

The image shows the silhouettes of six people in a modern office environment. They are standing in front of large windows that let in bright light, creating a high-contrast scene. The people are dressed in business attire and appear to be engaged in a group discussion or meeting. Their reflections are visible on the polished floor.

Volume One

*Cases in Management
and Organizational Behavior*

Teri C. Tompkins

Cases in Management and Organizational Behavior

Teri C. Tompkins
University of Redlands



Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

Senior Editor: David Shafer
Managing Editor (Editorial): Jennifer Glennon
Editorial Assistant: Kim Marsden
Assistant Editor: Michele Foresta
Executive Marketing Manager: Michael Campbell
Associate Managing Editor (Production): Judy Leale
Production Coordinator: Keri Jean
Manufacturing Supervisor: Arnold Vila
Manufacturing Buyer: Diane Peirano
Senior Prepress/Manufacturing Manager: Vincent Scelta
Cover Design: Michael J. Fruhbeis
Composition: Joseph F. Tomasso

Copyright ©2001 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 07458.

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. This publication is protected by Copyright and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise. For information regarding permission(s), write to: Rights and Permissions Department.



10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
ISBN 0-13-746389-8

To my inspiring daughters Katherine Lora-Li, age 4 1/2, and Erin Patricia Liann, age 3.

I'll love you forever

I'll like you for always

As long as I'm living

My babies you'll be.

(modified from *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch, Firefly Books, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada, 1986.)

I know you're out there somewhere

A need so deep it reaches cross the sea

Two halves of a whole will make connection

Needing you, needing me

It was only when we gave up

Waiting for your birth(s)

We saw it had already happened

Halfway round the earth.

(From *Needing You, Needing Me* by Anne Lawrence and Paul Roose, country songwriters and a casewriter)

Our souls have always been connected. I am overjoyed that you have given me the opportunity to sponsor part of your journey. You have already been a blessing beyond measure.

All my love,

Momma

Preface

I've put this book together to fill a void that I think exists in the field of case teaching. There are not enough intermediate-length cases, especially in organizational behavior and management. Most cases available for the classroom are long, messy cases requiring total commitment to "the case method." There is rarely enough time to review and discuss theory or to include classroom exercises. The alternatives are the short cases at the end of the chapter in the textbook. These cases are usually fictional or gleaned from an article, such as found in the *Wall Street Journal*, not from direct contact with the organization and the people. They require very little thinking from students, with the "problem" and "right answer" clearly drawn from the chapter in question. These end-of-chapter cases provide little challenge for students.

The intermediate length cases in this book are messy enough that students have to think to analyze them, yet short enough that the instructor can include other teaching methods such as lecture or classroom exercises. The cases are real—the facts of the case have not been altered to make it more illustrative or plausible. Consequently, many of the cases have strong emotional undertones, which draw the students into the case and help them relate to the key characters. Students care about what happens to the people and the organization. Classroom discussion is lively. Students gain mastery of the course content because they have used course-pertinent theories and concepts, along with their own reasoning and relevant experience, to approach genuine organizational problems.

Where Can You Use This Book?

Courses in management or organizational behavior

I've included a detailed matrix referencing each case to 18 different subject chapters. There are numerous cases that would be ideal for human resources management classes, as well. The teaching notes outline questions and teaching plans that are appropriate for undergraduate, graduate, and executive levels.

As a reference book for entire business programs

The range of material in the casebook makes it an ideal reference book for many courses in a bachelor's or M.B.A. program. Cases could be used in courses of management theory, principles of management, organizational behavior, human resources management, communication, negotiation, international management, power and politics, managing change, managing diversity, ethics and social responsibility, entrepreneurship and small business, and managing conflict.

Training programs

The prepared real-life cases and teaching notes meet learning objectives that improve organizational performance. *Organizational development professionals and consultants will find a ready-made source of training materials available in the Casebook and Instructor's Manual of Case Teaching Notes.* Since the cases are intermediate length, the training group can read the case during the session without prior preparation.

Support resources

Fully developed teaching notes including detailed answers, analysis, and an explicit teaching plan for long and short teaching sessions are included in the Instructor's Manual of Case Teaching Notes. Inexperienced case teachers will find it ideal to help them learn how to teach the case. Busy professors, or ones who like to offer spontaneous activities in the classroom, will find the planning in the teaching notes very useful. This high level of support for instructors is unusual for case teaching notes.

