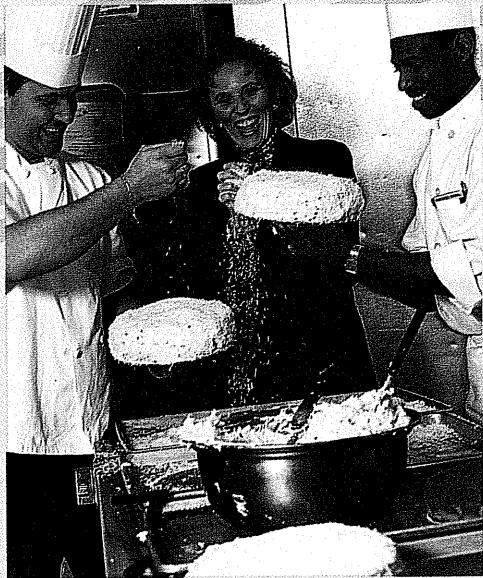Hyatt's Myrna Hellerman learns firsthand that cooking is no piece of cake on In-Touch Day.

Doesn't it seem logical that top executives who spend time in the trenches—doing the day-to-day activities of operating employees—will have a better understanding of their employees and the problems those employees face than executives who stay cloistered in their headquarters offices? It does, but very few organizations do anything about it. One exception is Hyatt Hotels.[1]

Hyatt's president came up with the idea of "in-touch day" in 1989. On this day, once a year, the company closes its headquarters office and the firm's senior management staff spreads out to a hundred Hyatt hotels in the United States and Canada. There, they take jobs as bellhops, chambermaids, cooks, carpenters, and similar frontline positions. Myrna Hellerman, Hyatt's vice president of human resources, oversees the program.

Ms. Hellerman notes that even though most Hyatt executives visit company hotels about thirty-five times a year, there's a big difference between seeing hotel operations from the vantage point of a guest and seeing them from the point of view of a desk clerk or a waiter. Actually performing such jobs allows managers to learn, first hand, the problems that employees confront. For instance, the head of employee training recently spent her day in a hotel kitchen and saw, up close and personal, problems with her new training manuals. Specifically, they were designed for lengthy training sessions, which don't take place because of the constant demands of the kitchen, and the manuals were unclear to many of those to whom English was not their first language. In response, the training manager had her department produce several shorter booklets to get the information across more quickly and create multi-language versions of training materials.

Additionally, the in-touch day concept provides tangible evidence to employees that management cares about them and their job problems. It's one thing to talk about improving employee jobs, but another to put yourself in the shoes of your employees and work right alongside them.

Hyatt's in-touch day illustrates one way for managers to better understand their employees. This chapter looks at a number of factors that influence employee behavior and their implications for management practice.

Toward Explaining and Predicting Behavior

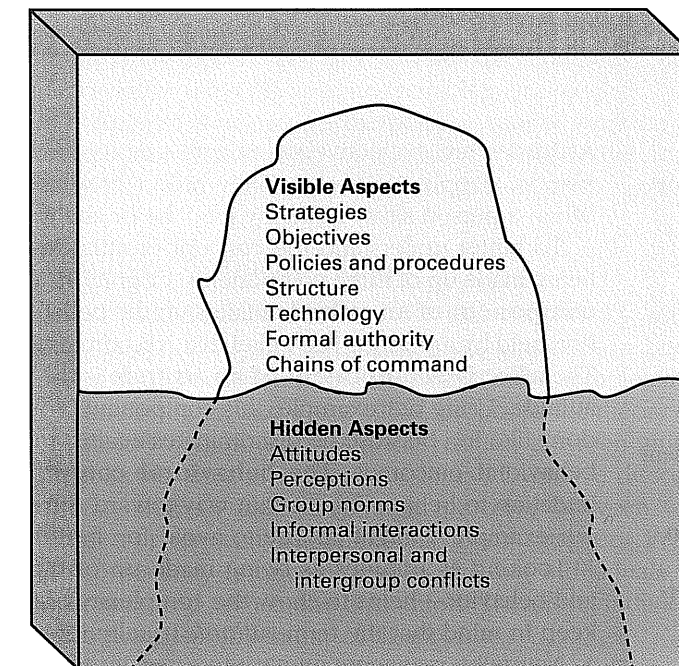**behavior**
The actions of people.

organizational behavior
The study of the actions of people at work.

The material in this and the following four chapters draws heavily on the field of study that has come to be known as *organizational behavior* (OB). While it is concerned with the subject of **behavior**—that is, the actions of people—**organizational behavior** is concerned more specifically with the actions of people at work.

One of the challenges to understanding organizational behavior is that it addresses a number of issues that are not obvious. Like an iceberg, a lot of organizational behavior is not visible to the naked eye. (See Figure 14–1.) What we tend to see when we look at organizations are their formal aspects—strategies, objectives, policies and procedures, structure, technology, formal authority, and chains of command. But just under the surface there lie a number of informal elements that managers need to understand. As we'll show, OB provides managers with considerable insight into these important, but hidden, aspects of the organization.

FIGURE 14–1
The "Organization as an Iceberg" Metaphor

Visible Aspects
Strategies
Objectives
Policies and procedures
Structure
Technology
Formal authority
Chains of command

Hidden Aspects
Attitudes
Perceptions
Group norms
Informal interactions
Interpersonal and intergroup conflicts

Focus of Organizational Behavior

Organizational behavior focuses primarily on two major areas. First, OB looks at *individual behavior*. Based predominantly on contributions from psychologists, this area includes such topics as attitudes, personality, perception, learning, and motivation. Second, OB is concerned with *group behavior*, which includes norms, roles, team building, and conflict. Our knowledge about groups comes basically from the work of sociologists and social psychologists. Unfortunately, the behavior of a group of employees cannot be understood by merely summing up the actions of each individual, because individuals in groups behave differently from individuals acting alone. You see this characteristic when a street gang in a large city harasses innocent citizens. The gang members, acting individually, might never engage in such behavior. Put them together, and they act differently. Therefore, because employees in an organization are both individuals and members of groups, we need to study them at two levels. In this chapter, we'll provide the foundation for understanding individual behavior. In the next chapter, we'll introduce basic concepts related to understanding group behavior.

Goals of Organizational Behavior

The goals of OB are to *explain* and to *predict behavior*. Why do managers need this skill? Simply, in order to manage their employees' behavior. We know that a manager's success depends on getting things done through other people. Toward this goal, the manager needs to be able to explain why employees engage in some behaviors rather than others and to predict how employees will respond to various actions the manager might take.

What employee behaviors are we specifically concerned about explaining and predicting? The emphasis will be on employee productivity, absenteeism, and turnover. In addition, we'll also look at job satisfaction. While job satisfaction is an attitude rather than a behavior, it is an outcome about which many managers are concerned.

In the following pages, we'll address how an understanding of employee attitudes, personality, perception, and learning can help us to predict and explain employee productivity, absence and turnover rates, and job satisfaction.

