

Frank E. Kuzmits

*Experiential Exercises in*  
***Personnel***



***Human Resource Management***

*Second Edition*

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# **Experiential Exercises in Personnel/Human Resource Management**

## **Second Edition**

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University of Louisville

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To my loving sisters,  
Pat, Linda, and Lisa

# Preface

Not long ago, the personnel manager or administrator could well have been a burnt-out line executive who was put to rest in the personnel pasture. It was believed that little harm, or good, for that matter, would emanate from the personnel office. The personnel department was considered a routine, dull, paperwork function in which most activities focused upon keeping personnel files neat and orderly and planning the company picnic. The prestige, status, and salaries of personnel managers and administrators were pitifully low in comparison to managers in manufacturing, marketing, and finance. The personnel department was surely a place to be avoided by anyone who aspired to ride the fast track to lofty organizational levels.

In recent years, however, the personnel/human-resource function has undergone a major revolution of status and importance. Top management now recognizes that the quality of an organization's human-resource program can have a profound impact on organizational effectiveness. We now have evidence that high-quality personnel programs will result in heightened motivation and job satisfaction, decreased absenteeism and turnover, and in the end, a more productive and healthier organization. The personnel manager is no longer forced to the back of the bus, and handsome salaries are now being enjoyed by trained and experienced human-resource executives.

The growing importance of the personnel/human-resource function has also led to the creation of personnel/human-resource courses in many colleges and universities today. As a result, we have witnessed a virtual explosion in textbooks on the subject of personnel/human-resource management. An instructor may select from more than 30 textbooks on the personnel function, and the list continues to grow. Yet, the number of experiential materials in the field of personnel/human resource management remains low. This book was written to provide instructors with fresh, innovative, experiential exercises that will enable students to *apply* personnel/human-resource theories and principles to "real life" personnel problems, situations, and issues. As such, this book is intended to be used with traditional teaching materials. It may be used to supplement any one of the many personnel/human-resource textbooks available today.

I extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the University of Louisville staff members who labored hard and long to meet my seemingly impossible publication deadlines. Staff members Denise Schoen, Laura Ahrens, and Jan Pollard spent countless hours behind the word processors on this project. Without their support, this book would have never been completed on time. The staff never fails to do what must be done—and without a single grumble or complaint.

Special thanks is also due to Dean Robert Taylor, Assistant Dean Jane Goldstein, and Management Department Chairman Michael R. Carrell for their support on this project and for creating an environment within the business school encouraging creativity and professionalism. A special thanks is also due to my colleagues in the management department; their positive reinforcement was a continual source of motivation for this project.

# Introduction

Most students have previously used experiential exercises in a classroom setting, recognize their advantages and disadvantages, and are generally familiar with how they are to be implemented. For the first-time user of experiential exercises, however, a few points are in order.

1. Generally, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. One of the advantages of using experiential exercises is that it enables students to recognize the complexities of applying theories and principles and to recognize unique approaches to identifying issues and solving problems. As such, individual or group responses will vary, sometimes considerably. Expect this.
2. Not all students like experiential exercises. Some may prefer the lecture or case study; however, the majority of students report that experiential exercises are not only enjoyable but greatly enhance the learning process.
3. An understanding of the basic theory behind a certain function (e.g., performance appraisal) is generally important before conducting an exercise. Typically, your instructor will precede an exercise with a lecture and/or text assignment. Remember, this book is intended to *supplement* text material, not replace it. In this book one exception to this rule is the self-assessment exercise. These exercises were developed to enable the student to examine his or her attitudes, feelings, and beliefs concerning a certain subject or issue. Therefore, it may be advantageous to complete self-assessment exercises before listening to a lecture on a particular subject.
4. Be aware of the limitation of experiential exercises. The exercises may replicate “real world” problems and issues but the “real world” remains much more complex than any exercise. It is impossible for an experiential exercise to capture fully the complexity and uncertainty of actual organizational life.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This book contains 16 parts, as shown in the table of contents. Each part represents a basic functional area of personnel/human-resource management. The parts were designed to follow the organization of a typical personnel/human-resource textbook. While not every functional area is represented in this book, the exercises cover the most popular and widely recognized areas in the personnel/human-resource field.