Acknowledgments

I owe a special thanks to my dissertation chair, Professor Vijay Sathe, who sent me to gather data in organizations all over the United States and Europe, and asked me to write my first case. When I began teaching organizational behavior as a doctoral student, I was fortunate to select Cohen, Fink, Gadon, and Willets *Effective Behavior in Organizations* as the textbook. These authors taught me about a different style of case teaching. I owe my commitment to fully developed teaching plans to these authors.

I am grateful to Steve Robbins for his mentoring and support over these last three years. He helped my dream of “becoming a writer when I retire,” grow into a reality at an earlier age! David Shafer, my editor, has been helpful throughout this entire project. I’ve also appreciated the support of Jennifer Glennon, Michelle Foresta, Judy Leale, and Kim Marsden at Prentice Hall. My good friends and research colleagues, Katherine R. Rogers, Ann Feyerherm, and Terri Egan, as well as my colleagues at the University of Redlands, have been supportive and encouraging during this intense project. I am grateful to my colleagues at Western Casewriters Association, especially my friend, Anne Lawrence, for her mentoring, and to Asbjorn Osland for his flexibility and support in reviewing and editing 17 student cases for the Western Casewriters 1999 annual workshop.

This work would not have been possible without the excellent work of my two research assistants, Amber Borden and Jonnetta Thomas-Chambers. Their tireless efforts and excellent output kept my spirits up, and improved the quality of this book and teaching note’s manual. My mother-in-law, Mittie Lawrence Dick, was especially helpful during the last hours with copy editing. As a member of a generation who was thoroughly schooled in proper grammar, she gave me a lesson on the use of commas that I won’t soon forget!

The cases in this book are sensitive, often painful, revealing looks at “moments in time” for the key person in the case. I am grateful to the writers and the subjects in these cases who were willing to share their stories so that students like you could learn from their experience.

Finally, I’d like to thank my family. I have learned to trust God, communicate often, be present in the moment, love openly, and laugh freely because of them. Thank you for your enduring love.

Teri C. Tompkins
Claremont, California

About the Author

Teri C. Tompkins, the eldest in a large family, was born and raised in southern California, where she has enjoyed the rich diversity of people and geography. She received her bachelor of arts and master of science degrees from California State University, Long Beach, in not-for-profit management from the Recreation and Leisure Studies department. Her mother often asked her if she was still majoring in “fun.” She held several positions in youth agencies including the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

In 1983, she quit her job to train and qualify for the 1984 Olympic archery trials. The experience gave her confidence to change careers. She enrolled in the M.B.A. program at the Claremont Graduate University (CGU). As a research assistant for Professor Vijay Sathe, she began researching and writing cases. She subsequently enrolled in the Ph.D. program, and used cases as part of her dissertation research. Upon graduation from CGU, she joined the faculty at the University of Redlands, and became involved in the Western Casewriters Association, where she became president from 1995 to 1996.

She is the founding editor of an electronic journal on organizational learning, published by the Institute for Organizational Learning and Creating (IOLC) in Texas. She consults in the areas of team development and learning. Her interests include writing biographies for children, and anything to do with nature including, hiking, biking, and natural science. After delaying parenthood for years, she and her spouse are thoroughly enjoying raising two daughters, ages three and four.

Case Analysis Guideline

There are generally two kinds of cases in this casebook, decision cases and analysis (descriptive) cases. Some cases are both. Decision cases usually require that you identify the problem(s), evaluate solutions, and *decide* what you would do supported by rationale. Analysis cases do not really pose any problems and, therefore, require that you *explain* the behavior in the case.

Your instructor may use cases in class and not expect any preparation from you. At other times, your instructor may request prior preparation before coming to class, such as reading the case, and answering questions. If more extensive preparation is requested or a written assignment is given, these guidelines may be useful.

In decision cases, you may follow a certain “formula” to get the most out of the case. The steps in the formula are a general guideline and may be altered by your instructor based on course objectives. In analysis cases, you seek to explain “why” certain behaviors happened, using appropriate theory, and supplemented with your common sense (developed from life/work experience).