Attitudes

attitudes
Evaluative statements concerning objects, people, or events.

cognitive component of an attitude
The beliefs, opinions, knowledge, or information held by a person.

affective component of an attitude
The emotional or feeling segment of an attitude.

behavioral component of an attitude
An intention to behave in a certain way toward someone or something.

Attitudes are evaluative statements—either favorable or unfavorable—concerning objects, people, or events. They reflect how an individual feels about something. When a person says "I like my job," he or she is expressing an attitude about work.

To better understand the concept of attitudes, we should look at an attitude as being made up of three components: Cognition, affect, and behavior.[2] The **cognitive component of an attitude** makes up the beliefs, opinions, knowledge, or information held by a person. The belief that "discrimination is wrong" illustrates a cognition. The **affective component of an attitude** is the emotional or feeling segment of an attitude. Using our example, this component would be reflected in the statement, "I don't like Jon because he discriminates against minorities." Finally, affect can lead to behavioral outcomes. The **behavioral component of an attitude** refers to an intention to behave in a certain way toward someone or something. So, to continue our example, I might choose to avoid Jon because of my feelings about him.

Looking at attitudes as being made up of three components—cognition, affect, and behavior—helps to show the complexity of attitudes. But for the sake of clarity, keep in mind that the term *attitude* usually refers only to the affective component.

Naturally, managers aren't interested in every attitude an employee might hold.

job satisfaction
A person's general attitude toward his or her job.

job involvement
The degree to which an employee identifies with his or her job, actively participates in it, and considers his or her job performance important to his or her self-worth.

organizational commitment
An employee's orientation toward the organization in terms of his or her loyalty to, identification with, and involvement in the organization.

They're specifically interested in job-related attitudes. The three most popular of these are job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment.[3] **Job satisfaction** is an employee's general attitude toward his or her job. When people speak of employee attitudes, more often than not they mean job satisfaction. **Job involvement** is the degree to which an employee identifies with his or her job, actively participates in it, and considers his or her job performance important to his or her self-worth. Finally, **organizational commitment** represents an employee's orientation toward the organization in terms of his or her loyalty to, identification with, and involvement in the organization.

Attitudes and Consistency

Did you ever notice how people change what they say so it doesn't contradict what they do? Perhaps a friend of yours has consistently argued that American cars are poorly built and that he'd never own anything but a foreign import. But his dad gives him a late-model American-made car, and suddenly they're not so bad. Or, when going through sorority rush, a new freshman believes that sororities are good and that pledging a sorority is important. If she fails to make a sorority, however, she may say: "I recognized that sorority life isn't all it's cracked up to be, anyway!"

Research has generally concluded that people seek consistency among their attitudes and between their attitudes and their behavior.[4] This means that individuals try to reconcile differing attitudes and align their attitudes and behavior so they appear rational and consistent. When there is an inconsistency, individuals will take steps to correct it. This can be done by altering either the attitudes or the behavior or by developing a rationalization for the discrepancy.

For example, a recruiter for Ontario Electronics Ltd. (OEL), whose job it is to visit college campuses, identify qualified job candidates, and sell them on the advantages of OEL as a place to work, would be in conflict if he personally believed OEL had poor working conditions and few opportunities for new college graduates. This recruiter could, over time, find his attitudes toward OEL becoming more positive. He may, in effect, convince himself by continually articulating the merits of working for OEL. Another alternative would be for the recruiter to become overtly negative about OEL and the opportunities within the firm for prospective candidates. The original enthusiasm that the recruiter may have shown would dwindle, probably to be replaced by open cynicism toward the company. Finally, the recruiter might acknowledge that OEL is an undesirable place to work, but as a professional recruiter his obligation is to present the positive side of working for the company. He might further rationalize that no work place is perfect; therefore, his job is not to present both sides of the issue, but rather to present a rosy picture of the company.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

cognitive dissonance
Any incompatibility between two or more attitudes or between behavior and attitudes.

Can we additionally assume from this consistency principle that an individual's behavior can always be predicted if we know his or her attitude on a subject? The answer to this question is, unfortunately, more complex than merely a "Yes" or "No."

Leon Festinger, in the late 1950s, proposed the theory of **cognitive dissonance.**[5] This theory sought to explain the relation between attitudes and behavior. Dissonance in this case means inconsistency. Cognitive dissonance refers to any incompatibility that an individual might perceive between two or more of his or her attitudes, or between his or her behavior and attitudes. Festinger argued that any form of inconsistency is uncomfortable and that individuals will attempt to reduce the dissonance and, hence, the discomfort. Therefore, individuals will seek a stable state where there is a minimum of dissonance.

Of course, no individual can completely avoid dissonance. You know that cheat-

ing on your income tax is wrong, but you "fudge" the numbers a bit every year, and hope you're not audited. Or you tell your children to brush after every meal, but *you* don't. So how do people cope? Festinger proposed that the desire to reduce dissonance is determined by the importance of the elements creating the dissonance, the degree of influence the individual believes he or she has over the elements, and the rewards that may be involved in dissonance.

If the elements creating the dissonance are relatively unimportant, the pressure to correct this imbalance will be low. However, say that a corporate manager—Mrs. Smith—believes strongly that no company should pollute the air or water. Unfortunately, Mrs. Smith, because of the requirements of her job, is placed in the position of having to make decisions that would trade off her company's profitability against her attitudes on pollution. She knows that dumping the company's sewage into the local river (which we shall assume is legal) is in the best economic interest of her firm. What will she do? Clearly, Mrs. Smith is experiencing a high degree of cognitive dissonance. Because of the importance of the elements in this example, we cannot expect Mrs. Smith to ignore the inconsistency. There are several paths that she can follow to deal with her dilemma. She can change her behavior (stop polluting the river). Or she can reduce dissonance by concluding that the dissonant behavior is not so important after all ("I've got to make a living, and in my role as a corporate decision maker, I often have to place the good of my company above that of the environment or society"). A third alternative would be for Mrs. Smith to change her attitude ("There is nothing wrong in polluting the river"). Still another choice would be to seek out more consonant elements to outweigh the dissonant ones ("The benefits to society from our manufacturing our products more than offset the cost to society of the resulting water pollution").

The degree of influence that individuals believe they have over the elements will have an impact on how they will react to the dissonance. If they perceive the dissonance to be an uncontrollable result—something over which they have no choice—they are less likely to be receptive to attitude change. If, for example, the dissonance-producing behavior was required as a result of the boss's directive, the pressure to reduce dissonance would be less than if the behavior was performed voluntarily. While dissonance exists, it can be rationalized and justified.

Rewards also influence the degree to which individuals are motivated to reduce dissonance. High dissonance, when accompanied by high rewards, tends to reduce the tension inherent in the dissonance. The reward acts to reduce dissonance by increasing the consistency side of the individual's balance sheet.

These moderating factors suggest that just because individuals experience dissonance they will not necessarily move directly toward consistency; that is, toward reduction of this dissonance. If the issues underlying the dissonance are of minimal importance, if an individual perceives that the dissonance is externally imposed and is substantially uncontrollable by him or her, or if rewards are significant enough to offset the dissonance, the individual will not be under great tension to reduce the dissonance.

Attitude Surveys

An increasing number of organizations are regularly surveying their employees in order to keep informed of their attitudes.

