

## **The Rise of Human Resources Principles in the Classroom** ***A Selection of HR Activities for Business Teachers***

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### **Myers-Briggs Assessment BMA-HRP 2**

This assessment is available online (free) at [www.humanmetrics.com](http://www.humanmetrics.com) to take the test & then use [www.personalitypages.com](http://www.personalitypages.com) for interpretation & application of the typology information. The assessment can be utilized for a better “get to know classmates” at the beginning of the year, Increased Self-awareness for students, Group/Teamwork, Valuing Differences, Better Communication Skills, & Career Choices. Students should record their ‘type’ & characteristics of the ‘type’ in their notebook for reference. One activity I have used is the “M & M”: I choose one group (3-4 students) of a similar type & one group (3-4) of a very different type & place them at different ends of the classroom. I then place a handful of M & Ms in front of them and ask the group to write on easel sheet what they see. The rest of the class serves as observers; what typically will happen is where you have a very high extrovert/social group they will have a small party while they do the assignment and if you have a very serious group who are detailed & factual, they will record precise information of exactly how many they have of each color, etc. This allows students to see the types at work. Another activity would be to have both groups write directions to a destination. When you debrief, you emphasize that all types have strengths as well as the importance of having a variety of types on a project team or workforce because you gain different perspectives and stronger outcomes of the work. This is one of the most important aspects of diversity and also conflict management. As you go thru the year, you can refer back to typology and build it in to any of the lessons listed above. HR Managers frequently conduct icebreaker sessions like these to help employees connect and build team spirit.

### **Student Handbooks & New Employee Orientation Manual BMA-HRP 5**

This activity could begin with a scavenger hunt of information in the student handbook. Next, a class discussion could follow to discuss the purpose of the information in the student handbook. What happens if those in charge do not consistently enforce rules/procedures? (If exceptions are made by Teachers or Administrators to class rules, school procedures, the Policy/rule is weakened, students or parents may complain, perception of unfairness, liability could increase.) This would provide linkage to Employee Manuals and company policies and the purpose for them. Sample company manuals could be reviewed with the students. Students could then work in groups of 3-4 to write a New Employee Checklist of most important items to include first day and first week. An HR Manager may provide induction and orientation training where employees get to know the work culture of the company. The key HR issues linked here are productivity, employee morale, Employer expectations, and reduced employee turnover.

### **Motivation & Performance Appraisal BMA-HRP 2, 5, 7 & 9**

This project involves use of the book *Fish!* by Stephen Lundin, Harry Paul, and John Christensen. Your school media center may have a copy, or your local library. You can also purchase used copies on Amazon or find in a local book stores for about \$3-4. Since most HR classes are small, only about 10-12 students, the cost would be minimal. Students read the book over a period of one week or so (100 pages) while also completing activities on leadership styles, mission/vision statements, employee motivation, & organizing and planning. The book is a quick read and provides a story that addresses some of today’s most pressing work & management issues. As the students read along, they follow a fictitious manager as she uncovers problems in the organization & figures out how to solve them. In the story, this manager gets guidance from an employee at the Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle (a real business). After the students read the story, they will then conduct an Organizational Analysis of the key managerial functions, more like an HR Manager would. For example, what actions did the Manager take that helped (or hurt) employee morale?

HR Managers are responsible for implementing Performance Appraisal systems and employee and manager work performance is constantly monitored. Also, assessing Employee satisfaction & feedback is an important function.

# Case Study 1

## Coping with Stress at U. S. Customs

Growing numbers of air and sea passengers and expanding amounts of cargo, along with illegal smuggling and drug-trafficking, have brought added pressure to the job of U. S. Custom employees. Coupled with these stressors is the added pressure of an expanding workforce that is more diverse and less well trained. Work-weeks sometimes average eleven hours a day for six days, increasing the number and intensity of personal stressors such as child care issues and personal time.

Heightening these problems is the fact that roughly one-half of U. S. Custom employees also serve as law enforcement officials. These persons face the pressures of life and death situations, shift work, exposure to society's worst social illnesses, frustration dealing with bureaucratic judicial system, some periods of boredom followed by adrenaline-pumping activities. Another common complaint of employees is that their managers lack good supervisory skills. Employees describe the work environment as one of criticism, negative feedback, and with emphasis on mistakes while good performers are taken for granted and go unrewarded.

During stress management training classes, the Custom employees identified five factors as the major causes of their workplace stress:

Supervisory pressures

Deadlines/time pressures on paperwork

Boredom/meaningless work

Frustration with co-workers

Working conditions

*Working as a part of the H R team, discuss and list ways that each of the stressors mentioned above might be reduced or eliminated by the employee and employer. Each group should have a recorder & a spokesperson to share your information with the class.*

## Case Study 2

### Small Companies Need Diversity Too

When John Chuang started MacTemps, a global temporary staffing firm in 2007, he thought that if he hired strictly according to merit without regard to race, age, and gender, he would get a diverse and balanced workforce without imposing rules or guidelines. As a small company, MacTemps wasn't closely scrutinized by the EEOC or the OFCCP. And as an Asian himself, Chuang did not like the idea of affirmative action because it allowed people to typecast him. As he said, "Did I get into Harvard solely because I was a minority?" He felt as though his success was due to his hard work, not his ethnic background. He was certain that hiring talented people—regardless of race, gender, and the like—was the best approach.

After eight years of frenzied growth, MacTemps had \$50 million in revenue and had made the *Inc.* 500 list twice. Chuang thought his 'meritocracy' staffing plan was working quite well. Then, a *New York Times* reporter brought to his attention that MacTemps had all white males at the top level of the company with females in lower positions.

Most start-up companies initially depend heavily on personal relationships. So entrepreneurs often hire friends and Chuang was no different. As he said, "When you are in the middle of launching your business, you are not thinking about diversity for the future, you're thinking about getting sales, and you count on people you know." The pitfall of hiring friends is that they often tend to be like you.

As a HR consultant to Chuang, what changes would you recommend he make in his hiring strategy? Should he establish a practice of hiring or promoting well-qualified individuals or given the choice must they always be the most qualified? How could he provide development for females in the company who may have the potential to be promoted? How could diversifying his management team lead to even greater success for his company?

## **Additional Resources:**

**Seattle Pike Place Fish Market (u-tube)**

**Career O'Net Online**

**Occupational Outlook Handbook**

**Society for Human Resource Management**

**American Society for Training & Development**

**Training and Development Handbook by Robert Craig**

**The Management of Human Resources by David Cherrington**

**Gifts Differing by Isabel Briggs Myers**

**Type Talk at Work by Otto Kroeger**

**See Case Studies**