

陈丽萍 主编



商务英语简明教程

Business English

陈丽萍 赵 阳 安之丹 编写



复旦大学出版社

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内容简介

本书的编写立足于高职高专院校人才培养定位、人才培养目标以及人才培养模式,旨在提高高职高专学生的商务英语能力,更重要的是培养学生的职业能力及素养。本书的内容编排基于“工学结合”模式,共分5个工作学习项目,每个项目以完成具体的商务学习任务为核心,突出教材的应用性、实践性、职业性特点。本书以商务英语应用的主要写作任务的顺序为主线,以“初涉职场——商务接待——开发外贸营销渠道——商务谈判——商品出口”的工作逻辑设计取代传统无序的知识组合设计,旨在培养学生的商务英语沟通技能。

本书可作为高职高专院校相关专业的英语教材,也可作为从事商务活动人士的专业参考用书。

前 言

《商务英语简明教程》以适应职场生活的语言要求为目的,内容涉及商务活动的各个环节。商务英语课程不只是简单地去提高学生的英语水平和能力,更多的是向学生传授一种西方的企业管理理念、工作心理,甚至如何和外国人打交道,如何和他们合作、工作以及他们的生活习惯等,从某种程度上说这些都是包含在文化概念里的。

本书编写的总体思路是:在对外贸职场相关岗位进行工作任务和职业能力分析的基础上,依照与企业、行业专家组共同开发的国际商务专业职业能力标准和相关工作岗位标准,打破以往单纯以知识体系为线索的传统编写模式,按照“任务驱动”、“项目导向”的课程开发思路,以工作任务为中心组织课程内容,让学生在完成具体项目的过程中学会完成相应的工作任务,构建相关理论知识,发展职业能力。其主要特点是以项目为载体,设定特定的学习领域,在课程单元(学习领域)的设计上,以相应的工作任务为中心,整合理论与实践,实现理论与实践一体化,“做、学、教”一体化。

本书由无锡工艺职业技术学院商务英语专业陈丽萍和安之丹老师以及苏州市职业大学赵阳老师负责编写设计以及最后定稿。编写人员分工如下:无锡工艺职业技术学院陈丽萍老师(学习领域1、学习领域5),苏州市职业大学赵阳老师(学习领域2),无锡工艺职业技术学院安之丹老师(学习领域3、学习领域4)。本书能顺利完稿并交付出版,应该感谢无锡工艺职业技术学院院系领导的大力支持与关心。

本书在编写过程中,参考了许多专家学者的著作。虽然我们在参考文献中列出了这些著作和作者,但难免有所疏漏,在此向本书参考的所有著作的作者们表示真诚的感谢。另外,由于编者水平有限,书中错误疏漏在所难免,恳请广大读者及专家批评指正。

编 者
2014 年 9 月

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Learning Situation 1 Career Starting (初涉职场)

Item 1 Applying for a Job (应聘工作)

Task 1 Job Application (求职)

Knowledge Objectives

- To learn how to apply for a satisfied job for yourself and master the formats and components of a job application.
- To master the useful expressions for an effective job application.

Skill Objective

- To know how to apply for a satisfied job through different channels.

Thinking & Discussing

- What is a job application?
- What are the important points you should pay attention to when you apply for a job?
- How to apply for a job you want to get?

I. Item Presentation

Wang Ling, a saleswoman in a small cosmic company, is responding to a recent advertisement for a sales manager in another company. She graduated from Jiangnan University in 2006. Having obtained the Bachelor of Management, she has seven years of practical experience as a saleswoman. She wants to improve her abilities related to her major. In order to have more chance to get the new job, she is going to take some measures to get the relevant news. Firstly, she is going to scan the latest information of recruitment in the newspapers or on the Internet. Through this way, she may send her application letter coupled with her resume and wait for the possible interview. Secondly, she is going to tell her intention of seeking employment to all her friends, teachers and relatives and require their assistance. If they have any information, they may immediately notify her or even recommend her to the personnel manager. What's more, she may publicize her job application letter or resume on the Internet for the reference of prospective employers. Thirdly, she is going to attend the recruiting fairs in which she may send her job application letter or resume to the companies she desires and even be given an immediate interview.