The following steps should guide you in analyzing a case.

Decision Case

1. List the facts.

Sometimes it helps to list the facts chronologically, or in relationship with key characters, or in some systematic way, to check for areas that are unclear, such as case facts that are ambiguous or differences of opinion if you are working in a group. By listing the facts, you get a sense of the whole of the case. You usually do not turn this part in; it's used to get you oriented.

2. Make inferences about the facts.

From the facts, what kinds of assumptions do you make? For example, if someone worked eighteen hours a day, seven days a week for five weeks in a row, we could infer several very different reasons why that person worked so many hours. Some might say the person is a “kiss-up,” or “disorganized,” or “overworked,” or “dedicated.” It's important to state your inferences so that other people may evaluate whether they agree with you, based on their own interpretation of the facts.

Inferences are tentative probability statements that may be a basis for deciding on a course of action later on.

3. What is the problem (and why)?

After identifying the problem(s), try to analyze why they exist. This may lead to an even more critical (or basic) problem. The obvious problem or the problem stated by the character in the case might not be the actual problem that needs solving. It may be a symptom. For example, the direct problem of an employee quitting, when analyzed, might be due to poor communication with her boss, thus suggesting that poor employee relations is a more basic problem. Often there are multiple causes for a problem.

Is there additional information that you need to analyze the case adequately? A thorough analysis recognizes what information would be gathered, even if you can't actually do it for your analysis.

4. Brainstorm possible solutions to the problem.

Don't settle for just one or two solutions. Take some time to brainstorm a large quantity of solutions. Following the rules of brainstorming, don't evaluate them until you've generated a sizable amount.

Case Analysis Guideline

5. For each alternative, list positive and negative consequences.

By evaluating the costs, as well as the benefits, you can possibly modify a potential solution to overcome some of the negative consequences. It is helpful to look for more than one or two consequences. Ask yourself, what might happen to if we implemented this solution.

6. Make a decision and provide rationale for it.

Making a decision is an important part of the analysis and often forgotten by students in an effort to analyze the problem. Tell what your decision is, the possible consequences, and why you selected the decision. Finally, describe any assumptions you made.

7. What are your “lessons learned” from the case?

What did you learn by analyzing this case? What theoretical concepts were supported or refuted, and why? Are there any new concepts that are suggested by your analysis?

Analysis case

1. List the facts.

2. Make inferences about the facts.

3. Explain the behavior or situation in the case.

Using theory and your own learning, explain *why* events are going on. *Link* the facts from the case with appropriate explanations using such linking phrases as “because of,” or “due to,” “as a result of,” “an example of,” “illustrates,” or “the following table matches the behavior in the case with the theory.” This is the most critical part of a case analysis.

4. Describe your “lessons learned” from the case.

Critical Incident Case Assignment

Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to link theory and practice. Whether you have lots of work experience or little work experience, it is very likely that you have had experience in organizations. Whether it's sport teams, youth groups, churches or synagogues, friends, schools, or workplaces, you may vividly remember some of the interactions that you have had, probably because there was some emotion tied to them. This assignment challenges you to take a real-life experience that happened to you and link that practical experience to organizational behavior or management theory. Once you have written a narrative case of your experience, you will analyze your behavior, and the behavior of the other key players, based on relevant theory. Then you will develop an action plan that reconnects the theory back to practice. Thus, practice is connected to theory, and theory back to practice.

The assignment has four components. Each component requires a different cache of skills. From this exercise you will develop or improve many of your skills, including creativity, writing, critical thinking, analysis, and editing.

Directions to Complete Assignment

Step 1—Notes to get you started.

*Do step 1 in bullet point; it is not necessary to write complete sentences.

Length: No assigned length, but be thorough. You must do all the substeps ("a" through "f" as follows).

(a) Pick a "dilemma or decision" that happened to you at work in which you were puzzled, confused, angry, shocked, hurt, extremely happy, proud, or any strong emotion. If you have limited work experience, choose another setting. Without judging your writing style or grammar, describe the dilemma or decision as completely as you can. Write out as much of the detail as you can remember about the "dilemma" or "decision." Include as many of the senses as you can remember. Use bullet points.

