

Learning on the job and Facilitating Learning

Case duration (Min): **45-60**

Organizational Behaviour (OB)

Organizational Learning

Knowledge management

Worldwide

Case summary:

Managers must learn continually and develop their skills to cope with the changing and growing demands of the market place. This case study considers mentoring as a means to transfer knowledge and develop employees.

Learning objectives:

Apply learning to self-development and the development of others.

Case problem:

How are managers to learn and acquire the skills necessary for them to be effective managers?

First, if you are taking a taught management course then consult with your tutor and ensure that the case has not been scheduled into a teaching class or tutorial. If it has not:

1. Play/ read the media associated with the case. You may need to access the Internet and enter a URL to locate any video clips.
2. Attempt the Case study questions.

Consider attempting the case study as a group exercise; you could form a study group with fellow students.

3. Check the suggested answers - remember these are suggestions only and there are often many possible answers.

Discuss questions and answers with other students.

4. If you feel your answer(s) were weak then consider reading the relevant suggested readings again (also see the case study suggested references).

Title/ Media type

URL/ Media description

JB Allred States Importance of
Continuous Learning :

<http://eclips.cornell.edu/themes.do?id=98&clipID=8351&tab=TabClipPage>

Film

Well, it does enhance the value of your employees when people want to work. For at least the kind of people I hire, they want to work, they want to be responsible, they want someone to trust them, they want to be valued, and they want to learn. So, there are a lot of things that we do. First of all, everybody that works in our company including myself are still going to school -- not formally but we're still learning, and there's quite a bit of education that goes on. We bring in new materials, we're always training our workers, we're cross-training our workers. As a matter of fact, we often refer to our company as a Dojo which is Japanese for school. As a matter of fact, I'm number one Sensei and I have another guy that's number two Sensei and we actually use those titles on occasion, because a lot of what we do is about craftsmanship. So, I think people enjoy working in that kind of environment where they think that they're special, where they think that they're growing and they feel like they're learning. We do other things too like in our factory if we go 30 days without an error, everybody gets a 10% bonus, everybody on the production floor, and we don't break into the departments. So, everybody has to work together. The nice thing about that is with that financial incentive it really encourages people. If somebody else is making a mistake, it encourages the worker to help the other guy. And when they make it, they all feel really good, and it isn't about the money, it's about what they want, it's about that they succeed in that. That's a tough challenge because we make very hard parts, very difficult parts, but they've made it quite a few times. Another thing that we do in our company is that system, that 10% bonus is a trust system. In other words somebody could make a bad part and not tell me but I trust everybody. What is important is the fact that they've gone 30 days and forgo their reward through sheer honesty, they've also gone 29 days and admitted to me that they made a mistake, which is actually a great sign of integrity, because that's very tempting, and I'm just as impressed with that. So, we have very good morale in our company, people for the most part are pretty well motivated. I know everybody by name, we're all friends, we all work together, and by the way we also work very hard. It's not a lot of room, a company our size and the type of work we do, not a lot of room to kick back and relax.

Film

John Metz Discusses Leaving Consulting and Learning Business Skills From a Talented Mentor.

Then, the next interesting thing I did in my life, I was getting a little bored being a consultant. You get a little tired telling people how to do things and not actually doing them. So, it was one of those things -- it's another funny story. I was reading the Wall Street Journal, I saw an ad for a hotel company called Royce Hotels. They were looking for a Director of Development, which is the real estate guy for a hotel company. Well, I knew who owned Royce Hotels, it was owned by Servico. They were based in West Palm Beach, Florida, and I decided that basically this is the job for me. So, instead of just writing and sending them my resume, I basically put all of the work I'd done at Peat Marwick. I had done a lot of work on suite hotels and different types of hotels and I put it all into a federal express package along with my resume, federal expressed it down and then I proceeded to call them and say Hey, I'm going to be in West Palm Beach on Monday, I'd like to come in and see you. They didn't really know what to make of it. They really wouldn't give me an answer. I just said, I'm going to be in your offices on Monday and I would like to see somebody. And the long and short is I went to their offices on Monday and they saw me and they hired me and I was very fortunate because it was a great job. I got out of consulting and I got into real estate development and real estate acquisitions and dispositions, but then another funny thing happened to me. After I got this great job and I had this great Cornell education now and I had been a consultant for 3 years, now all of a sudden I got a desk and a secretary and I've got to start making acquisitions and developments and I have no clue how to do that, none. I mean here I'm in charge of literally tens of millions of dollars of acquisitions, and I didn't have a clue on how to go about making acquisitions. I had done projects and analyzed big projects, big hotels, big real estate developments, I've analyzed everything. It would take me weeks to analyze a big project. I got to Servico and my desk was full of stacks of potential acquisitions and I went How can I possibly analyze all of these acquisitions and do them justice. So, I had to go to my boss and I had to tell him, I basically told him, I have no idea how to do this. So, the good news is that he said, Fine, and he actually took me under his wing and he actually became my mentor and he taught me everything he knew. He taught me how to structure deals, he taught me what to look for in what was a good deal or a bad deal and just the whole 9 yards of what makes a good real estate development, what makes a good acquisition and how you sell properties. So, he literally gave me on-the-job training and he had been in the business for literally 40 years and it is one of the best things that ever happened to me again because I had a mentor that, he not only cared about, he wanted to teach me right because he owned --it was a public company, but he and his family owned over 50% of the company.

