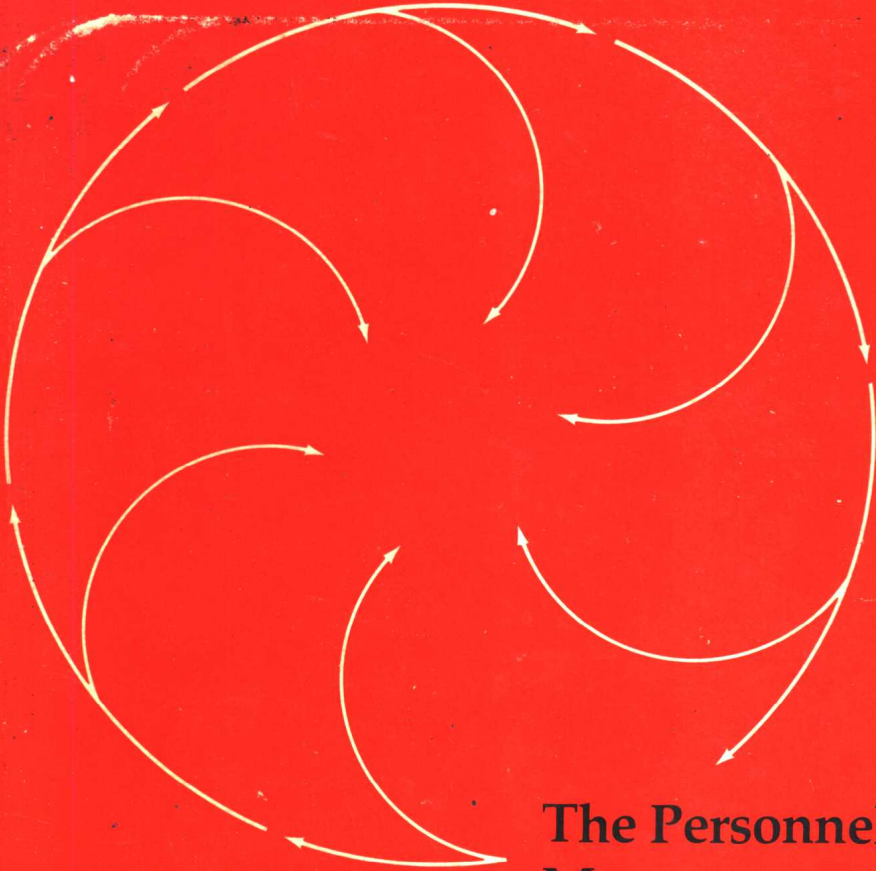


**French
Dittrich
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**The Personnel
Management Process**

**CASES ON
HUMAN RESOURCES
ADMINISTRATION**

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THE PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PROCESS

**Cases on Human
Resources Administration**

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY Boston

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Palo Alto London

to Marjorie, Sandy, and Jimmie

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Preface

In this book we hope to present to students of modern personnel administration a realistic and thought-provoking array of problems faced by administrators in today's organizations. Administrators are confronted by the traditional issues of recruitment, selection, and promotion, for example; but today they must face them knowing that changes in our federal and state equal employment opportunity laws force them to examine carefully the ways in which they make these decisions. In labor relations, we are now seeing evidence in many cities that public employees are not only organizing themselves to bargain collectively but also confronting municipal administrators with the threat and application of work stoppages as a means of exerting bargaining pressures.

We feel that the use of short incidents and somewhat longer cases in the teaching of personnel management can add a significant dimension to the learning experience by focusing on the applications of personnel concepts and by describing personnel administration problems in a wide range of work settings. We believe that the data gathered in practice and presented in case and incident form offers an excellent medium for an examination of the systemic nature of organizations and, more particularly, the systemic nature of personnel administration functions in those organizations. In our view, the relationships among elements of the personnel management system, such as those between employee selection and employee training and development or between employee appraisal and employee compensation, are difficult to fully capture or describe in text format, but they appear with substantial meaning in the richness and immediacy of real-life situations.

