

# Organizational Behavior

*Managerial Strategies for Performance*

R. Dennis Middlemist  
Michael A. Hitt







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*Managerial Strategies  
for Performance*

R. Dennis Muddlenist  
*Colorado State University*

Michael A. Hitt  
*Texas A&M University*



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## DEDICATION

To my father, I remember  
To my mother, I care  
To Melanie, I love

Frankie, Shawn and Angie  
—For the times that we have shared,  
and the times that we have missed

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# Preface

*Organizational Behavior: Managerial Strategies for Performance* is an introduction to the study and practical applications of organizational behavior. This field of study concerns the behavior of people within organizations to achieve both personal and organizational goals. It is a study that draws upon knowledge from a number of behavioral science disciplines and applies it to organizational settings.

The topics were selected on the basis of their relevancy and importance to current and future problems faced by managers in organizations. All of these concepts are supported by research findings which assure us that the statements made about people and their behavior are accurate. You will find them to be interesting, thought-provoking, and useful as you develop your skills in understanding people. Many current topics are unique to an introductory text in organizational behavior, such as personal space, minority relations, alcohol and drug abuse, and various topics in international management.

Many organizational behavior books stop after presenting the basic theory, satisfied that the reader will be able to easily apply the newly learned knowledge. However, we felt that application of these topics is often not obvious, and that simply learning new concepts does not guarantee that one will learn their applications. This book, like its predecessor—*Organizational Behavior: Applied Concepts*, is more than just an introductory text that surveys a large volume of behavioral research. It goes on to demonstrate how those concepts can be translated into managerial actions.

Each chapter begins with a “People in Organizations” case which is drawn from current news sources. These cases describe prominent organizations and managers as they have faced various problems. Important theories of organizational behavior are then explained, and their relationships to the case are shown. In addition, we have described other situations within the chapters that show how organizations have successfully (or sometimes less successfully) solved behavioral problems. These situations are detailed in the “Organizational Behavior/Strategy and Performance” cases.

In order to balance these applied cases, we have also searched for literature pertaining to popular myths that have organizational applications. These are

described in a case titled “Myths versus Reality.” In some cases the myth seems consistent with organizational realities, but in other cases the myth is inconsistent with theories and research findings in organizational behavior. We hope that these cases make students more thoughtful regarding the popular myths they may hold regarding management in modern organizations.

Finally, we hope that students will begin to appreciate the importance of sound research findings in the field. In addition to the theories and research presented in the body of the text, we have presented a number of research synopses titled “Focus on Research” within some of the chapters. These synopses present selected research in somewhat greater detail. These were selected so as to be representative of the diversity of research in the field, and for their relevancy to modern management.

The book is organized into five parts, building from basic to more complex skills. The first part presents a description of the organizational behavior discipline and the fundamental principles of behavioral research and diagnostic skills. These skills are then carried into the second part, which examines various aspects of individual behavior. Topics in this part include perception, learning, attribution, personality, attitudes, values, individual decision-making and problem-solving processes, motivation, job design and satisfaction, and stress. Job design and stress are new chapters, and recognize these as important applications of organizational behavior theories to perplexing problems in modern work settings.

Part Three contains theories, research, and applications of group processes. Topics in this section include intragroup dynamics, intergroup dynamics, and group decision making. Many practitioners believe that groups form the backbone of the organization, and we have examined both the positive and negative consequences of group behavior. We have examined group decision making as a process uniquely different from individual decision making, because of the social interactions that occur during group decision making. It is in controlling these phenomena that managers can lead groups to effective decisions. Part Four examines organizational processes including communication, conflict, power and politics, leadership, external environment, strategy, international operations, and organizational design and culture. Several of these topics are new to the text, and expand considerably upon recent research that relates people to organizations. This material recognizes the growing complexity of managing in our society. The discussion of international operations and the measurement of effectiveness add considerably to the skills needed by managers. Finally, the last part exposes the student to selected applications of organizational behavior knowledge. Although such knowledge has many, varied applications, we felt that organizational change and development, performance appraisal, rewards, and career planning are of particular relevance.

The field of organizational behavior is fascinating, because people are so valuable to organizations. It becomes even more intriguing when managers realize that they can improve the skills that allow them to manage organizations so that employees are more likely to be motivated and satisfied with their work. And yet some managers never develop these skills. For them, people are just a necessary aggravation. As you read through and complete this book, you will discover that people do not have to be an aggravation. They can be—and are—a definite asset to the skilled manager. You will also discover that there is nothing mysterious about learning these skills. They will come easily as you understand how the processes by which they can be applied.

This unique combination of theory and practice has valuable use in both the classroom and the manager's office. One does not have to be a student to find this book valuable. As a reference source on the manager's desk, it can be an asset in the understanding and solving of human behavior problems that managers confront. It may be used to enhance the skills of managers, regardless of their previous training—or lack of training—in the behavioral sciences. This book is not meant, however, to be the “last word.” Rather, you may find that it is just the beginning of an exciting venture of learning about people at work and how you can improve your relationships with them.

We are indebted to our colleagues across the country who provided valuable advice, stimulating criticism, and unselfish support for the manuscript. Many of the ideas in the book were substantially improved by their comments. We sincerely thank the following persons who provided input during one or more phases of development:

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R. Dennis Middlemist

Michael A. Hitt

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