Figure 14–2 illustrates what an attitude survey might look like. Typically, **attitude surveys** present the employee with a set of statements or questions. Ideally, the items will be tailor-made to obtain the specific information that management desires. An attitude score is achieved by summing up responses to individual questionnaire items. These scores can then be averaged for job groups, departments, divisions, or the organization as a whole. General Electric, for example, in surveying more than

attitude surveys
Eliciting responses from employees through questionnaires about how they feel about their jobs, work groups, supervisors, and/or the organization.

FIGURE 14-2
Sample Attitude Survey

Please answer each of the following statements using the following rating scale:
  5 = Strongly agree
  4 = Agree
  3 = Undecided
  2 = Disagree
  1 = Strongly disagree

Statement	Rating
1. This company is a pretty good place to work.	___
2. I can get ahead in this company if I make the effort.	___
3. This company's wage rates are competitive with those of other companies.	___
4. Employee promotion decisions are handled fairly.	___
5. I understand the various fringe benefits the company offers.	___
6. My job makes the best use of my abilities.	___
7. My work load is challenging but not burdensome.	___
8. I have trust and confidence in my boss.	___
9. I feel free to tell my boss what I think.	___
10. I know what my boss expects of me.	___

20,000 of its employees, found that over half of the respondents were dissatisfied with the information and the recognition they received from the company and with their opportunities for advancement.[6] As a result, management instituted regular monthly information meetings, brought in experts to answer questions, and began printing a newsletter. One year later, a follow-up survey found that the number of employees dissatisfied with the information they received had dropped to zero, while the number dissatisfied with promotional opportunities fell from 50 to 20 percent.

## The Satisfaction-Productivity Controversy

From the 1930s to the mid-1960s, it was taken as a truism that happy workers were productive workers. As a result of the Hawthorne studies (discussed in Chapter 2), managers generalized that if their employees were satisfied with their jobs, they would then transfer their satisfaction into high productivity. Much of the paternalism shown by managers in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s—by forming company bowling teams and credit unions, holding company picnics, and training supervisors to be sensitive to the concerns of subordinates—was supposed to make workers happy. But belief in the happy worker thesis was based more on wishful thinking than on hard evidence.

A careful review of the research indicates that if satisfaction does have a positive effect on productivity, that effect is fairly small.[7] However, the introduction of contingency variables has improved the relationship.[8] For example, the relationship is stronger when the employee's behavior is not constrained or controlled by outside factors. An employee's productivity on machine-paced jobs, for instance, is going to be much more influenced by the speed of the machine than by his or her level of satisfaction. Job level also seems to be an important moderating variable. The satisfaction–performance correlations are stronger for higher-level employees. Thus, we might expect the relationship to be more relevant for individuals in professional, supervisory, and managerial positions.

Unfortunately, most of the studies on the relationship between satisfaction and productivity used research designs that could not prove cause and effect. Studies that have controlled for this possibility indicate that the more valid conclusion is that productivity leads to satisfaction rather than the other way around.[9] If you do a good job, you intrinsically feel good about it. Additionally, assuming that the organization rewards productivity, your higher productivity should increase verbal recognition,

MANAGERS WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

J. W. Kisling at Multiplex, Inc.
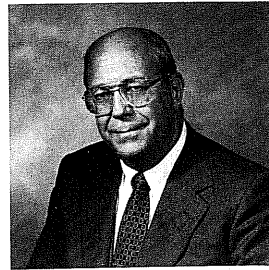
J. W. Kisling is CEO at Multiplex, Inc., a St. Louis-based manufacturer of automatic beverage dispenser machines.[10] The company employs 150 people, eighty of them operating personnel who work on the factory floor. Kisling recently decided to survey the eighty line workers to see how their attitudes aligned with national data and to identify areas where management could make improvements.

Kisling and his personnel manager used a fifty-two question survey covering nine areas: Attitude toward top management; work and safety conditions; supervisory effectiveness; pay and employee benefits; communication and recognition; job security and promotion; attitude toward fellow workers; attitude toward the survey; and quality. Space was also provided for suggestions. The fifty-two items in the questionnaire were based on a survey developed by the National Association of Manufacturers. This allowed Multiplex to compare its results with those of thousands of other manufacturers.

Much of what Kisling found was encouraging. For instance, 82 percent of the employees agreed with the statement, "I would recommend employment in Multiplex to my friends." But the survey also uncovered a number of trouble spots. One plant manager was severely criticized for his autocratic style. He was let go. Top management was criticized for being unavailable. Kisling responded with a voice-mailbox system that allows line employees to send him messages confidentially. And some people wrote that they had become bored with their jobs. Results were broken down by departments to find those who were frustrated. In response to this concern, Multiplex's management has redesigned a number of jobs and has begun cross-training workers at different positions on the line.

your pay level, and probabilities for promotion. These rewards, in turn, increase your level of satisfaction with the job.

Implications for Managers

We know that employees can be expected to try to reduce dissonance. Therefore, not surprisingly, there is relatively strong evidence that committed and satisfied employees have lower rates of turnover and absenteeism.[11] Because most managers want to minimize the number of resignations and absences—especially among their more productive employees—they should do those things that will generate positive job attitudes. Dissonance, however, can be managed. If employees are required to engage in activities that appear inconsistent to them or that are at odds with their attitudes, managers should remember that pressure to reduce the dissonance is lessened when the employee perceives that the dissonance is externally imposed and uncontrollable. The pressure is also lessened if rewards are significant enough to offset the dissonance.

The findings about the satisfaction–productivity relationship have important implications for managers. They suggest that the goal for making employees happy on the assumption that this will lead to high productivity is probably misdirected. Managers

Employees doing machine-paced work, such as these at a Gillette razor manufacturing plant, often reduce their dissonance by perceiving that their work behavior is largely determined by externally imposed and uncontrollable forces.

who follow this strategy could end up with a very happy but poorly performing group of employees. Managers would get better results by directing their attention primarily to what will help employees to become more productive. Successful job performance should then lead to feelings of accomplishment, increased pay, promotions, and other rewards—all desirable outcomes—which then lead to satisfaction with the job.

Personality

personality
A combination of psychological traits that classifies a person.

Some people are quiet and passive, while others are loud and aggressive. When we describe people using terms such as quiet, passive, loud, aggressive, ambitious, extroverted, loyal, tense, or sociable, we are categorizing them in terms of *personality traits*. An individual's **personality** is the combination of the psychological traits we use to classify that person.

Predicting Behavior from Personality Traits

There are literally dozens of personality traits. However, six have received the bulk of attention in the search to link personality traits to behavior in organizations. They include *locus of control, authoritarianism, Machiavellianism, self-esteem, self-monitoring,* and *risk propensity.*

Locus of Control   Some people believe that they control their own fate. Others see themselves as pawns of fate, believing that what happens to them in their lives is due to luck or chance. The locus of control in the first case is *internal;* these people believe that they control their destiny. In the second case it is *external;* these people believe that their lives are controlled by outside forces.[12] The evidence indicates that

employees who rate high in externality are less satisfied with their jobs, more alienated from the work setting, and less involved in their jobs than those who rate high in internality.[13] A manager might also expect to find that externals blame a poor performance evaluation on their boss's prejudice, their co-workers, or other events outside their control, whereas internals explain the same evaluation in terms of their own actions.

authoritarianism
A measure of a person's belief that there should be status and power differences among people in organizations.