For the student who is not familiar with incidents and cases in the classroom, the incident is a short, easy-to-read description of a situation that typically frames a single issue or points up one particular problem. Cases, on the other hand, are longer, describe a business or organizational setting in more detail, and provide the student with more complexity as well as a broader understanding of the total problems faced by managers responsible for personnel decisions. Frequently, cases pose multiple problems that require attention and point up the interface among subsets of a more comprehensive personnel system. Because of their complexity and length, cases often require an entire class period, and on occasion more than a single period. They can serve as the basis for more detailed analysis and for the preparation of class reports or examinations.

The cases and incidents in this book are arranged in sets of topical material that correspond to the nine parts of Wendell French's book *The Personnel Management Process*, Fourth Edition. These parts are groups of chapters that deal with closely associated functional areas of personnel administration. Part 4 of that text, for example, has chapters entitled "Organizational Objectives and Job Design" (Chapter 9) and "Job Analysis and Description, Performance Standards, and Work Rules and Conditions" (Chapter 10). The corresponding

section of this book contains incidents and cases dealing with these topics from which the instructor will choose to structure class discussions.

While the organization of the book is arranged for direct compatibility with *The Personnel Management Process*, the arrangement of incidents and cases in functional area groupings will easily permit its use either as a companion to other texts or as the primary resource material for a personnel course dealing directly with applications and problems.

We have provided a brief guide to the use of incidents and cases for students unfamiliar with the case method. Introductory material at the beginning of each major section is designed primarily to guide readers from section to section and to direct attention to major areas of interest in the case material. For students who wish to examine conceptual material in more detail, we recommend reference to *The Personnel Management Process* text and to the selected readings suggested at the end of each part in this casebook.

We are deeply indebted to contributing colleagues who have taken the time and expended the effort to collect this case information. Their efforts have resulted in a realistic presentation of personnel management that encourages discussion and that presents issues in a thought-provoking manner.

We also wish to express our thanks to Gregory L. Kumpan, Anne S. Reints, Prof. Richard E. Dutton of the University of South Florida, and Prof. John F. DeVogt of Washington & Lee University for their helpful comments on the makeup and content of the manuscript, and to the staff of Houghton Mifflin for their assistance in the entire project.

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Introduction to the Case and Incidents Method

The typical personnel manager is often confronted with decisions about personnel programs for which there exist few precedents, few established propositions, and little factual data. Many personnel management texts provide the student and personnel manager with an overview of personnel issues, processes, and systems. However, the reader is still left with the difficult task of relating theoretical concepts to practical situations likely to confront the personnel manager of a complex organization.

To help the reader close the "gap" between theory and an action frame of reference, we have presented a number of cases and actual incidents. All of the cases are based on the reports of actual participants; none are contrived or manipulated to make a specific point. These cases represent the real world. Names and organizations, of course, have been changed in some cases to avoid the possibility of identification. (These cases are not presented as normative models or examples of how-to-do-it. Rather, they are examples of a wide range of personnel problems and issues.)

The cases and incidents have been selected to demonstrate personnel problems in a wide range of environments such as (1) public and private sectors of our economy; (2) both centralized and decentralized organizations; (3) both failures and successes; and (4) small, medium, and large organizations. An analysis of the cases and incidents will reveal the following breakdown:

<i>Geographical location</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Western United States	28
South and Southwest United States	22
Midwest United States	22
Eastern United States	18
Canada	8
Foreign	2
<i>Sector</i>	
Private	73
Public	27
<i>Size</i>	
Large	38
Medium	38
Small	24

THE PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD

Most leading personnel management texts define the primary role of the personnel manager as decision making. Before managers can make good decisions, however, they must be aware of and follow the logic that leads to problem solving. The major phases of problem solving are:

1. Size up the situation by defining the major and minor problems.
2. Gather relevant data about the major and minor problems. This phase may include the development of a model or theory of the cause of the problem.
3. Analyze the data and the situation.
4. Consider as many alternative solutions as possible.
5. Eliminate from serious consideration those solutions least likely to solve the problem or problems. During this phase you actually compare, test, and evaluate your options.
6. Select the best solution.
7. Implement the solution. In choosing a solution, the problem solver must be prepared to defend the solution and recommend a strategy for implementing it. The optimum solution may be doomed to failure without the proper commitment from the organizational participants who must help implement it.