Now, she sits down with a piece of paper and doesn't get up until she has listed all the things she is proud to have accomplished.

Wang Ling, as a job applicant, is required to accomplish the following tasks:

Task 1: To understand the text of job analysis accurately.

Task 2: To think about the following main elements: position, department, salary/pay grade, work time, job summary, responsibilities or daily tasks, qualifications, and relations of the position to others in the company.

Task 3: To write an effective job application letter.

Task 4: To know what type of career she is leaning toward.

II. Instructors Demonstration

Step 1: To understand the advertisement in the newspapers about offering a position of sales department accurately

王玲大学毕业后从事过很多工作,如文秘、销售、行政管理等。她最近从报纸上了解到某个大型进出口公司正在招聘销售经理。

该公司良好的工作环境、丰厚的薪资、完备的福利、众多的员工培训机会以及今后巨大的发展提升空间,都深深吸引着王玲,并且她结合大学所学的专业,觉得自己完全能够胜任这项工作。因此,王玲决定辞去原来的工作,应聘这个新的岗位。

Step 2: To discuss the main points you should avoid when you seek a satisfied job

In such a fiercely competitive world, finishing the task your boss has assigned you is not enough. If you want to maintain your achievement, you are supposed to offer better work.

So, you should know what type of career you are leaning toward. A well – prepared, qualified job seeker can increase his/her likelihood of landing a job by avoiding the behaviors employers hate. In order to magnify their chances of hiring a superior employee, employers will avoid job seekers who make these fatal errors.

If the job seeker fails to follow instructions, his/her application may never reach the people with the power to hire.

◇ Failure to describe personal information properly.

The job seeker should provide his/her name and contact information of references. Depending on this basic personal information, the employers, especially the direct supervisors can learn about the applicant's social security application, the job application number and the applicant's available work schedule. The employers can know whether the job seeker has ever been convicted of a crime. The military record is also requested in a job application.

The job or employment application is the official form that employers ask all applicants for a position to fill out. The job application is asked to be filled out offline in a pen/paper format or, increasingly, online. The job application (see a variety of sample job applications) provides a consistent format with the same questions that must be answered by each person who applies for an open position. The job application is a legally defensible listing of job applicant's employment history, educational background, degrees, qualifications, references, and more.

◇ Failure to answer questions about salary requirements.

For example, if the job seeker does not comply with the salary requirements, the employers may relegate his/her application to the “no” pile. Why? A job application that fails to follow directions is not considered a valid application and need not receive consideration for the position. Employers must evaluate whether the job seeker's behavior will be acceptable in their workplace.

◇ Failure to comply with job seeker's skills and experience.

Sometimes, job seekers apply indiscriminately for jobs that their skills and experience don't match. Employers are spammed by unqualified and marginally qualified people who apply for each posted job. Yet, reviewing every resume, and hoping for a gem, an interesting applicant who doesn't quite fit the hiring profile, is critical to find superior employees. So, the employer is stuck evaluating them all, and this means — they are all gone in 30 seconds.

◇ Unprepared to interview.

Job seekers are unprepared to fill out the job application during their scheduled interview. This makes them seem unprepared. It will hold up the employer's background checking process if the job seeker is a viable candidate. Companies often use the application as a literacy screen, so taking the application home is not an option.

Step 3: A sample

Warm – up:

1. I am looking for a suitable job in another company.
2. I am seeking a position as Department Store Manager.
3. The working conditions must be pleasant.
4. I saw your advertisement in the... magazine.
5. I noticed on your website that you are inviting application for the post of...
6. For this reason, I would like to work for you.
7. I think my experience and qualifications are suitable for...
8. Mr. XXX should be particularly well suited for such employment.
9. I have... years of accounting experience and am responding to your recent advertisement for an Accounting Manager.
10. I have learned from the advertisement in *The Japan Times* on June 8, 2013, that you are now hiring an English Chinese speaker to fill in a teaching position.

Sample:

Wang Ling
Address: 99 Jingyi Road, Wuxi City, China
Tel: (0510) 81711098
Telex: (0510) 81711812
Email: wangling88@163.com
Date: August 30, 2013

David Smith
Title: Human Resource Manager
Address: Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am writing to apply for the position of Sales Manager that you advertised in *The Guardian* on 18 July, 2013, as I believe it offers the career challenge which I am seeking.