Authoritarianism **Authoritarianism** refers to a belief that there should be status and power differences among people in organizations.[14] The extremely high authoritarian personality is intellectually rigid, judgmental of others, deferential to those above, exploitative of those below, distrustful, and resistant to change. Because few people are extreme authoritarians, our conclusions must be guarded. It seems reasonable to postulate, however, that possessing a high authoritarian personality would be negatively related to the performance of a job that demands sensitivity to the feelings of others, tact, and the ability to adapt to complex and changing situations.[15] On the other hand, in a job that is highly structured and in which success depends on close conformance to rules and regulations, the highly authoritarian employee should perform quite well.

Machiavellianism
A measure of the degree to which people are pragmatic, maintain emotional distance, and believe that ends can justify means.

Machiavellianism Closely related to authoritarianism is the characteristic of **Machiavellianism** ("Mach"), named after Niccolo Machiavelli, who wrote in the sixteenth century on how to gain and manipulate power. An individual who is high in Machiavellianism—in contrast to someone who is low—is pragmatic, maintains emotional distance, and believes that ends can justify means.[16] "If it works, use it" is consistent with a high Mach perspective. Do high Machs make good employees? That answer depends on the type of job and whether you consider ethical implications in evaluating performance. In jobs that require bargaining skills (such as labor negotiator) or that have substantial rewards for winning (such as a commissioned salesperson), high Machs are productive. In jobs in which ends do not justify the means or that lack absolute standards of performance, it is difficult to predict the performance of high Machs.

self-esteem
An individual's degree of like or dislike for him or herself.

Self-Esteem People differ in the degree to which they like or dislike themselves. This trait is called **self-esteem.**[17]

The research on self-esteem (SE) offers some interesting insights into organizational behavior. For example, self-esteem is directly related to expectations for success. High SEs believe that they possess more of the ability they need in order to succeed at work. Individuals with high SEs will take more risks in job selection and are more likely to choose unconventional jobs than people with low SEs.

The most common finding on self-esteem is that low SEs are more susceptible to external influence than are high SEs. Low SEs are dependent on the receipt of positive evaluations from others. As a result, they are more likely to seek approval from others and more prone to conform to the beliefs and behaviors of those they respect than are high SEs. In managerial positions, low SEs will tend to be concerned with pleasing others and, therefore, less likely to take unpopular stands than are high SEs.

Not surprisingly, self-esteem has also been found to be related to job satisfaction. A number of studies confirm that high SEs are more satisfied with their jobs than low SEs.

self-monitoring
A personality trait that measures an individual's ability to adjust his or her behavior to external situational factors.

Self-Monitoring Another personality trait that has recently received increased attention is called **self-monitoring.**[18] It refers to an individual's ability to adjust his or her behavior to external, situational factors.

Individuals high in self-monitoring can show considerable adaptability in adjusting their behavior to external, situational factors. They are highly sensitive to external
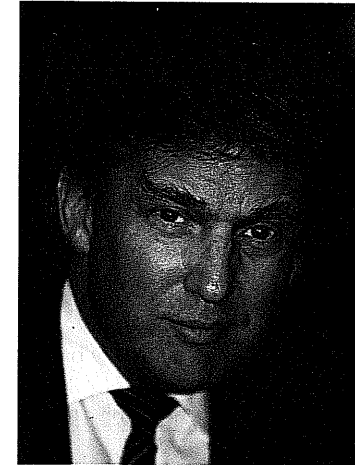
Donald Trump's high-risk-propensity personality fits well with his businesses: real estate development and gaming enterprises.

Donald Trump's high-risk-taking personality might be a major obstacle for an accountant who has to perform auditing activities.

cues and can behave differently in different situations. High self-monitors are capable of presenting striking contradictions between their public persona and their private selves. Low self-monitors can't deviate their behavior. They tend to display their true dispositions and attitudes in every situation; hence there is high behavioral consistency between who they are and what they do.

The research on self-monitoring is in its infancy, thus predictions are hard to make. However, preliminary evidence suggests that high self-monitors tend to pay closer attention to the behavior of others and are more capable of conforming than are low self-monitors.[19] We might also hypothesize that high self-monitors will be more successful in managerial positions where individuals are required to play multiple, and even contradicting, roles. The high self-monitor is capable of putting on different "faces" for different audiences.

Risk Taking People differ in their willingness to take chances. This propensity to assume or avoid risk has been shown to have an impact on how long it takes managers to make a decision and how much information they require before making their choice. For instance, in a recent study, a group of managers worked on simulated personnel exercises that required them to make hiring decisions.[20] High-risk-taking managers made more rapid decisions and used less information in making their choices than did the low-risk-taking managers. Interestingly, the decision accuracy was the same for both groups.

While it is generally correct to conclude that managers in organizations are risk aversive,[21] there are still individual differences on this dimension.[22] As a result, it makes sense to recognize these differences and even to consider aligning risk-taking propensity with specific job demands. For instance, a high-risk-taking propensity may lead to more effective performance for a stock trader in a brokerage firm. This type of job demands rapid decision making. On the other hand, this personality characteristic might prove a major obstacle to accountants performing auditing activities. This latter job might be better filled by someone with a low-risk-taking propensity.

Matching Personalities and Jobs

Obviously, individual personalities differ. So, too, do jobs. Following this logic, efforts have been made to match the proper personalities with the proper jobs.

The best documented personality–job fit theory has been developed by psychologist John Holland.[23] His theory states that an employee's satisfaction with his or her job, as well as his or her propensity to leave that job, depends on the degree to which the individual's personality matches his or her occupational environment. Holland has identified six basic personality types an organization's employees might possess. Table 14–1 describes each of the six types, their personality characteristics, and examples of congruent occupations.

Holland's research strongly supports the hexagonal diagram in Figure 14–3.[24] This figure shows that the closer two fields or orientations are in the hexagon, the more compatible they are. Adjacent categories are quite similar, while those diagonally opposite are highly dissimilar.

