quality management knowledge was gained through Western State Community College's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program that focused on quality, continuous improvement and teamwork. I was in one of the first groups to be trained in this process. CQI director, Richard Smith was my trainer for this intense four-day session. The objectives of the course were to (1) develop understanding of concepts and behaviors that are necessary to implement Continuous Quality Improvement in the work setting, (2) focus on process and systems improvements in order to meet or exceed student and stakeholder expectations, (3) to provide interpersonal tools and techniques as well as an overview of technical tools that are necessary for quality improvement, (4) to enhance communication skills that will improve teamwork and process improvement, and (5) to reinforce that quality improvement is "everyone's responsibility" and needs to be a continuous process in order to meet or exceed our student and stakeholder needs and expectations. In addition to the theoretical bases, I learned about teamwork, customer-driven quality, strategic quality planning, empowerment, customer

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

employee's own environment and ability to perform his/her job. Teams were called upon to identify ways to improve processes. I had an opportunity to apply the knowledge I learned when I led the Business Office/Mailroom Team. This team flowcharted the process of a student's experience with the business office. It was an interesting exercise for us to participate in as it gave us new insights into how we were forcing some students to jump through unnecessary hoops. I participated on the Interoffice Mail System Team as a resource person. This team's activities included surveying the internal customers to determine satisfaction, making recommendations, and implementing changes. By adding an additional daily mail delivery we provided better service to our internal customers without incurring additional cost.

Working together on autonomous teams to solve problems or implement changes gave the employees ownership in the process. Learning and understanding what their co-workers did gave them knowledge and, occasionally, new respect for both the employee and his/her position.

Each employee was also provided with an opportunity to add value to their part of the process, thus improving the services rendered. Although the college considers education its product, we were a service sector as opposed to a manufacturer. The value added to our "product" was most often in the terms of customer service. An example of a value-adding activity occurred in the bookstore. We began filling phone, email, or fax book orders for students. We either had the books available for pickup or we shipped them out at the student's expense. Again, no additional costs were incurred but customer satisfaction rose.

The district continues to be committed to Continuous Quality Improvement. Its efforts paid off when on March 4, 2004, State Governor Tim Black presented the district with the State Recognition for Performance Excellence (SRPE) Award. Western State Community College District (WSCCD) is the first educational institution to earn the State's highest quality award.

Good planning and organizational skills are required in a management position. I learned these skills through leadership training, through reading articles published by CACUBO (Central Association of College and University Business Officers), Practical Supervision, American School and University, University Business Officer, and College Planning and Management, from reading management books, from staff development opportunities provided by WSCCD and from my supervisors. I attended a management and supervision program sponsored by the district for employees who had supervisory responsibilities. This Zenger-Miller Front Line Leadership Program was a twenty-four hour training program delivered over a period of about six months. This is the same training program the college district contracts to provide for business and industry. Topics included planning, organization and control, employee motivation, employee recognition, effective communications including listening skills, and conflict resolution. We

practiced our skills through role-playing. Recognizing positive results, dealing with emotional behavior, getting your ideas across, giving constructive feedback, and getting good information from others are other areas covered in this training. I was able to apply the skills learned in this program to increase my effectiveness when I needed to improve individual performance, develop teamwork and team support, and manage change. It was helpful when I wanted to encourage innovation, build mutually productive, collaborative relationships, encourage involvement and initiative and develop in others increased vision and commitment to goals.

I participated in Baldrige/NCA Leadership Training at WSCCD called "The Baldrige in Education: Criteria for Performance Excellence in Action." Topics covered in this training included leadership, strategic planning, student and stakeholder focus, information and analysis, faculty and staff focus, education and support process management and performance results. The college used the Baldrige-Based Institutional Self-Assessment that focused on the employee's role in organizational assessment, learning and process improvement. I studied behavior/social styles using the DISC model to understand how I was similar or dissimilar to my employees and co-workers. I learned that most managers and employees have characteristics in each of the four categories dominance, intuitor, stability and compliance. This knowledge was useful in forming process improvement teams and in being able to adapt my leadership style as necessary.

My organizational and planning skills enabled me to balance many tasks at the same time. On a typical day I was booking the facilities for outside groups, relaying information to the evening college assistant who was the only administrative representative on campus in the evenings and on Saturdays, arranging set up of the rooms, checking on catering, requesting video equipment, verifying insurance provided by the group, arranging for cleanup and billing the group for the room usage. I was also making sure copiers were operating properly, checking out keys, analyzing phone reports, meeting with vendors, answering phones, advising students, waiting on students at the window in the business office, attending meetings and hoping the alarms worked properly for our scheduled fire drills.

I was the person on campus responsible for telecommunications and made sure the systems functioned properly so that others could depend on the system to perform their jobs. When it appeared it was necessary to upgrade our system, I applied some of the management skills I had learned by surveying the users to determine their needs and desires and to identify problems with the current system. I participated in writing requests for proposals, interviewed vendors and analyzed the proposals. I was instrumental in proposing and implementing several new telephone systems at the college, bringing such changes as multi-line phones, voice mail, and caller identification. I was trained by Norstan Communications to operate a computer system that

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 learned the value of setting goals and committing them to paper (MBO). One-, three- and five-year goals and objectives were written, often with interim completion dates included for various objectives. The plan was reviewed several times a year and most employees or departments were accountable to see that progress was being made. Plans were made for implementing the agreed upon objectives. Every employee had an opportunity to have input into the master planning process.