This book consists of cases and incidents in personnel management. An incident is based on an actual situation, is short in length, and is so precisely stated and to the point that the student can normally point to the major issue. Incidents differ from cases not only in terms of depth of content and the number of complex issues, but also in terms of the phases of problem solving. For example, the critical incidents in this book usually emphasize the first three steps of the problem-solving approach, whereas cases emphasize all phases of the problem-solving approach. The reason that incidents involve only the first three phases is that, without all of the relevant data, students must make too many assumptions, and it becomes very difficult for the class to move towards any reasonable solution.¹

There are no correct answers to these incidents and cases; rather, each incident or case has numerous solutions, and the learning outcome is enhanced through a good exchange of views by students in the classroom. Thus, we believe that these incidents and cases will support a good analytical base of personnel management theory that is acquired from a leading personnel text and permit "practice" in the classroom. We believe that realistic and workable decisions will follow in the "real world" of personnel management.

¹ John V. Murray and Thomas J. Von der Embse, *Organizational Behavior: Critical Incidents and Analysis* (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Co., 1973), p. 10.

Contents

Preface ix

About the Authors xi

About the Contributing Authors xiii

Introduction to the Case and Incidents Method xix

PART 1 A DEFINITION AND HISTORY OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

1

1 Selecting a Director of Personnel 5

2 Advice from the First Personnel Text: Tead and Metcalf 8

PART 2 A PROCESS-SYSTEMS MODEL AND MAJOR CONTINGENCIES

9

3 The Mushrooming Company 13

4 E. G. Lomax Company 14

5 The University of Obelisk 17

6 Birkenfield Furniture Manufacturing Company 25

7 Harmony Life of Hartford 34

8 Economy Fashions Limited 47

9 Reduction in Force 59

PART 3 BEHAVIORAL-SCIENCE CONCEPTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

61

10 The Robert Morton Case 67

11 Lordstown Plant of General Motors 72

12 Canadian Auto Corporation 81

13 Precision Woodcraft, Inc. 90

14 The Initiation of Major Lego 99

15 St. Luke's Hospital (A) 101

16 St. Luke's Hospital (B) 108

17 The Production Department 114

18 I Wasn't the Only One 119

PART 4 THE TASK-SPECIALIZATION PROCESS

121

19 Methods Engineering 125

20 Gordon Foundry Company 132

21 Latex Paint Company 134

22 Parts Distribution Department 142

23 The Mike Moore Case 145

PART 5 THE STAFFING PROCESS	147
24 Affirmative Action Recruiting	151
25 The Joining Up of Janet Miller	155
26 Succession in Management at United Foods Stores, Inc.	157
27 Belwood Lumber Company	166
28 Who Shall It Be?	173
29 A Difficult Decision	177
30 Validity of Selection Devices	179
31 Personnel Testing at Western Hemisphere	181
PART 6 THE APPRAISAL AND TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	191
32 Digital Electronics	195
33 Safety Training (A)	208
34 Safety Training (B)	213
35 The Corporate Policy	216
36 Norton Consolidated	220
37 Selective Training—Good or Bad?	223
38 The First Rating	227
39 The Scientist Who Quit	229
PART 7 THE COMPENSATION PROCESS	231
40 The Puzzled Manager	235
41 The New Year's Bonus	236
42 The Apex Case	238
43 Salary Adjustment: Equity and Morale	243
PART 8 THE COLLECTIVE-BARGAINING PROCESS	245
44 Atlanta Sanitation Strike	249
45 The Threatening Letter	259
46 Vann Engineering Unionization	260
47 Knoll Kakery	287
48 The Worried Personnel Director	294
49 The New York Teachers' Walkout, 1967	295
50 The Unhappy Foreman	302
51 Discharge of Mrs. Ash: A Case of "Stealing Time"	303
52 Hoerner Waldorf Corporation of Montana vs. International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Millworkers, Local No. 885	315