What does all this mean? The theory argues that satisfaction is highest and turnover lowest where personality and occupation are in agreement. Social individuals should be in social jobs, conventional people in conventional jobs, and so forth. A realistic person in a realistic job is in a more congruent situation than is a realistic person in an investigative job. A realistic person in a social job is in the most incongruent situation possible. The key points of this model are that (1) there do appear to be intrinsic differences in personality among individuals, (2) there are different types of jobs, and (3) people in job environments congruent with their personality types should be

TABLE 14-1   Holland's Typology of Personality and Sample Occupations

Type	Personality Characteristics	Sample Occupations
Realistic - Prefers physical activities that require skill, strength, and coordination	Shy, genuine, persistent, stable, conforming, practical	Mechanic, drill press operator, assembly line worker, farmer
Investigative - Prefers activities involving thinking, organizing, and understanding	Analytical, original, curious, independent	Biologist, economist, mathematician, news reporter
Social - Prefers activities that involve helping and developing others	Sociable, friendly, cooperative, understanding	Social worker, teacher, counselor, clinical psychologist
Conventional - Prefers rule-regulated, orderly, and unambiguous activities	Conforming, efficient, practical, unimaginative, inflexible	Accountant, corporate manager, bank teller, file clerk
Enterprising - Prefers verbal activities where there are opportunities to influence others and attain power	Self-confident, ambitious, energetic, domineering	Lawyer, real estate agent, public relations specialist, small business manager
Artistic - Prefers ambiguous and unsystematic activities which allow creative expression	Imaginative, disorderly, idealistic, emotional, impractical	Painter, musician, writer, interior decorator

Source: Based on John L. Holland, *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments,* 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ; Prentice Hall, 1985.

more satisfied and less likely to resign voluntarily than should people in incongruent jobs.

Implications for Managers

The major value of a manager's understanding personality differences probably lies in selection. Managers are likely to have higher-performing and more satisfied employees if consideration is given to matching personality types with compatible jobs. In addition, there may be other benefits. For instance, managers can expect that individuals with an external locus of control may be less satisfied with their jobs than internals and also that they may be less willing to accept responsibility for their actions.

FIGURE 14-3
Relationships Among Occupational Personality Types

Source: J. L. Holland, *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments,* 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1985). Used by permission. This model originally appeared in J. L. Holland et al., "An Empirical Occupational Classification Derived from a Theory of Personality and Intended for Practice and Research," ACT Research Report No. 29 (Iowa City: The American College Testing Program, 1969).
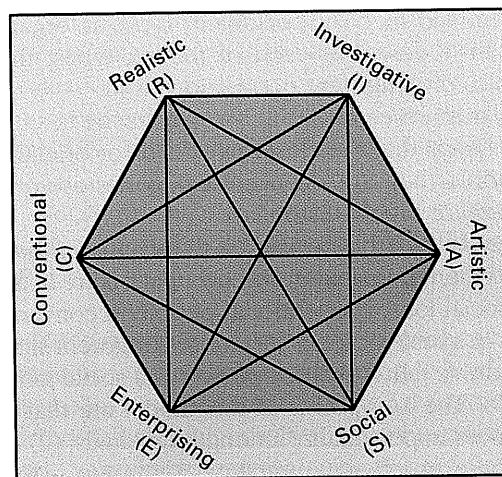
Dominant Personality Attributes Should Vary Across National Cultures

There are certainly no common personality types for a given country. You can, for instance, find high risk takers and low risk takers in almost any culture. Yet a country's culture should influence the dominant personality characteristics of its population. We can see this by looking at two personality traits—locus of control and authoritarianism.

National cultures differ in terms of the degree to which people believe they control their environment. North Americans, for example, believe that they can dominate their environment while other societies, such as Middle Eastern countries, believe that life is essentially preordained. Notice the close parallel to internal and external locus of control. We should expect a larger proportion of internals in the U.S. and Canadian work force than in the work forces of Saudi Arabia or Iran.

Authoritarianism is closely related to the concept of power distance. In high power-distance societies, such as Mexico or Venezuela, there should be a large proportion of individuals with authoritarian personalities, especially among the ruling class. In contrast, because the United States rates below average on this dimension, we'd expect authoritarian personalities to be less prevalent there than in the high power-distance countries.

Perception

perception
The process of organizing and interpreting sensory impressions in order to give meaning to the environment.

Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. Research on perception consistently demonstrates that individuals may look at the same thing, yet perceive it differently. One manager, for instance, can interpret the fact that her assistant regularly takes several days to make important decisions as evidence that the assistant is slow, disorganized, and afraid to make decisions. Another manager, with the same assistant, might interpret the same action as evidence that the assistant is thoughtful, thorough, and deliberate. The first manager would probably evaluate her assistant negatively, while the second manager would probably evaluate the person positively. The point is that none of us actually sees reality. We interpret what we see and call it *reality.* And, of course, as the above example illustrates, we act according to our perceptions.

Factors Influencing Perception

How do we explain the fact that people can perceive the same thing differently. A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. These factors can reside in the *perceiver;* in the object, or *target,* being perceived; or in the context of the *situation* in which the perception is made.

When an individual looks at a target and attempts to interpret what he or she sees, the individual's personal characteristics are going to heavily influence the interpretation. These personal characteristics include attitudes, personality, motives, interests, past experiences, and expectations.

FIGURE 14-4
Perception Challenges

Do you see a vase or two profiles face-to-face? It depends on what you choose as a background.
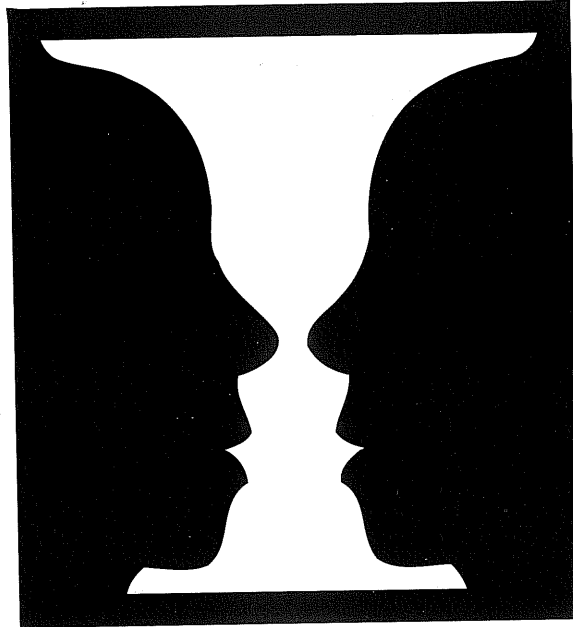
The characteristics of the target being observed can also affect what is perceived. Loud people are more likely than quiet people to be noticed in a group. So, too, are extremely attractive or unattractive individuals. Because targets are not looked at in isolation, the relationship of a target to its background also influences perception (see Figure 14-4), as does our tendency to group close things and similar things together.

The context in which we see objects or events is also important. The time at which an object or event is seen can influence attention, as can location, light, heat, and any number of other situational factors.

Attribution Theory

Much of research on perception is directed at inanimate objects. Managers, though, are more concerned with human beings. So our discussion of perception should focus on person perception.

Our perceptions of people differ from our perceptions of such inanimate objects as desks, machines, or buildings because we make inferences about the actions of people that we don't make about inanimate objects. Nonliving objects have no beliefs, motives, or intentions; people do. The result is that when we observe people, we attempt to develop explanations of why they behave in certain ways. Our perception and judgment of a person's actions, therefore, will be significantly influenced by the assumptions we make about the person's internal state.

Attribution theory has been proposed to develop explanations of how we judge people differently depending on what meaning we attribute to a given behavior.[25] Basically, the theory suggests that when we observe an individual's behavior, we attempt to determine whether it was internally or externally caused. Internally caused behaviors are those that are believed to be under the personal control of the individual. Externally caused behavior results from outside causes; that is, the person is seen as forced into the behavior by the situation. That determination, however, depends on three factors: (1) distinctiveness, (2) consensus, and (3) consistency.