- Sounds
- Sights
- Smells
- Emotions
- Conversations
- Even tastes and textures, if applicable

(b) Think of the other key players. Step back and put yourself in their place. Try to describe the critical incident from their perspective. Write how they might have experienced it, using vivid description. Describe the key players (including yourself) in terms of demographics and psychosocial issues: age, race, education, gender, work experience with the company, leadership style, personality, beliefs, and so on. You may find that you do not need to include all the key players, or you may need to describe more key players.

(c) Using bullet points, outline the history that led to the event and the history after the event. In Step 2, case narrative, you can edit your history to eliminate all but the most

Critical Incident Case Assignment

important points. The important points should help the class understand the “critical incident” from your perspective and the key players.

(d) Describe the context in which this event happened. That is, for what kind of group or organization did the key players work? How large is the company or group? What kind of business is the company in or what is the purpose of the group?

(e) Decide if you need to include any exhibits to help clarify the case, such as simplified organizational charts, a diagram of the office, or a copy of a letter or memo (you can disguise confidential information or names).

(f) Write an epilogue telling us what actually happened after the critical incident.

Evaluation criteria for Step 1—Notes to get you started

- You did the assignment thoroughly including information in points a, b, c, d, e, and f.
- Your critical incident is focused and can be vividly described. It isn't about a whole year in your life. It is about a key event that may have been preceded by a year in your life (background, history, and contextual information).

Step 2—Narrative

Your assignment is to write an interesting case using the notes from Step 1. The case is in narrative story form; that is, you weave the facts together in a story.

Length: 7 to 12 double-spaced pages.

Look over your notes from Step 1. How can you weave this case together to make it interesting to your classmates? **Write the case in PAST tense. Use third person** (she/he NOT I/we). Describe yourself and others from an objective viewpoint. In other words, don't just tell us that the other person is stupid, mean, and nasty, but **SHOW** us by the person's words and actions. Be truthful; don't make up people or events.

You may disguise the case by changing people's names or other identifying information that you don't want others to know about. You may choose to describe the company in generic terms (e.g. the company produces high-end electronic equipment). You can make up a name, such as Internet Computer Company, or you can use real names of people and the company.

You will be graded on proper grammar and editing. Use 12 point type (preferably Times New Roman, Helvetica or Ariel). Indent every paragraph five spaces or one tab. Double space between line but not between paragraphs. Include plenty of subheadings (at least four). Everything should be written in past tense, including descriptions of the people and the company, even if this feels awkward. Everything must be written in third person, including descriptions of yourself. If you disguise names, use regular names (not names like Mr. Troublemaker). Avoid names that can be confused with another character (e.g., Al and Albert—change one of their names for clarity to another name, e.g., Chuck).

The easiest way to write a decision-focused case is to:

1. Start out with one paragraph describing you, the decision maker, wondering what to do. For example, “Paula Jones, human resource manager for XYZ Company, sat at her desk wondering what to do. Two of her best warehouse employees had nearly started throwing blows.”
2. Write a background section describing the context of the critical incident. This includes information about the company, the group or location, the type of work the

Critical Incident Case Assignment

- key players do, the organizational culture, norms, or quirks, and the product or service. This is usually about three to seven paragraphs.
3. Write a section describing the key players. Depict the psychosocial background of the decision maker and the other key players. Usually this requires one to three paragraphs per player for the two (or three) major key players and a few sentences for any other key player. Only a few words are usually needed for minor players.
 4. Describe the critical incident in detail.
 5. End with a final paragraph portraying the decision maker as still wondering what to do. Do so **without telling us what the decision maker decided**.
 6. Write a part B that tells what the decision maker (you) did.
 7. Write an epilogue about what happened to the key players and, if relevant, to the company or group. The epilogue catches us up to the time you wrote the case. If you don't know, catch us up to the time when you lost contact.

Other Ways to Organize Your Case

If you had cooperation from the other key player(s), you could interview the other person(s) and put the case in your own, and the other person's words.

Not all cases are decision focused. Some cases (as you will find in this casebook) are descriptive narratives that illustrate theory in an interesting way.