(To be continued)

(Continued)

As you can see from my enclosed curriculum vitae, I graduated from Jiangnan University in 2006 and since then I have had a successful year working in a business environment with a foreign business group.

I would like to highlight the following skills which I believe would add value to your organization.

Organizational skills — developed in my current job with XXX Chemical Sales.

Accounting skills — developed in my role as University Entertainment officer where I prepared annual reports and accounts. During that time, I was responsible for a budget of \$... per annum.

Interpersonal skills — developed through working in an environment at the team in my current role and through a number of holiday vacation positions.

I have a keen interest in sales products and would appreciate the opportunity of an interview to discuss why I believe I am a good match for your requirements.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Wang Ling

III. Language Focus

1) advertise *vt. & vi.* 为……做广告, 登广告

◇ They try every means to advertise their products. 他们利用一切手段为他们的商品做广告。

advertise extensively 大规模地做广告

advertise for 为征求……做广告

heavily advertise in papers 在报纸上大做广告

advertisement *n.* 广告

◇ The choice of media depends upon the product and the audience the advertisement is aimed at. 媒介的选择取决于要做广告的产品以及广告面对的大众。

blind advertisement 隐蔽性广告

classified advertisement 分类广告

a neon light advertisement 霓虹灯广告

outdoor advertisement 户外广告

a patent medicine advertisement 专利药物广告

place/put in/insert an advertisement in a magazine 在杂志上登广告

advertising *n.* 广告; 广告业

◇ With your advertising facilities, you can perhaps work up a big demand for them. 好好利用你们的广告设施, 也许能够替这些货物开拓出一个很大的市场需求。

advertising agency 广告公司; 广告代理商

advertising budget 广告预算

Advertising Association 广告协会

advertising campaign 广告运动

advertising column 广告栏

advertising contract 广告合同

advertising effectiveness 广告效果

advertising exhibition 广告展览会

advertising manager 广告经理, 广告经纪人

window advertising 橱窗广告

2) career *n.* 生涯; 事业

◇ More and more career women hold a high position in a company. 越来越多的职业女性在公司中身居要职。

3) highlight *vt.* 使显著; 使精彩; 强调

◇ The key words in the contract are highlighted. 合同中的关键词被突出强调。

4) entertainment *n.* 招待; 娱乐

◇ We encourage our employees to organize groups for recreational and social entertainment purposes. 我们鼓励我们的员工组团进行社交娱乐活动。

entertain *vt.* 款待; 采纳(建议等) , 考虑接受(订货等)

◇ We are too heavily committed to being able to entertain fresh orders. 我们负担太重, 不能接受新订货。

5) budget *n.* 预算; 预算费 *vt. & vi.* 预算

◇ We have to budget for our advertising campaign before Christmas from now on. 我们必须从现在开始为圣诞节前的广告攻势做预算。

budget accounts 预算账户; 预算项目

budget allocations 预算拨款

budget allotments 预算分配

budget allowance 预备金, 预算限额

budget amount 预算总金额

budget control 预算控制

budget deficit 预算赤字

budget document 预算书

budget making 预算编制

budget period 预算期

6) annual *a.* 一年一次的

◇ The winners of the Annual Award for the Excellent Businessmen are Tom Wang and Tony Zhang. 本年度最佳营业员奖得主是汤姆·王和托尼·张。

annually *adv.* 每年

annual allowance 年度津贴

annual advance 年进度

annual budget 年度预算

annual audit 年度审计

annual financial statement 年度财务报表

annual expenditure 年度开支

annual quota 年度配额

annual interest rate 年利率

annual return 岁报, 年利润

annual report 年度报告

annual salary 年薪

annual symposium 年会

IV. Competence Practice

Mike Smith, a foreign trade salesperson from Jiangsu Sheng Da Garment Co., Ltd., wants to change his job. He goes through the advertisements in the newspapers and has just found a new position in a new company. The followings are some sections included in the advertisement in the newspaper.

◇ Job summary.