Distinctiveness refers to whether an individual displays a behavior in many situations or whether it is particular to one situation. Is the employee who arrives late today also the source of complaints by co-workers for being a "goof-off"? What we

attribution theory
A theory used to develop explanations of how we judge people differently depending on the meaning we attribute to a given behavior.

want to know is if this behavior is unusual or not. If it is, the observer is likely to give the behavior an external attribution. If this action is not unique, it will probably be judged as internal.

If everyone who is faced with a similar situation responds in the same way, we can say the behavior shows *consensus*. Our tardy employee's behavior would meet this criterion if all employees who took the same route to work were also late. From an attribution perspective, if consensus is high you would be expected to give an external attribution to the employee's tardiness; whereas if other employees who took the same route made it to work on time, your conclusion for causation would be internal.

Finally, an observer looks for *consistency* in a person's actions. Does the person engage in the behaviors regularly and consistently? Does the person respond the same way over time? Coming in ten minutes late for work is not perceived in the same way if for one employee it represents an unusual case (she hasn't been late for several months), while for another it is part of a routine pattern (she is regularly late two or three times a week). The more consistent the behavior, the more the observer is inclined to attribute it to internal causes.

Figure 14-5 summarizes the key elements in attribution theory. It would tell us, for instance, that if an employee—let's call her Ms. Smith—generally performs at about the same level on other related tasks as she does on her current task (low distinctiveness), if other employees frequently perform differently—better or worse—than Ms. Smith does on that current task (low consensus), and if Ms. Smith's performance on this current task is consistent over time (high consistency), her manager or anyone else who is judging Ms. Smith's work is likely to hold her primarily responsible for her task performance (internal attribution).

One of the more interesting findings drawn from attribution theory is that there are errors or biases that distort attributions. For instance, there is substantial evidence to support that when we make judgments about the behavior of other people, we have a tendency to underestimate the influence of external factors and overestimate the influence of internal or personal factors.[26] This is called the **fundamental attribution error** and can explain why a sales manager may be prone to attribute the poor performance of her sales agents to laziness rather than the innovative product line introduced by a competitor. There is also a tendency for individuals to attribute *their own* successes to internal factors like ability or effort while putting the blame for failure on external factors like luck. This is called the **self-serving bias** and suggests that feedback provided to employees in performance reviews will be predictably distorted by recipients depending on whether it is positive or negative.

fundamental attribution error
The tendency to underestimate the influence of external factors and overestimate the influence of internal factors when making judgments about the behavior of others.

self-serving bias
The tendency for individuals to attribute their own successes to internal factors while putting the blame for failures on external factors.

FIGURE 14-5
Attribution Theory
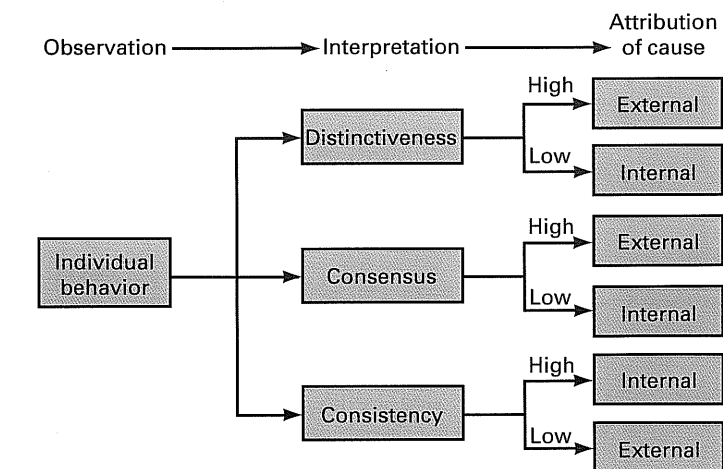
Frequently Used Shortcuts in Judging Others

We use a number of shortcuts when we judge others. Perceiving and interpreting what others do is burdensome. As a result, individuals develop techniques for making the task more manageable. These techniques are frequently valuable—they allow us to make accurate perceptions rapidly and provide valid data for making predictions. However, they are not foolproof. They can and do get us into trouble. An understanding of these shortcuts can be helpful toward recognizing when they can result in significant distortions.

Individuals cannot assimilate all they observe, so they engage in **selectivity.** They take in bits and pieces. These bits and pieces are not chosen randomly; rather, they are selectively chosen depending on the interests, background, experience, and attitudes of the observer. Selective perception allows us to "speed read" others, but not without the risk of drawing an inaccurate picture.

It is easy to judge others if we assume that they are similar to us. In **assumed similarity,** or the "like me" effect, the observer's perception of others is influenced more by the observer's own characteristics than by those of the person observed. For example, if you want challenge and responsibility in your job, you will assume that others want the same. People who assume that others are like them can, of course, be right, but most of the time they're wrong.

When we judge someone on the basis of our perception of a group to which he or she belongs, we are using the shortcut called **stereotyping.** "Married people are more stable employees than singles" and "union people expect something for nothing" are examples of stereotyping. To the degree that a stereotype is based on fact, it may produce accurate judgments. However, many stereotypes have no foundation in fact. In such cases, stereotypes distort judgments.

When we form a general impression about an individual based on a single characteristic such as intelligence, sociability, or appearance, we are being influenced by the **halo effect.** This effect frequently occurs when students evaluate their classroom instructor. Students may isolate a single trait such as enthusiasm and allow their entire evaluation to be tainted by their perception of this one trait. An instructor might be quiet, assured, knowledgeable, and highly qualified, but if his style lacks zeal, he or she will be rated lower on a number of other characteristics.

Implications for Managers

Managers need to recognize that their employees react to perceptions, not reality. So whether a manager's appraisal of an employee is *actually* objective and unbiased or whether the organization's wage levels are *actually* among the highest in the industry is less relevant than what employees perceive them to be. If individuals perceive appraisals to be biased or wage levels as low, they will behave as if these conditions actually exist. Employees organize and interpret what they see; this creates the potential for perceptual distortion.

The message to managers should be clear: Close attention needs to be paid to how employees perceive both their jobs and management practices. Remember, the valuable employee who quits because of an *incorrect perception* is just as great a loss to an organization as the valuable employee who quits for a *valid reason.*

Learning

The last individual-behavior concept we want to introduce in this chapter is learning. It is included for the obvious reason that almost all complex behavior is learned. If we want to explain and predict behavior, we need to understand how people learn.

selectivity
The process by which people assimilate certain bits and pieces of what they observe, depending on their interests, background, and attitudes.

assumed similarity
The belief that others are like oneself.

stereotyping
Judging a person on the basis of one's perception of a group to which he or she belongs.

halo effect
A general impression of an individual based on a single characteristic.

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learning
Any relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of experience.

operant conditioning
A type of conditioning in which desired voluntary behavior leads to a reward or prevents a punishment.