## EXERCISE STRUCTURE

The structure of most exercises is identical: Purpose, Introduction, The Problem, and Discussion. The *Purpose* statement conveys to the instructor and student what is expected from completing the exercise. The *Introduction* section provides a brief theoretical background to the subject area and varies somewhat in length from exercise to exercise. For some exercises, it is relatively brief; for others, it is

more involved and detailed. In writing this section, I varied the length depending on the amount of coverage the typical textbook gives to that particular subject area. Where textbook coverage is normally brief, I expanded the introduction; where textbook coverage is normally detailed, I shortened the introduction. The section entitled *The Problem* describes the exercise and provides the information and data necessary to complete the exercise. In most cases, this section describes a problem or issue confronting a hypothetical organization; in other exercises, this section is a quiz or questionnaire. The *Discussion* section presents a small number of discussion questions that pertain to the exercise and general topical area the exercise focuses upon. Some of the questions may be omitted, depending on the time available.

Finally, don't be afraid to have some fun with these exercises. Most students agree that the experiential approach to learning is interesting and enjoyable. Learning doesn't have to be dull!



# Experiential Exercise/ Textbook Cross Index

Each experiential exercise corresponds with a chapter or chapters in *Personnel/Human Resource Management, 2nd edition*.

Experiential Exercises	<i>Personnel/Human Resource Management, 2nd edition</i>
1 Personnel Information: Where to Find It	<b>Chapter 1</b> , Introduction; <b>Chapter 16</b> , Personnel Research and Problem Solving
2 Are These Effective Job Descriptions?	<b>Chapter 2</b> , Job Analysis
3 Job Analysis	<b>Chapter 2</b> , Job Analysis
4 Can This Job Be Enriched?	<b>Chapter 3</b> , Job Design
5 Alternate Work Schedules	<b>Chapter 3</b> , Job Design
6 Recruiting Sources: Where to Get the People You Want	<b>Chapter 4</b> , Personnel Recruitment
7 Ads That Work	<b>Chapter 4</b> , Personnel Recruitment
8 Recruitment and Selection at Bronzababy Lotion Company	<b>Chapter 4</b> , Personnel Recruitment; <b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection
9 Measuring Employee Potential: The Assessment-Center Technique	<b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection; <b>Chapter 8</b> , Management Development
10 Which Employment Test Is Most Valid?	<b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection
11 The Inference-Observation Problem, or, Is What You See What You Really Get?	<b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection
12 The Structured Employment Interview	<b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection
13 The Candid Interview: A Look at the RJP	<b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection
14 Oldies-but-not-so goodies: A Look Back at 1960s Help-Wanted Ads	<b>Chapter 4</b> , Personnel Recruitment; <b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection
15 Help Wanted, Male; Help Wanted, Female: A Look at the Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ)	<b>Chapter 4</b> , Personnel Recruitment; <b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection

<b>Experiential Exercises</b>	<b><i>Personnel/Human Resource Management, 2nd edition</i></b>
16 Are These Application Blanks Lawful?	<b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection
17 I Shouldn't Have Asked: Acceptable and Unacceptable Queries During the Employment Interview	<b>Chapter 4</b> , Personnel Recruitment; <b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection
18 Sexual Harassment	<b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection; <b>Chapter 15</b> , Managing Unsatisfactory Performance: Discipline and Counseling
19 Is Your Chauvinism Showing?	<b>Chapter 8</b> , Management Development
20 Women and Work: A Quiz	<b>Chapter 5</b> , Personnel Selection; <b>Chapter 8</b> , Management Development
21 Designing a Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS)	<b>Chapter 6</b> , Appraisal of Human Resources
22 How Good Was Jimmy Carter? (A Problem in Rater Reliability)	<b>Chapter 6</b> , Appraisal of Human Resources
23 Appraising Appraisal Forms	<b>Chapter 6</b> , Appraisal of Human Resources
24 Successful and Unsuccessful Job Behaviors	<b>Chapter 6</b> , Appraisal of Human Resources
25 Management by Objectives (MBO)	<b>Chapter 6</b> , Appraisal of Human Resources
26 Performance Feedback: Let Me Be Perfectly Clear	<b>Chapter 6</b> , Appraisal of Human Resources
27 Loyalty is Good—But What Does it Mean?	<b>Chapter 6</b> , Appraisal of Human Resources
28 Job Instruction Training (JIT)	<b>Chapter 7</b> , Employee Training
29 Is This a Training Problem?	<b>Chapter 7</b> , Employee Training; <b>Chapter 15</b> , Discipline and Counseling
30 Matching Training Needs with Training Techniques	<b>Chapter 7</b> , Employee Training
31 Supervisory Training at the Seal-Tight Casket Company (Part I: Training Objectives)	<b>Chapter 7</b> , Employee Training; <b>Chapter 8</b> , Management Development
32 Supervisory Training at the Seal-Tight Casket Company (Part II: Program Design)	<b>Chapter 7</b> , Employee Training; <b>Chapter 8</b> , Management Development
33 Supervisory Training at the Seal-Tight Casket Company (Part III: Program Evaluation)	<b>Chapter 7</b> , Employee Training; <b>Chapter 8</b> , Management Development
34 The Scale of Life	<b>Chapter 9</b> , Internal Staffing and Career Management
35 Career Planning	<b>Chapter 9</b> , Internal Staffing and Career Management

### Experiential Exercises

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- Chapter 10**, Compensation Systems
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# 1

## Personnel Information: Where to Find It

### PURPOSE

This exercise outlines the sources of personnel information and how to research a personnel topic, and gives practice in researching personnel-related topics in the library.

### INTRODUCTION

Students of management should become very familiar with the personnel literature and know how to research a personnel topic. Why? The first reason is pretty obvious: you may be required to write a research paper to pass the course! More than likely you'll have to spend a good bit of time roaming the stacks to find data on your topic. Of course, you want to do an efficient job in writing your paper. Hours of time can be wasted in the library if you don't have a sound strategy for researching your topic.

There is a second important and very practical reason for becoming familiar with the personnel literature. As a practicing personnel administrator or line manager, it will be vitally important for you to keep abreast of the state of the art in both personnel management and your specific field. As a training director, for example, you will need to know current theories, practices, and techniques of training, and you will also profit from knowing the results of research on the training function. Also, as a personnel practitioner, you may be given an assignment to study a particular problem or issue in detail (such as absenteeism or the four-day work week) and advise your organization on how it should proceed with the issue. In sum, you will profit from a sound familiarity with the personnel literature in several important ways. Learn to look at the library as a close friend. It can continue to help you throughout your career.

Let's begin by looking at the different kinds of material available in your library. Following this discussion, we'll examine some ways to go about finding the proper sources for a particular topic.

### Sources of Personnel Information

**Books** A vast number of books have been written on personnel topics by both academicians and practicing personnel professionals. Books have been written on practically every major personnel topic, and the volume and breadth of personnel books appear to be expanding (no doubt because of the growing importance of the personnel function).

**Practitioner Journals** Journals written primarily for the practicing personnel professional are frequently referred to as *practitioner journals*. They contain articles about new advances in the field and contain information useful in *applying* current

personnel methods and techniques. Popular practitioner journals and their publishers include

- *Personnel Journal*, published monthly by A. C. Croft, Inc.
- *Personnel Administrator*, published monthly by the American Society for Personnel Administration (ASPA)
- *Personnel*, published bimonthly by the American Management Association
- *Training and Development Journal*, published monthly by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)
- *Monthly Labor Review*, published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Commerce