Format of Step 2—Narrative

1. You may use this format for decision-focused or descriptive narrative cases.
2. Title of case narrative (think of a descriptive title).
3. By "your name."
4. Include page numbers at bottom center.
5. Double space.
6. Write an interesting opening that catches the reader's attention.
7. The main body of the story should include enough detail to allow your instructor or a peer review group to understand the problem you faced. It should be interesting to read with dialogue or description that might cause the reader to feel your emotion when the event happened to you.
8. Conclude your case narrative by leaving the reader "hanging," wondering what to do. (You can write what you actually decided or did in a short "B" case).
9. In an **epilogue**, write what is happening to the company and the main players at this moment in time, or the last you heard about them.
10. **Research Methodology:** Describe whether the narrative was based on your own recollections, or any written documents, or interviews with fellow workers, or any other method you used to collect your material.
11. **Industry:** A brief one- or two-sentence, description of the industry in which the narrative took place. For example, "small manufacturing plant (160 employees) of high-end electronic equipment; union employees; company disguised/not disguised."

Grading criteria for Step 2—Narrative

- The case describes a critical incident as explained in Step 1.
- The organization of the case is clear and easy to follow.
- It is written in past tense.
- It is written in third person.

Critical Incident Case Assignment

- It is not pejorative. You don't tell the reader that the person is stupid, evil, manipulative, and so on. Instead, you illustrate his or her behavior and words, and let the reader draw his or her own conclusions.
- There is enough detail in the case for someone who has no experience with your organization (e.g., the professor) to develop some hypotheses or a list of factors that might explain the behavior. That is, you include enough background information about the company and the key players to help the reader see the context in which the critical incident unfolds, but you don't overwhelm the reader with minutiae.
- It is interesting to read.
- The case should be approximately 7 to 12 double spaced pages, not including the exhibits.
- You included an epilogue.
- You followed the suggested format.

Step 3—Analysis

Your assignment is to analyze the case narrative based on principles of management and organizational behavior theory from your textbook and related readings. Emerging from the issues in your case narrative, choose three topics from the list “Potential topics for case analysis” (or if a relevant topic is not on this list, talk with your instructor). For each chosen topic, write three questions, using the format suggested in the list entitled “Types of Case Questions.” Use three different types of questions (e.g., cause-and-effect, challenge, and hypothetical questions) within each topic. Label each question (e.g., “hypothetical”). After each question, answer the question thoroughly. Remember to cite appropriate references (author, year, page number), when information is used from your textbook, other books, and articles.

For example, imagine you have to make a decision about how to handle two warehouse employees who nearly fought on the job. First, you would outline the factors that (you think) caused the behavior. Then suppose you found out that one of the employees had a problem with anger, which may be drug related. You could talk about violence in the workplace (from your textbook or reference material). Next, you discover another factor, that is, the two men were from different cultural backgrounds. You could use Hofstede's cultural differences to explain those factors. Then, you would outline possible alternatives of how you might handle the situation. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of each alternative. Finally, you would want to suggest the best course of action to follow based on what you have learned from the organizational behavior theories and your work experience.

Length: 7 to 12 double-spaced pages, and long enough to explain the behavior in the case. This would be difficult to do in less than seven pages, as the case analysis should include at least three topics, with three questions within each topic.

After receiving feedback from your instructor and/or peer review group, using your textbook, and other course materials from management theory, human resources, or organizational behavior courses, make notes about the theory that seems to be most connected to your experience. Focus on *explaining* behavior or suggesting *answers* to a dilemma. Write your analysis by asking yourself *why* the key players responded as they did. Use the theory to explain why or to suggest an action plan.

Format of Step 3—Analysis

- 1) Analysis of “title of case,” followed by your name.
- 2) Double space, 12 point font (preferably Times-Roman, Helvetica or Ariel).