◇ Responsibilities or daily tasks he should finish every day.

◇ Qualifications which he should possess in the new company.

◇ Relations of the position to others in the new company.

COMPANY NAME: Cambodia Industrial Textile Co., Ltd.

COMPANY ADDRESS: No. 999, Street 217 Chom Chao, Toul Pongror Viaalage, Sangkat Chom Chao, Cambodia

Tel: 023 - 424512

Email: paco_bermejo@yahoo.com

Mike Smith, as a job seeker, is required to accomplish the following tasks:

Task 1: To understand the content of the advertisement in the newspaper.

Task 2: To write an efficient job application letter according to the above requirements.

Task 3: To make group discussion on job application letters written by learners, then instructors make the summary of key writing points such as expressions, patterns and structures in the application letters.

V. Knowledge Extension

1. Useful sentences

- 1) I would like to apply to your company for the position of sales manager. 我想应聘贵公司销售经理的职位。
- 2) My experience and qualifications indicate that I am the very person you are seeking. 我的经验与资历可以说明我就是您要招聘的。
- 3) I was trained in Britain as a graduate student majoring in Linguistics for English Language Teaching and held a MA degree in this field. 我在英国攻读英语语言教学, 获得文学硕士学位。
- 4) I am eager to gain summer employment related to my ongoing educational and career goals of a career and degree in physical education. 我渴望得到一个能与我在体育教学专业的学习以及今后的职业相关的暑期工作机会。
- 5) I am seeking a new position where my abilities can be utilized more fully. 目前我正在寻求能使我的能力得到更充分发挥的新岗位。
- 6) I believe this background provides the management skills which you require for this position. I would welcome the opportunity for a personal interview to further discuss my qualifications. 我相信以上背景提供了您要求胜任这一职位的管理技能。我希望有一个面试的机会, 以此进一步讨论我的资格。
- 7) The position I am looking for should have a salary in the range of \$... to \$... 我所寻求的职位薪金应在……美元至……美元范围内。
- 8) My experience as... and... is, I believe, readily adaptable to your needs. 我相信我作为……和……的经历能随时适应你们的需要。
- 9) Please accept this letter as application for the Cost Accounting Supervisor position currently available with your company, as advertised in Sunday's... *Globe*. 我从星期日《……环球报》的广告中获悉, 最近贵公司正在招聘成本会计师, 请接受我的申请。
- 10) I have spent five years in a position... and have capitalized on my ability to undertake... 我有五年从事……的工作经验。我以我的能力承担了……

2. Some reasons for difficulties related to finding a new job after going out of the campus

Nowadays, more and more university graduates complain that graduation does not equate to employment. It is said more than one million Chinese college graduates didn't have jobs last year. The situation is probably worse this year, because there are more students who will graduate. Now the job markets are all very crowded, but only a limited percentage of the students can find a job there. They experience great difficulties finding satisfactory jobs. On the other hand, many students choose to take part in postgraduate entrance examinations. In fact graduate study is just a buffer for employment. Graduate students also confront the problem of employment. What causes the employment difficulty of the college students on earth? In my opinion, before finding a job, they should do some preparations.

First, when they are at school, they should make good use of their time and put their heart into their studies. They can hold part-time jobs in their spare time to get some work experience. Second, they should take part in some social activities and provide themselves with special training so that they are more confident and courageous to face fairly good jobs or certain position requirements.

Having done those things above, I believe once they go out of the campus, they won't feel bewildered.

However, that is not all. A good application letter and a job interview are also important. On the other hand, they can ask for jobs by email, friends and other ways. In a word, to find a good job, they should catch every chance and keep learning. Last but not least, the more confident they are the more chances they will have. In fact, there are at least seven things that we should avoid:

◇ Job seekers present their credentials unprofessionally.

Their job application letters and some other personal materials contain typos, grammatical errors, incomplete thoughts, portions copied and pasted from prior applications to different employers, and details not requested for the current job. Recently, a governmental employer added the caveat that applications mailed in stationery belonging to the current employer would not be considered. The same applies to emailed applications from the current employer's address.

◇ Job seekers lie on their resume or bolster their credentials by blurring details or leaving out pertinent facts.

