**III. Topic Summaries and Expert Contributions**

# Part 1 Introduction

## Topic Summary 1: Introduction to Organizational Behavior

### Topic Summary: Introduction to Organizational Behavior

Organizational behavior emerged as a distinct field of study in the 1940s. Because organizational behavior is an interdisciplinary study, this means that it draws from different disciplines in order to understand organizations from multiple perspectives and viewpoints. As an interdisciplinary study, organizational behavior draws from psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, strategy, management, and even the natural sciences. All types of organizational members benefit from understanding organizational behavior. This topic summary will help you understand processes studied by the field of organizational behavior and how improving these processes may lead to improved individuals, groups, and organizations.

1. Explain the skills needed for the changing workplace and how you can develop these skills.

Answer:

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| --- | --- |
| **Skills Needed for the Changing Workplace** | **Relevant Contemporary Organizational Behavior Topic** |
| Adaptability and flexibility | Organizational change, learning, individual characteristics |
| Problem solving and critical thinking | Individual characteristics, decision making, negotiation, learning |
| Leadership  | Leadership, persuasion, influence & impression management |
| Professionalism | Individual characteristics, organizational culture, motivation, persuasion, influence, and impression management |
| Teamwork | Groups and teams, organizational culture, communication and diversity |
| Communication | Communication, perception, persuasion, influence, and impression management, negotiation, individual characteristics |
| Innovation | Individual characteristics, leadership, and organizational change and innovation |
| Diversity | Diversity, learning, organizational culture |
| Ethics | Corporate social responsibility and ethics, organizational culture, decision making, leadership |
| Learning | Learning, individual characteristics, perception, motivation |
| Health and wellness choices | Stress, motivation, individual characteristics |

1. Describe the types of contemporary organizations and give some examples of each type.

Answer:

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|  **Type of Contemporary Organization** | **Description** | **Example** |
| Community of practice | Group of people who share an interest in a topic and interact together on the topic | Associations, international development, education |
| Hybrid | Form of organization that combines two or more forms. May consist of a team structure embedded in a formal hierarchical structure. | Technology firm, some corporations |
| Network | An organization with a shared responsibility, equal status among members, and shaped more by the activities of its members than by its hierarchy | Technology firms, craft organizations |
| Bureaucratic | An organization with specialized roles, and a command and control structure with formal hierarchy | U.S. government agency, armed forces, some corporations |
| Professional | A public or private organization that consists of people with strong professional norms and similar professions | Healthcare, law, and higher education |
| Representative democratic | An organization based on the principles of employee autonomy, participation, and even profit-sharing or shared ownership | Credit unions, food-coop |

1. What is an organization?

Answer: An organization is where people interact and coordinate in order to achieve a purpose.

1. Organizations share one attribute – what is it?

Answer: All organizations share one attribute: organizations require people interacting with one another.

1. What are four dynamic organizational processes that shed light on life in contemporary organizations?

Answer: There are four dynamic organizational processes that shed light on life in contemporary organizations. **Individual processes** describe individual differences in characteristics, learning, and perception. **Leading and leadership processes** describe the factors that impact differences in leadership, motivation, persuasion, influence, impression management, and decision making. **Interpersonal processes**refer to the pattern of interactions among individuals that includes groups and teams, negotiation, and communication and diversity.

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**Expert Contribution on *Challenges of Leadership: The Relevance of Organizational Behavior***

**David L. Bradford (Stanford University)**

Leadership means dealing with an increasingly complex, uncertain world that is making more and more personal demands on those who want to manage. Furthermore, there can be no book, no four- or two-year program that can predict all the future challenges. As we have stressed, learning has to be continuous throughout a person’s career. The mental models must change as one progresses in an organization or moves to a new field. This demands new competencies and flexibility to fit one’s style into different situations. This includes a willingness to see experiences as potential learning opportunities. It demands the ability for self-reflection and openness to feedback. Organizational behavior can provide the framework for that rich learning.

1. Explain what is changing in the world that leaders face today?

Answer: Increasing globalization means organizations are faced with new competitors, new markets, and more stringent government regulations.

Disruptive technologies can destroy industries almost overnight; for example, the video distribution business. Cell phones now replace banks as a way to transfer money within Africa or allow farmers in India to check market prices—freeing them up from the tyranny of middlemen buyers.

The increasing interdependence of the world’s economic systems means that an event in one place impacts others in distant places. A tsunami in Japan disrupts auto production in the United States and Europe. A popular rebellion in northern Africa spikes oil prices. Bankruptcy in Italy could destroy the Euro and cause a worldwide recession

Knowledge is becoming obsolete at an astonishing rate. Half of the “facts” that engineering undergraduates learn in their first year will be outdated by the time they graduate.

1. How can contemporary leaders, who can’t have all the answers but who are still held accountable for results, still be open to others’ ideas without totally giving way to them?

Answer: A clear vision and specific strategic and business plans can serve as partial guidelines, but there are still many decisions on *how* to implements those plans. In exploring the assumptions behind one’s mental models and seeing the effect of one’s behavior, it is possible to gain clarity as to the values behind one’s intentions and actions. That clarity on personal values can serve as an important foundation when faced with multiple options and different pressures. This provides a consistency without rigidity, since the same value can be expressed in different ways in different situations.

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**Expert Contribution on *How Companies Keep on Winning: A System for Developing Global Leaders***

**Robert Fulmer (Duke Corporate Education)**

Key research, along with other studies, have shown a high degree of innovation designed to address strategic challenges in developing high-performing leaders. There are increased levels of competition and pressure for change, along with new demographic and generational differences. The best companies practice “innovative imitation" to gain competitive advantage from their business and leadership development activities by consistently using strategic, systemic coordination to develop their high potential global leaders. In this reading an overview of key insights about how the leading global firms go about developing their potential leaders is discussed. Both a backdrop from previous research on the subject and an overview of key findings about emerging, innovative best practices from leading firms are outlined.

1. Why do high-performing firms tie leadership development closely to their business strategies?

 Answer: High-performing firms engage in leadership training and development because they believe such practices are a part of their long-term strategies for success.

1. What is the first step to linking leadership development to a firm’s strategic vision?

Answer: The first step is to develop an awareness of leadership development programs used by other firms.

1. Why do firms utilize the expertise of the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC)?

Answer: APQC maintains the world’s largest database of benchmarks for real-time performance metrics. APQC can provide instant benchmarks to help firms determine where their organization stands in terms of leadership performance, as well as online tools that compare the company’s own data with that provided by peers. In an effort to make best practices widely available, they have sponsored a variety of best practice studies.