What is **learning?** A psychologist's definition is considerably broader than the layperson's view that "it's what we did when we went to school." In actuality, each of us is continuously "going to school." Learning occurs all the time. We continually learn from our experiences. A workable definition of learning is, therefore, any relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of experience.

Operant Conditioning　**Operant conditioning** argues that behavior is a function of its consequences. People learn to behave to get something they want or to avoid something they don't want. Operant behavior means voluntary or learned behavior in contrast to reflexive or unlearned behavior. The tendency to repeat such behavior is influenced as a result of the reinforcement or lack of reinforcement brought about by the consequences of the behavior. Reinforcement, therefore, strengthens a behavior and increases the likelihood that it will be repeated.

Building on earlier work in the field, the late Harvard psychologist B. F. Skinner's research has extensively expanded our knowledge of operant conditioning.[27] Even his staunchest critics, who represent a sizable group, admit that his operant concepts work.

Behavior is assumed to be determined from without—that is, learned—rather than from within—reflexive or unlearned. Skinner argued that by creating pleasing consequences to follow specific forms of behavior, the frequency of that behavior will increase. People will most likely engage in desired behaviors if they are positively reinforced for doing so. Rewards, for example, are most effective if they immediately follow the desired response. Additionally, behavior that is not rewarded, or is punished, is less likely to be repeated.

You see illustrations of operant conditioning everywhere. For example, any situation in which it is either explicitly stated or implicitly suggested that reinforcements are contingent on some action on your part involves the use of operant learning. Your instructor says that if you want a high grade in the course you must supply correct answers on the test. A commissioned salesperson wanting to earn a sizable income finds that this is contingent on generating high sales in his or her territory. Of course, the linkage can also work to teach the individual to engage in behaviors that work against the best interests of the organization. Assume that your boss tells you that if you will work overtime during the next three-week busy season, you will be compen-

Mary Kay Cosmetics understands the value of operant conditioning. The use of visible rewards for high sales performance reinforces and strengthens this behavior.

sated for it at the next performance appraisal. However, when performance appraisal time comes, you find that you are given no positive reinforcement for your overtime work. The next time your boss asks you to work overtime, what will you do? You will probably decline! Your behavior can be explained by operant conditioning: If a behavior fails to be positively reinforced, the probability that the behavior will be repeated declines.

Social Learning   Individuals can also learn by observing what happens to other people and just by being told about something, as well as by direct experiences. So, for example, much of what we have learned comes from watching models—parents, teachers, peers, television and movie performers, bosses, and so forth. This view that we can learn both through observation and direct experience has been called **social learning theory.**[28]

social learning theory
People can learn through obser-
vation and direct experience.

While social learning theory is an extension of operant conditioning—that is, it assumes that behavior is a function of consequences—it also acknowledges the existence of observational learning and the importance of perception in learning. People respond to how they perceive and define consequences, not to the objective consequences themselves.

The influence of models is central to the social learning viewpoint. Four processes have been found to determine the influence that a model will have on an individual:

1. *Attentional processes.* People learn from a model only when they recognize and pay attention to its critical features. We tend to be most influenced by models that are attractive, repeatedly available, we think are important, or we see as similar to us.

2. *Retention processes.* A model's influence will depend on how well the individual remembers the model's action, even after the model is no longer readily available.

3. *Motor reproduction processes.* After a person has seen a new behavior by observing the model, the watching must be converted to doing. This process then demonstrates that the individual can perform the modeled activities.
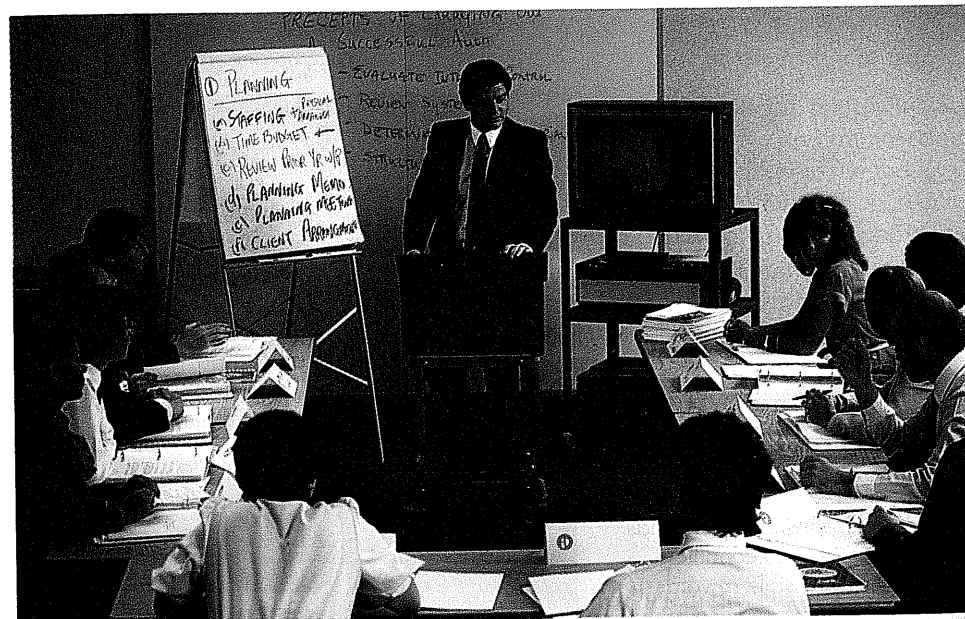
Arthur Andersen uses social
learning concepts in the develop-
ment of its in-house training
programs.

4. *Reinforcement processes.* Individuals will be motivated to exhibit the modeled behavior if positive incentives or rewards are provided. Behaviors that are reinforced will be given more attention, learned better, and performed more often.

Shaping: A Managerial Tool

Because learning takes place on the job as well as prior to it, managers will be concerned with how they can teach employees to behave in ways that most benefit the organization. Thus managers will often attempt to mold individuals by guiding their learning in graduated steps. This process is called **shaping behavior.**

Consider the situation in which an employee's behavior is significantly different from that sought by management. If management only reinforced the individual when he or she showed desirable responses, there might be very little reinforcement taking place. In such a case, shaping offers a logical approach toward achieving the desired behavior.

shaping behavior
Systematically reinforcing each
successive step that moves an
individual closer to the desired
response.

We *shape* behavior by systematically reinforcing each successive step that moves the individual closer to the desired response. If an employee who has chronically been a half-hour late for work comes in only twenty minutes late, we can reinforce this improvement. Reinforcement would increase as responses more closely approximate the desired behavior.

There are four ways in which to shape behavior: through positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment, or extinction. When a response is followed with something pleasant, such as when a manager praises an employee for a job well done, it is called *positive reinforcement.* Rewarding a response with the termination or withdrawal of something unpleasant is called *negative reinforcement.* Managers who habitually criticize their subordinates for taking extended coffee breaks are using negative reinforcement. The only way these employees can stop the criticism is to shorten their breaks. *Punishment* penalizes undesirable behavior. Suspending an employee for two days without pay for showing up drunk is an example of punishment. Eliminating any reinforcement that is maintaining a behavior is called *extinction.* When the behavior is not reinforced, gradually it tends to be extinguished. In meetings, managers who wish to discourage employees from continually asking distracting or irrelevant questions can eliminate this behavior by ignoring these employees when they raise their hands to speak. Hand-raising will become extinct when it is invariably met with an absence of reinforcement.