It is often said that change is the only constant. One of the biggest challenges in the workplace is change. Whenever possible, as many of my employees as possible were included in the decision making process. All employees were made aware of imminent change as early in the process as possible. My department went through its share of changes over the years. I reported directly to three different presidents, two different deans and to the Dean for Student Services and Development. We updated our telecommunications system several times, and had to learn new computer systems on a regular basis. We were accountable to ever-changing federal and state guidelines. Communication regarding the change and how we would deal with it as well as plans for training and updating of skills eased the pain of change.

Motivating staff can be a challenge for managers. From studying the early theorists McGregor, Maslow, Taylor and Drucker, I learned that people will work for rewards (primarily money), they will work for a leader, they will work for something in which they believe and that satisfies their purpose in living, and they will work for things that satisfy them psychologically. I gained some of my knowledge about motivation from the various leadership training sessions, seminars, district staff development activities, business articles and from fellow administrators and supervisors. Learning early that people respond differently to a variety of motivators was helpful for me. Having some time off work motivated one employee who wasn't motivated by money. By allowing him to take off early (without pay of course) when he had completed his job for the day, I was motivating him to complete his work in a timely manner. Many staff members were motivated by money, which was tied to merit raises for exemplary performance evaluations. I formally evaluated the staff assigned to my area annually, praising them for exemplary behavior, making recommendations for improvement if needed and helping them set goals for the coming year. Informal evaluations were held as needed and I coached my employees and asked for their input on a regular basis.

Many employees were motivated by rewards. The college offered several systems of rewards. There were annual recognition awards such as the Chancellor's Awards and Outstanding

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

expeditiously. The entire college met on a monthly basis. The staff received minutes from meetings. The District provided leadership in this area also. All staff members received newsletters highlighting district activities and recognizing employees for committee work, awards, etc. All employees received a weekly update of current campus events and noteworthy items via email. All staff members were encouraged to contribute items for the newsletters. Communication from the bottom up as well as the top down was not only encouraged but also expected.

Information technology and management is a challenge for the manager today. I began my career with a manual typewriter and a duplicating machine. No one had heard of voice mail. During my career we moved from electric typewriters to main frame computers to personal computers. We moved from rotary dial telephones to digital switching equipment and multi-line phones.

We moved from telephone operators to automated answering and voice mail. We moved from interoffice memos to email. Although the plan was to move to a paperless office, paper was in abundance. In order to better manage the information overload, I attended a seminar titled "How to Organize Your Life and Get Rid of Clutter" sponsored by Career Track. Topics covered were paper management, time management and space management. Managing all the information technology changes was a challenge. The key was communicating the change, providing training to employees using the equipment and tapping into information that was so much more readily available. Technology is ever changing. We must be able to adapt if we hope to stay competitive.

Many businesses today are doing business globally either through dealings with customers from other countries or actually having branches of their business located in another country. Jones Community College has foreign students attending classes. They have classes for English as a second language, classes for students in the Central American Scholarship Program through Georgetown University and classes for students from foreign countries taking classes here prior to enrolling in four-year institutions. We dealt with different values, different languages, different customs, etc. Several of our administrators and instructors have gone to foreign countries to share information and help establish programs in colleges there. They participated in staff development activities to share their ideas and experiences with us.

Managers dealing with employees in other countries face huge challenges because of these differences. They deal with differences in legal and political systems. They will find differences in technology, economic systems, accounting practices, food, weather and work ethics. Some words in our language are very offensive to people in other countries. Some of the names of our products have negative connotations in some countries. Managers and employees who move to other countries to work are unfamiliar with the language and customs. Several resources are available to organizations wishing to do business with foreign countries. One such resource is the web site www.websiteaddress.com. There are also international commerce journals such as the International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, Journal of International Management, and The International Journal of Commerce and Management. Business: The Ultimate Resource contains a listing of resources for businesses interested in this topic.

Realizing that my employees were my greatest assets, I learned that mentoring them and helping them grow in their personal and professional lives was helpful to the institution and made them better employees. I encouraged my employees to attend seminars or workshops they felt would be beneficial to them. I required them to attend at least one staff development activity each year. Opportunities included continuing education classes, local or regional seminars, computer classes, etc. Additionally, the district offered a staff development day annually and the college had one as well. I encouraged my employees to learn each other's jobs. This cross training not only helped during the absence or vacation of an employee but gave the employee an opportunity to apply for open positions if they so desired. I maximized the abilities of my staff members, placing them in appropriate positions (Taylor). If there were possible changes to make in job descriptions without significantly changing the job classification, I would make the changes. One staff member had better people skills while another was better with tasks. We were able to be flexible with their positions and moved the people-person to the front window. The task-oriented employee was better behind the scenes. An employee who was older and had some health problems was transferred to a job where she wasn't required to be on her feet so much. This gave me the opportunity to fill her position with someone who was physically able to perform the duties required. It was a "win/win" situation. Because the college was a public institution, I followed very strict guidelines for opening and filling positions. I made hiring recommendations to the President of the college and Human Resources Manager at the district office. As long as I had followed the stated guidelines, my recommendations were given approval.

As my job responsibilities grew, I learned quickly, but sometimes reluctantly, to delegate. I had to learn that I wasn't giving up control, but demonstrating trust that someone else could do part of my job. Doing this in steps gave me confidence that the employee could handle the job.

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 very exemplary. I have included a listing of some written resources I have used during my career.

I am submitting this narrative with the hope that you will find my extensive training and experience in the field of management equivalent to the content taught in MGT 349. I believe I possess the knowledge, gained through training, seminars, personal reading, research and work experience, detailed in the WIU catalog course description and commensurate with the course objectives from the syllabi I have perused. I was able to apply the knowledge I gained by demonstrating the related skills in the day-to-day operations required in my position. I believe you will find my documentation and letters of support reflect this as well.

I am very grateful for your time and consideration of this request for Mgt 349 credit.