In a recent research, 64% of HR professionals did not extend a job offer to a potential employee because their background reference check showed inaccurate dates of previous employment. Lies of omission or commission will haunt a job seeker. Commonly, employers consider lying on application materials grounds for dismissal — even years after the employees were hired. Employers should dig deeply to check the accuracy of applicant credentials such as claimed degrees.

◇ Job seekers fail to research the company.

In one recent interview for a software development company, a job seeker hadn't visited the company website or become familiar with the products. How can a job seeker tell an employer how well he or she will fit the job and the company when the applicant didn't even visit the website? In fact, how can the job seeker even apply? This is hardly to present to a potential employer. And, it speaks volumes for potential job performance.

◇ Job seekers try to get to hiring managers in an effort to circumvent the hiring process.

Read number two above. Then, ignore this advice provided by supposedly informed career professionals. Applications sent to hiring manager end up on HR's desk. The note says, "I don't know this applicant." Or, the note says, "I can't vouch for this person, but someone I know recommended him." Rest assured, if a current employee is enthused about a candidate, the "right" people know. And, the job seeker doesn't risk pissing off HR staff that moves qualified applicants on through the review process.

◇ Job seekers that "bug" hiring managers and HR staff quickly wear out their welcome.

HR has a name for candidates whose calls, emails, and visits interrupt work and steal time and attention from overworked staff. They call them "stalkers". These job seekers gain no points with the hiring decision makers — and this ought to be the consequence of such behavior. Get my drift?

◇ Job seekers indulge in unprofessional interview behavior.

Why would any serious job candidates blow their chances so badly when their foot is already in the door? Job searchers arrive late, dress improperly, wreak of cologne, and sport dirty finger nails. They are unprepared to answer predictable questions. They chew gum, take calls on cell phones, and leave items they need in their cars.

One interviewee asked the employer the name of the company where he was interviewing; he said he forgot to read the sign on his way in. Another asked an interviewer if she wanted to see his belly scar to verify a boat accident was the reason for his unemployment. Smart employers notice and make appropriate hiring decisions.

◇ Job seekers fail to practice common courtesy.

They arrive late, fail to follow instructions, bombard employers with emails and calls, and talk down to lower level employees. Employers should consider courtesies such as thank you letters when making a hiring decision. Candidate behaviors do reappear in the workplace.

VI. Exercises for Business English

Section A

Directions: Choose the best answer for each statement from the four choices marked A, B, C and D.

1. Improper packing may _____ local customs to either reject the goods or levy a fine.
A. make B. force C. cause D. give
2. The exporter must pack the goods _____ strict conformity _____ the contract stipulations.
A. on, on B. on, with C. in, with D. of, of
3. To avoid possible dispute _____ quality, both parties should describe the goods exactly as the buyer and the seller intend them to be.
A. on B. in C. of D. at
4. The shipped fruits may _____ because of the long journey.
A. change B. deteriorate C. eat D. rot
5. An agreement is _____ as a result of the process of offer and acceptance.
A. included B. reached C. had D. resulted
6. Which of the following courses would be useful for a doctor?
A. Improving your interpersonal skills. B. Managing people.
C. Basic computer skills. D. All of the above.
7. Which of the following skills would be useful when doing a distance course?
A. Interpersonal skills. B. Presentation skills.
C. Listening skills. D. Computer skills.
8. When applying for a Master's course, which of the following would you not be expected to supply?
A. Supporting references. B. Official transcripts of qualifications.
C. Personal statement. D. Social security number.
9. The currency to be denominated in the contract is called _____.
A. cost term B. interest clause
C. cost escalation clause D. payment term
10. As a general rule, the export goods are always inspected by the _____ before shipment.
A. shipper B. buyer C. agent D. distributor

Section B

Directions: Read the following passage. Fill each gap with the best answer from the four choices marked A, B, C and D.