Both positive and negative reinforcement result in learning. They strengthen a desired response and increase the probability of repetition. Both punishment and extinction also result in learning; however, they weaken behavior and tend to decrease its subsequent frequency.

Implications for Managers

Managers can very clearly benefit from understanding the learning process. Because employees continually learn on the job, the only issue is whether managers are going to let employee learning occur randomly or whether they are going to manage learning through the rewards they allocate and the examples they set. If marginal employees are rewarded with pay raises and promotions, they will have little reason to change their behavior. If managers want a certain type of behavior but reward a different type of behavior, it shouldn't surprise them to find employees learning to engage in the other type of behavior. Similarly, managers should expect that employees will look to them as models. Managers who are constantly late to work, or take two hours for lunch, or help themselves to company office supplies for personal

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN MANAGEMENT
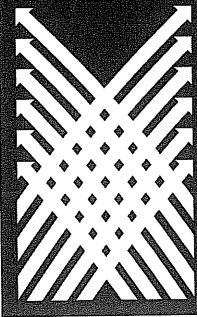
Is Shaping Behavior a Form of Manipulative Control?

Animal trainers use rewards—typically food—to get dogs, porpoises, and whales to perform extraordinary stunts. Behavioral psychologists have put rats through thousands of experiments by manipulating their food supply. These trainers and researchers have shaped the behavior of these animals by controlling consequences. Such learning techniques may be appropriate for animals performing in zoos, circuses, or laboratories, but are they appropriate for managing the behavior of people at work?

Critics argue that human beings are not rats in an experiment. Human beings should be treated with respect and dignity. To explicitly use rewards as a learning device—to encourage the repetition of desired behaviors—is manipulative. Human beings in organizations should act of free will and not be subjected to manipulative control techniques by their bosses.

No well-schooled behavioral scientist would argue that shaping isn't a powerful tool for controlling behavior. But when used by managers, is it a form of manipulation? If an employee engages in behaviors that the organization later judges "wrong" but that were motivated by a manager's control of rewards, is that employee any less responsible for his or her actions than if such rewards were not involved? What do *you* think?

each successive step that moves the employee closer to the response desired by the manager.

Review Questions

1. How is an organization like an iceberg? Use the "iceberg metaphor" to describe the field of organizational behavior.
2. What are the three components of an attitude?
3. Clarify how individuals reconcile inconsistencies between attitudes and behaviors.
4. What are attitude surveys and how do they help managers?
5. What behavioral predictions might you make if you knew that an employee had (a) an external locus of control? (b) a low Mach score? (c) low self-esteem? (d) high self-monitoring tendencies?
6. Name four different shortcuts used in judging others. What effect does each of these have on perception?
7. What is the self-serving bias?
8. What is social learning theory? What are its implications for managing people at work?

Summary

This summary is organized by the chapter-opening learning objectives found on page 413.

1. The field of organizational behavior is concerned with the actions of people—managers and operatives alike—in organizations. By focusing on individual- and group-level concepts, OB seeks to explain and predict behavior. Because they get things done through other people, managers will be more effective leaders if they have an understanding of behavior.

use, should expect employees to read the message they're sending and model their behavior accordingly.

2. People seek consistency among their attitudes and between their attitudes and their behavior. They seek to reconcile divergent attitudes and align their attitudes and behavior so they appear rational and consistent.
3. The correlation between satisfaction and productivity tends to be low. The best evidence suggests that productivity leads to satisfaction rather than, as was popularly believed, the other way around.
4. Holland identified six basic personality types and six sets of congruent occupations. He found that when individuals were properly matched with occupations that were congruent with their personality types, they experienced high satisfaction with their job and lower turnover rates.
5. Attribution theory proposes that we judge people differently depending on whether we attribute their behavior to internal or external causation. This determination, in turn, depends on three factors: distinctiveness, consensus, and consistency.
6. Managers can shape or mold employee behavior by systematically reinforcing

Discussion Questions

1. How could you use personality traits to improve employee selection?
2. Given that perception affects behavior, do you think there is anything management can do to reduce employee perceptual distortion.
3. What factors do you think might create the fundamental attribution error?
4. "Managers should never use discipline with a problem employee." Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.
5. How important do you think knowledge of OB is to low-, middle-, and upper-level managers? What type of OB knowledge do you think is most important to each?
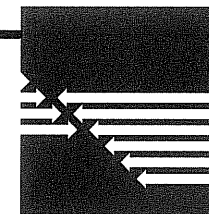
SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Who Controls Your Life?

Instructions: Read the following statement and indicate whether you agree more with choice A or choice B.

A	B
1. Making a lot of money is largely a matter of getting the right breaks.	1. Promotions are earned through hard work and persistence.

A	B
2. I have noticed that there is usually a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.	2. Many times the reactions of teachers seem haphazard to me. ____
3. The number of divorces indicates that more and more people are not trying to make their marriages work.	3. Marriage is largely a gamble. ____
4. It is silly to think that one can really change another person's basic attitudes.	4. When I am right I can convince others. ____
5. Getting promoted is really a matter of being a little luckier than the next person.	5. In our society a person's future earning power depends upon his or her ability. ____
6. If one knows how to deal with people, they are really quite easily led.	6. I have little influence over the way other people behave. ____
7. The grades I make are the result of my own efforts; luck has little or nothing to do with it.	7. Sometimes I feel that I have little to do with the grades I get. ____
8. People like me can change the course of world affairs if we make ourselves heard.	8. It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence what happens in our society at large. ____
9. A great deal that happens to me is probably a matter of chance.	9. I am the master of my fate. ____
10. Getting along with people is a skill that must be practiced.	10. It is almost impossible to figure out how to please some people. ____

Source: Adapted from Julian B. Rotter, "External Control and Internal Control," *Psychology Today,* June 1971, p. 42. Copyright 1971 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted with permission.

FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE ACTION

PP
Palomino Publishers

To: Jane Lopez, Director of Human Resources
From: W. H. Luden, Director of Sales

I'm excited about the Executive Committee's recent decision to create our own national sales force. During our first three years of business, with our financial capabilities limited, it made sense to contract with Paramount Publishing to use their sales staff to sell our book titles. But our sales are now approaching $10 million a year, and we need our own sales organization.

It is my intention to hire six to ten new college graduates this spring to staff these new sales positions. Upon joining our company, I want to put them through a four-day, intensive sales-training program. I have a good idea of what the content of that program should be. Where I need some help is in suggesting how to present that content. That's why I'm writing you this memo.

Based on your knowledge of learning theories, could you please provide me with a short report (not to exceed two pages), giving me specific suggestions on how best to design a thirty-hour sales-training program. For example, would learning be more effective if I exclusively lectured to the trainees or should I also use group discussion or some type of role-play exercises?

This is a fictionalized account of a potentially real problem. It was written for academic purposes only and is not meant to reflect either positively or negatively on actual management practices at Palomino Publishers.