Critical Incident Case Assignment

- 3) Include page numbers at bottom center.
- 4) **Key topics** (the three topics you focused on, and any additional topics you covered).
- 5) **Abstract:** A 250- to 500-word abstract of your narrative to help the professor remember the case when examining the analysis. An abstract is a summary that briefly tells the reader about the whole case, including case B, if applicable.
- 6) **Questions and Answers** Topic 1: List the topic (e.g., Motivation or Conflict).
 - a) Question 1 (label the type of question, e.g., evaluation or hypothetical—see “types of case questions” attachment).
 - i) Answer Question 1.
 - b) Question 2 (label type of question, should not be the same type of question as Question 1 or 3 for Topic 1).
 - i) Answer Question 2.
 - c) Question 3.
 - i) Answer Question 3.
- 7) **Questions and Answers** Topic 2 (same format as Step 6).
- 8) **Questions and Answers** Topic 3 (same format as Step 6).
- 9) **References:** Please provide a thorough, APA-style citation for each reference used to support the answers to your questions.
- 10) **What I learned:** Include a paragraph about what you learned from the analysis of the case narrative.

Grading criteria for Step 3—Analysis

- You select and analyze the most critical factors that influenced the behavior described in your case.
- Your questions follow the format suggested in the “types of case questions” attachment.
- The questions that you asked can be answered by reading your answers to the questions.
- You use relevant theory to explain case factors or to suggest why an action occurred or a decision was made.
- You use at least three different theories, which are not closely related, to explain the behavior described in the case. For example, three motivation theories would count only as one theory.
- You demonstrate your understanding of each theory by how you apply it to your analysis. You use the terms correctly and illustrate the theory appropriately, linking it to case facts.
- Your analysis is clearly written and focused.
- You include a plan of action or a reflection of how you might have done things differently if you knew then what you know now.
- Your action plan considers the pros and cons of various options. Your reflection also considers other paths you might have taken and why you didn’t.
- You followed the suggested format.

Step 4—Final version of case

Edit and revise the case narrative and case analysis from Steps 2 and 3 based on student (peer review group) and professor input. Turn in the original copies of Steps 1, 2, and 3 that were edited by the professor and two clean, edited versions based on your revisions. On the clean, edited versions please mark the changes you made from the “graded” narrative and the “graded” analysis.

Critical Incident Case Assignment

Grading criteria for Step 4 - Final Version of Case

- Based on everything you have learned in class to date, rewrite or edit the products of steps 2 and 3.
- Most narratives of case facts need additional information to support the final analysis and action plan, for there is often missing data in the written case that need to be added. You would need to take out editorial comments that look like analysis and move them to the analysis section.
- If your analysis included some case facts, then they should have been moved to the case narrative section.
- You included all sections requested by your professor, including the original graded papers from Steps 1, 2, and 3.
- You used three different types of questions for any one topic.
- The narrative and the analysis will be judged on the same criteria as before, except with higher expectations that you know more than you did when you wrote the first draft. Just because you got A's on the other steps does not guarantee you the same grade on your final version. Your instructor assigned grades, on the first part, based on what you knew then. It is assumed that, by the end of the course, you will have learned more and refined your thinking, which should be reflected in the final version. Some students have highlighted, with yellow pen, the areas they particularly want the professor to see in their refinements. Please pick some method to show the changes you have made between your graded narrative and analysis compared to the final version.
- Turn in **two** copies of your final version (including exhibits), one marked up (highlighted) version and one clean copy.

Types of Case Questions

When writing questions, please use a variety of cognitive questions that move from simple questions to those that require more thought. Bloom (1956)¹ developed the following system of ordering questions from lower to higher thinking skills.

These types of questions are especially good for descriptive cases or for the theory part of the decision-focused case.

Knowledge skills (remember previously learned material such as definitions, principles, formulas): For example: "Define *contingency design*." "What are the five steps to decision making?"

Comprehension skills (understanding the meaning of remembered material, usually demonstrated by restating or citing examples): "Explain the process of feedback." "Give some examples of Groupthink."

Application skills (using information in a new context to solve a problem, answer a question, or perform a task): "How does the concept of Herzberg's hygiene factors explain the workers' dissatisfaction?" "Given the workers' satisfaction, how would you explain the outcome?"

Analysis skills (breaking a concept into its parts and explaining their interrelationships, distinguishing relevant from extraneous material): "What factors affected the emergent behavior of the team?" "Point out the major arguments Skinner would use to explain this individual's behavior."

¹ Bloom, B. S., and others (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Vol. 1: *Cognitive Domain*. NY: McKay.