The Provincial Bank is one of the biggest financial institutions in the UK. With its 1,900 branches and 58,000 employees, it has 1 a household name. Almost 4,000 of these employees 2 managerial or executive positions. The bank has outstanding 3 of profitability, which has been achieved by introducing innovations at the same time as maintaining leadership of the 4 . The bank's comprehensive training programme concentrates on 5 the most important skills that graduates need in order to 6 early management responsibility. Trainees take responsibility for their own continuous self - development through visiting other branches and departments, and by 7 courses in management skills. They also receive training in order to increase their knowledge of the bank's 8 . The bank supports 9 of staff who wish to take professional examinations, and its Graduate Training Scheme is 10 to the nationally recognized Diploma in Management. Obviously the

quality of its managers is of 11 importance to the bank's performance. It welcomes good graduates in any subject area, 12 they can demonstrate the ability to influence events, and have the potential to 13 both as leaders and as part of a team. Most graduate trainees join the Retail Banking division initially. Those starting on this programme will soon have the 14 to work in other parts of the bank and can 15 a varied and flexible working life.

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|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. A. opened | B. entered | C. turned | D. become |
| 2. A. hold | B. do | C. keep | D. own |
| 3. A. career | B. catalogue | C. record | D. experience |
| 4. A. area | B. trade | C. record | D. market |
| 5. A. making | B. reaching | C. developing | D. heightening |
| 6. A. present | B. treat | C. deal | D. handle |
| 7. A. observing | B. attending | C. involving | D. staying |
| 8. A. services | B. goods | C. creations | D. abilities |
| 9. A. colleague | B. members | C. people | D. persons |
| 10. A. qualified | B. combined | C. fastened | D. linked |
| 11. A. main | B. vital | C. necessary | D. superior |
| 12. A. therefore | B. thus | C. provided | D. only |
| 13. A. succeed | B. realize | C. gain | D. overcome |
| 14. A. choice | B. chance | C. likelihood | D. probability |
| 15. A. forecast | B. believe | C. suppose | D. expect |

Section C

Directions: *Read the following two passages. Choose the best answer for each statement or question from the four choices marked A, B, C and D.*

Passage One

The promotion and development of performance management processes by HR can make an important contribution to knowledge management, by providing for behavioral expectations which are related to knowledge sharing to be defined, and ensuring that actual behaviors are reviewed and, where appropriate, rewarded by financial or non – financial means. Performance management reviews can identify weaknesses and development needs in this aspect, and initiate personal development plans, which are designed to meet these needs.

One starting point for the process could be the cascading of corporate core values for knowledge sharing to individuals, so that they understand what they are expected to do to support those core values. Knowledge sharing can be included as an element of a competency framework, and the desired behavior would be spelt out and reviewed. For example, positive indicators such as those listed below could be used as a basis for agreeing competency requirements and assessing the extent to which they are met. The following are examples of positive behaviors in meeting competency expectations for knowledge sharing:

Is eager to share knowledge with colleagues;

Takes positive steps to set up group meetings to exchange relevant information and knowledge;

Builds networks which provide for knowledge sharing;

Ensures that knowledge is captured, codified, recorded and disseminated through the intranet and/or other means of communication.

Hansen (1999) mentioned that at Ernst & Young, consultants are evaluated at performance reviews along

five dimensions, one of which is their “contribution to and utilization of the knowledge asset of the firm”. At Bain, partners are evaluated each year on a variety of dimensions, including how much direct help they have given colleagues.

1. The best title for this article is _____.
 - A. Knowledge Sharing
 - B. Performance Management Reviews
 - C. Performance Management Processes
 - D. Performance Management for Knowledge Workers
2. The following are examples of positive behavior in meeting competency expectations for knowledge sharing except for _____.
 - A. being reluctant to share knowledge with colleagues
 - B. taking positive steps to exchange relevant information and knowledge
 - C. building networks which provide for knowledge sharing
 - D. ensuring as appropriate that knowledge is captured, codified, recorded and disseminated through some means of communication
3. Which of the following is NOT mentioned by Hansen at all?
 - A. At Bain, direct help that partners have given colleagues will be evaluated.
 - B. At Ernst & Young, consultants’ contribution to the knowledge asset of the firm will be evaluated.
 - C. At Bain, partners are eager to share knowledge with colleagues.
 - D. At Ernst & Young, consultants are evaluated at performance reviews along five dimensions.
4. The author of this passage would most likely agree that _____.
 - A. performance management processes by HR can make little contribution to knowledge management
 - B. the cascading of corporate core values for knowledge sharing to individuals could be one starting point for the performance management process
 - C. knowledge sharing can’t be included as an element of a competency framework
 - D. taking positive steps to exchange relevant information and knowledge isn’t an example of positive behavior in meeting competency expectations for knowledge sharing
5. According to the passage, performance management processes by HR can make an important contribution to knowledge management through the following measures except _____.
 - A. by providing for behavioral expectations which are related to knowledge sharing to be defined
 - B. by ensuring that actual behaviors are reviewed
 - C. by ensuring that actual behaviors are rewarded by financial or non – financial means
 - D. by building networks which provide for knowledge sharing