NOTES:

Case study questions...

Action		Pre/During/After class
1	MEANING AND BENEFITS OF LEARNING : Briefly discuss the meaning of learning and then brainstorm the benefits for individuals and organisations.	During
2	ORGANISATIONS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING : In the previous question you identified significant benefits associated with learning for both individuals and organisations. How then can organisations achieve these benefits (outcomes)?	During
3	FACILITATING LEARNING : Two important methods of management development include mentoring and coaching-explain the meaning of these two terms, discussing both how they differ and are similar. You should also comment on factors influencing the learning process i.e. what will make mentoring work?	During
4	BENEFITS OF MENTORING Discuss the benefits of mentoring from the perspective of the mentor and the mentored; you should comment on knowledge management, developing talent and competitive advantage.	During
5	MENTORING AND IN THE LEARNING PROCESS (EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING) With reference Kolb's experiential learning cycle, discuss how the mental may help with each of the four phases/activities	During

Answers...

MENTORING

Individual–individual support in an organization providing guidance on career development, learning and performance.

MENTORS

Those assigned the task of supporting others by providing advice and assistance to help in their personal and career development.

LEARNING

the development of knowledge

LEARNING

Changes in a person's behaviour caused by information and experience

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

includes the movement of knowledge from its point of generation or codified form to the point of use

Question/ Answer

1 MEANING AND BENEFITS OF LEARNING :

Briefly discuss the meaning of learning and then brainstorm the benefits for individuals and organisations.

Learning is about change, it is a process that may be addressed formally or incidentally through experience; the development of knowledge - Changes in a person's behaviour caused by information and experience.

Benefits for individuals include the development and attainment of potential and the ability to meet the demands of change; organisational benefits include increasing everyone's capacity to contribute to the success of the organisation and enabling the organisation to be more effective in meeting its goals.

2 ORGANISATIONS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING :

In the previous question you identified significant benefits associated with learning for both individuals and organisations. How then can organisations achieve these benefits (outcomes)?

Learning occurs in many ways. Many answers are possible here such as training and development, education, exposing employees to development opportunities (problems) and new experiences, computer-based training, conditioning employees or enabling knowledge transfer (facilitating learning) to employees through mentoring, apprenticeships, tutoring, participation, pupillage etc aside from direct answers such as those given in the previous sentences, students may also discuss the role of organisations in creating a climate that facilitates learning.

3 FACILITATING LEARNING :

Two important methods of management development include mentoring and coaching-explain the meaning of these two terms, discussing both how they differ and are similar. You should also comment on factors influencing the learning process i.e. what will make mentoring work?

A coach is not an expert but somebody who helps others get the most from themselves; a mentor is like a coach (supportive and challenging) but typically an expert able to offer advice, guidance and knowledge. Respect for the mentor's knowledge is essential in the relationship.

Success in the mentoring relationship depends on openness and trust; the employee recognising the mentor as an expert and wanting to learn.

4 BENEFITS OF MENTORING

Discuss the benefits of mentoring from the perspective of the mentor and the mentored; you should comment on knowledge management, developing talent and competitive advantage.

Under the resource (knowledge) based view of strategy and the organisation, knowledge is seen as a source of sustainable competitive advantage because it is intangible, rare, difficult to see and imitate. Knowledge (particularly tacit) can leak from the company and therefore needs to be transferred between relevant employees. The mentoring process enables such knowledge transfer. The process motivates both parties and develops talented employees (home-grown).

5 MENTORING AND IN THE LEARNING PROCESS (EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING)

With reference Kolb's experiential learning cycle, discuss how the mentor may help with each of the four phases/activities

The mentor (often a leader) can open doors within the organisation and arrange learning experiences for the person being mentored. The mentor can then help the employee (Protégé) make sense of the experience through reflection. They can also explore other possible explanations for the experience and different ways a problem could have been managed. Similarly, a mentor could prepare an employee for an experience by discussing the problem situation and possible solutions in advance.

Case study references

Cole, G A. and Kelly, P P. (2011) 'Management Theory and Practice', Ed. 7. Cengage EMEA.

Knights, D. and Willmott, H. (2007) 'Introducing Organisational Behaviour and Management', Cengage Learning EMEA.

Nelson, D L. and Quick, J C. (2009) 'ORGB', Ed. 1. South Western.