Critical Incident Case Assignment

Synthesis skills (putting parts together to form a new whole; solving a problem requiring creativity or originality): “How would you organize the leadership of this team in light of new research on emergent leadership?” “How would you overcome barriers to organizational learning?”

Evaluation skills (using a set of criteria to arrive at a reasoned judgment of the value of something): “To what extent does the proposed reorganization resolve the conflict?” “If bonuses were banned, what would be the implications for the political environment at this firm?”

There are other ways to explore the case by balancing the kinds of questions you ask.

The following types of questions are especially good for decision-focused cases.

Exploratory questions probe facts and basic knowledge: “What case facts support the theory of Maslow’s hierarchy?”

Challenge questions examine assumptions, conclusions, and interpretations: “How else might we account for the behavior of Dr. Sinclair?”

Relational questions ask for comparisons of themes, ideas, or issues: “What premises of Dubinski’s are not taken into account by Coleman?”

Diagnostic questions probe motives or causes: “Why did Ferguson not confront his boss about Fester?”

Action questions call for a conclusion or action: “In response to Coleman’s ultimatum, what should Sculley do?”

Cause-and-effect questions ask for causal relationships between ideas, actions, or events: “If top management moved this team onto the factory floor, what would happen to its playfulness?”

Hypothetical questions pose a change in the facts or issues: “If the three men did not have similar background factors, would the outcome have been the same?”

Priority questions seek to identify the most important issue: “From all that you have read in this case, what is the most important cause of the conflict?”

Summary questions elicit syntheses: “What themes or lessons have emerged from your analysis of this case?”

Potential Topics for Case Analysis

Managerial Careers, Management Skills

Stages in careers; career anchors; management roles; people skills; entrepreneurship versus management

Decision Making, Creative Problem Solving

Perception; optimizing decision making model; alternative decision making models; determinants of attribution; satisficing; intuition; participative decision making; electronic meetings; interacting; brainstorming, nominal, Delphi techniques

Ethics, Diversity

Ethical dilemmas; rationalizations; ethics training; social responsibility; whistle-blowing; work force diversity; gender; comparable worth

Individual Differences

Biographical characteristics; ability; personality; locus of control; learning theories—behavioral, cognitive; values; attitudes

Critical Incident Case Assignment

Motivation, Rewards

Theories of motivation; maslow; Theory X and Theory Y; hygiene factors; high achievers; expectancy theory; underrewarding employees; job satisfaction; MBO; performance-based compensation

Self-Concept, Norms, Roles

Group structure; types of norms; conformity; status; role identity/perception/expectations/conflict

Group Dynamics and Work Teams

Identity, cohesiveness, trust; self-managed work teams; virtual teams; committees and task forces

Group Development and Group Interdependence

Phases, competency, group status, differentiation; intergroup relations

Communication and Conflict Management

Key communication skills; process of communication; networks; grapevine; barriers to effective communication; feedback; functional versus dysfunctional conflict; sources of conflict; conflict handling intentions; benefits and disadvantages of conflict

Power, Influence, Negotiation

Bases and sources of power; power tactics; power in groups and coalitions; empowerment; resource dependency; dependency; distributive/integrative bargaining; third-party negotiation roles

Leadership

What is leadership; trait theories; behavioral theories; Fiedler's contingency model; path-goal theory; situational leadership theory; leader-member exchange theory; charismatic leaders

Organizational Culture, Structure, and Design

Institutionalization; culture characteristics; factors that determine, maintain, and transmit culture; division of labor; unity of command; line/staff authority; span of control; departmentalization; mechanistic and organic structures; Mintzberg's five design configurations; matrix structure; organizations in motion—growth versus decline

Technology and Work Design

Information technology; job redesign; job enrichment

Organizational Learning and Change

Diffusion of knowledge and skills; innovation; stimulants to change; resistance to change; Lewin's model; work stress; stress management strategies; organizational development; OD interventions

Managerial Functions: Planning and Control

The planning process; types of plans—short and long range, strategic and operational; approaches to planning; contingency planning; forecasting; scenarios; benchmarking; budgetary control; types of control—feedforward, concurrent; feedback; internal versus external control; operations management and control

Managing Human Resources

Job analysis; interviewing in selection; performance simulation versus written tests; performance evaluation; training and development programs