Passage Two

Human resource management (HRM) is the strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization’s most valued assets — the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the business. The terms “human resource management” and “human resources” (HR) have largely replaced the term “personnel management” as a description of the processes involved in managing people in organizations. Being evolving rapidly, human resource management is both an academic theory and a business practice that addresses the theoretical and practical techniques of managing a workforce.

If we move to actual definitions, Torrington and Hall (1987) define “personnel management” as being “a

series of activities which first enable working people and their employing organizations to agree about the objectives and the nature of their working relationship and, secondly, ensure that the agreement is fulfilled. ”

While Miller (1987) suggests that HRM relates to “... those decisions and actions which concern the management of employees at all levels in the business and which are related to the implementation of strategies directed towards creating and sustaining competitive advantage. ”

Management Expert Peter Drucker has said that the typical business will soon bear little resemblance to the typical manufacturing company of 30 years ago. As Drucker predicts it, “The typical business will be knowledge – based, and an organization composed largely of specialists who direct and discipline their own performance through organized feedback from colleagues, customers and headquarters. For this reason, it will be what I call an information – based organization. ” As a result, the distinguishing characteristic of companies today and tomorrow, say many experts, is the growing emphasis on human capital — the knowledge, education, training skills and expertise of a firm’s workers — at the expense of physical capital like equipment, machinery, and the physical plant.

This growing emphasis on education and human capital reflects several social and economic factors. One is the increase in the service oriented nature of the US economy. (Service jobs like consulting put a bigger premium on worker education and knowledge than do traditional manufacturing jobs.) Another is the fact that manufacturing jobs are changing, too. Particularly in the United States, manufacturing intensive jobs in the steel, auto, rubber, and textile industries are being replaced by what one expert calls “knowledge intensive high – tech manufacturing in such industries as aerospace, computers, telecommunications, home electronics, pharmaceuticals, and medical instruments”. At the same time, even heavy manufacturing jobs are becoming one high – tech: at Alcoa Aluminum’s Davenport, Iowa plant, for instance, a computer stands at each work post to help each employee control his or her machines or communicate data. As *Fortune* magazine recently put it, “practically every package deliverer, bank teller, retail clerk, telephone operator, and bill collector in America works with a computer today”. Jobs today thus demand a level of expertise far beyond that required of most workers 20 or 30 years ago, so that human capital is quickly replacing machines as the basis for most firms’ success.

Furthermore, it is not unusual for more than one fourth of many firms’ sales coming from products less than five years old. As a result, “innovating creating new products, new services, and new ways of turning out goods more cheaply — has become the most urgent concern of corporations everywhere. ” This means that companies are relying on more employees’ creativity and skills, thus placing more stress on the employees’ brain power.

For managers, the challenges of fostering intellectual or human capital lie in the fact that such workers must be managed differently than were those of previous generations. As one expert put this, “the center of gravity in employment is moving fast from manual and clerical workers to knowledge workers, who resist the command and control model that business took from the military 100 years ago. ” Workers like these, in other words, cannot just be ordered around and closely monitored. New human resources management systems and skills will be required to select and train such employees and to win their self – discipline and commitment.

Trends like globalization and technological innovation are changing the way firms are managed. Organization today must grapple with revolutionary trends, accelerating product and technological change, globalized competition, deregulation, demographic changes, and trends toward a service society and the information age. These trends have changed the playing field in which firms must compete. In particular, they have dramatically increased the degree of competition in virtually all industries, while forcing firms to cope with unprecedented product innovation and technological change.