**Academic Journals** Academic journals are written primarily for an academic audience—professors and other researchers who are responsible for studying and advancing the state of the art of personnel theories and principles. They are sometimes highly theoretical and difficult to read because of the writing styles and complex statistical analyses that may be presented. Nonetheless, they are valuable sources of research findings and generally present problems and issues in an unbiased manner (unlike some practitioner journals). For these reasons, it is beneficial for both practitioners and students to have a working knowledge of the academic journals in the personnel field and the kinds of articles they contain. Some of these journals are

- *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, published quarterly by the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University
- *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, published quarterly by the National Training Laboratory Institute for Applied Behavioral Science
- *Journal of Applied Psychology*, published bimonthly by the American Psychological Association
- *Organization Behavior and Human Performance*, published bimonthly by Academic Press, Inc.
- *Personnel Psychology*, published quarterly by Personnel Psychology, Inc.
- *Human Resource Management*, published quarterly by the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Michigan

**Private Research Organization Reports** Several private organizations regularly publish excellent research reports that pertain to the personnel field. Some popular research organizations include

- Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., 1231 25th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037
- Bookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
- The Conference Board, 845 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10022

**Government Publications** The federal government is perhaps the country's largest publisher of personnel research. Several agencies and departments of the federal government regularly conduct personnel-related research and publish the results in a variety of forms. Some of these publications include *Monthly Labor Review*, *Personnel Literature*, *Employment and Earnings*, and *Federal Labor-Management Consultant*. To research personnel information, look in

- Government Documents Card Catalog (all documents are arranged alphabetically by type, subject, or department)
- Monthly Catalog of United States Document Publications (this source lists all government documents by month published)



- Index to U.S. Government Publications (this source lists government publications by subject and by year published)

Some of the major personnel-related headings that can be found in the government documents card catalog include *Labor Department*, *Labor Statistics Bureau*, *Labor-Management*, and *Personnel*.

**Conference Proceedings** Many management and personnel-related associations hold annual conferences at which a variety of papers are read and discussed. Often, these papers are edited and published in book form in what is known as *conference proceedings*. These proceedings, which may contain 50 or more papers, are excellent sources of information and research data on personnel topics and issues. Some associations that meet annually and publish proceedings that include personnel topics are

- Academy of Management
- American Institute for Decision Sciences
- American Psychological Association

**Other Sources** We have discussed only the most popular sources of personnel information; many others exist. General management and business journals, such as the *Harvard Business Review* and *Business Horizons*, often contain articles related to the personnel field. Many universities also support research centers and publish the results of research. Private consulting groups, such as Arthur D. Little, Inc., and employer association groups also conduct personnel research and publish the results.

### How to Research a Personnel Topic

While it is important to have a working knowledge of the sources of personnel material, it is equally important to be able to *find* the specific sources containing the information you need. It is also important to conduct a thorough search to insure that you haven't overlooked a potentially valuable source. From the information that you collect, you can always discard what you decide you don't need. Here are some techniques for researching a personnel topic:

1. *Card catalog*. The card catalog is the best reference for books, monographs, and other reports.
2. *Business Periodicals Index* (BPI). The BPI is organized the same way as the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, but its content is exclusively business-related material. Of course, most personnel topics should be contained within the BPI. Keep in mind that this particular guide covers *periodicals only*. The BPI will reference most popular personnel journals, including *Personnel Journal*, *Personnel Administrator*, and *Personnel*. Topics are listed in alphabetical order.
3. *Personnel Management Abstracts* is published quarterly by the Graduate School of Business, University of Michigan. The *Abstracts* lists and abstracts personnel topics alphabetically and includes only journal articles.
4. *Psychological Abstracts* is published monthly by the American Psychological Association. The *Psychological Abstracts* lists and abstracts psychological topics alphabetically and includes journal articles only.
5. *Computer search*. Your library may be able to conduct a computer search to obtain a printout of journal articles related to your topic.
6. *Government documents*. Your library probably has a separate section for government catalogs and documents. Techniques for locating government sources were discussed earlier.
7. *Additional methods*. In addition to the methods we've mentioned so far, some other techniques may be helpful. If you are writing a research paper and want