

Exercise:
Using Shakespeare
to *Explain* Management Factors
and *Predict* Management Outcomes

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Course: MGT 458
Title: Decision Making and Creativity (3 units)

“Those of us who study and conduct research on organizational and managerial phenomenon need to have our thinking stimulated and deepened by writers of fiction who are insightful observers and interpreters of everyday life.”

--Lyman Porter (*Professor Emeritus, UC Irvine*)

Goal

The purpose of this exercise is help students understand how to link excerpted text from a Shakespearean play or sonnet to a topic of importance for management in general, or for decision-making or creativity, specifically. Or, how do we learn to improve our management skills, knowledge, and abilities from texts written as plays more than 400 years ago?

Application

In general, there are two key dimensions to using Shakespeare in this course: the *level* of analysis and the *domain* of analysis. The level of analysis is one of *macro*- (“highest”), the *meso*- (“middle”), or the *micro*- (“lowest”). The domain of analysis is the topical area of interest relevant to class or your professional/organizational context.

Subsequent sections of this document are organized according to *level*. Analytical domains are expanded upon as needed.

Part I. Management Factors and Outcomes from *Themes* (“macro-level”)

As with all great literature, themes arise both within a text and among texts. Our task here is to reason by analogy from the key themes in figurative literature to the critical issues of organizational life. Since each team will have read one play, it is the themes that arise from a single play that primarily matter. After the class has heard all of the presentations, additional themes may emerge. The best themes emerge when students link ideas from multiple courses.

The “argument for” means that the reasoning analogy is relatively strong; that is, it is similar. Since the analogy is strong, there should be at least one theory, model, or framework that supports that reason. The “argument against” means that the analogy is relatively weak; that is, it is distinctive enough in one or more ways.

#	Common Shakespeare Theme	Recurring Business or Management Issue (i.e., the “argument for”)	Explanatory or Predictive Management Theory, Model, Framework (i.e., supports the “argument for”)	Counter-argument (i.e., the “argument against”)
1	War	Competition	Strategy	Sometimes rather, it’s cooperation that builds synergies.
2	Suicide	Self-destruction		A physical death and a <i>career misstep</i> may not be the same thing.
3	Deception			
4	Family			
5	Plots			
6	Time			
7	Fate/Fortune	Chance	Probability Theory	We “control” for this.
8	Ambition			
9	Gender			
10	Evil	(same)	Deontology	(none)
11	Language			
12	Hubris	Empathy	Emotional Intelligence	
13	Money			
14	Freedom	Free-will	Agency Theory	An employee has freedom, but freedom to achieve organizational goals (not only individual goals).
15	Honor/Honesty	Ethics	Nicomachean “Virtues”	More virtues, less vices
16	Humility	Leadership	“Servant” Leadership	
17	Reputation	Branding	Comparative Advantage	
18	Indecision	Status-quo		

Part II. Management Factors and Outcomes from *Scenes, Speeches, and Soliloquies* (“meso-level”)

The purpose of this exercise is help students understand how to link text in a Shakespeare play to a topic of importance to a student of management. The following excerpt is from Henry V, Act, Scene 1, lines 1-2, 17-23, and 29-34 (New Penguin Shakespeare, 1977).

By way of many empirical studies, leadership is arguably the most valuable activity of management. As a component of leadership, it is important to understand the nuances of motivation, particularly how “followers” will feel, think, and act in the context of a large, diverse, complex organization.

Original text in Early Modern English

(context) (King) Henry V is giving a speech to motivate his troops in a long-suffering battle against the French in northern France.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead...
On, on, you noblest English,
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof?

Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
Have in these parts from morn till even fought
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument;
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest

That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you...
For there is none of you so mean and base;
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes,
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,

Straining upon the start. The game's afoot;
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge
Cry, “God for Harry, England, and Saint George!”

From Early Modern English (Elizabethan/Jacobean) to Modern (Contemporary) English

“breach” means “front lines”
“fet” means “fetch”
“war-proof” means “prior victories”
“beget” means “created”

A Contemporary, Business Speech Interspersed with the Original Text

(context) You (future manager or executive) are giving a presentation to motivate your staff to increase sales in the face of global, free-market competition.

Again, colleagues and friends, we need to face our competitors head on;
Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;

Or else we may be forced to eventually file Chapter 11 bankruptcy
Or close the wall up with our English dead...

Although we are deeply motivated, we need to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity,
On, on, you noblest English,

Didn't our cherished founders create this company in earnest and show us the way?
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof?

Our talented and efficacious industry leaders, such as Jack Welch and Steve Jobs,
Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,

Who persevere, and develop new products and services 24/7
Have in these parts from morn till even fought

And didn't even have to fight all the time because everyone knew their work was the best;
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument;

And exclaim loudly that you won't disappoint all of the families that depend of your effort
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest

Because they and the founders are, from heaven, watching and helping you even now
That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you...

I know that none of our employees dislike everyone else and is so self-centered
For there is none of you so mean and base;

So as to prevent you from seeing the value in crafting deserved, righteous success in this economy
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes,

I see my employees full of new ideas that are just waiting to be released and developed further
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,

I see it in all my discussions with you—emails, the “suggestion box”, and small-group, quality circles.
The level of competition in this industry is high;
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot;

Develop your ideas into new sales with new customers for new products
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge

And be successful not just for me, but for a vaulted employee, our company, and your country.
Cry, “God for Harry, England, and Saint George!”

Part III. Management Factors and Outcomes from *Quotes* (“micro-level”)

Quotes can be useful as both tools of motivational tools and tools of learning. One down-side to the use of quotes (from any writing, not just literature) is that the quotes are taken out of context. One of your tasks then, is to apply specific quotes only to the most relevant organizational contexts or situations. This, too, is a reasoning-by-analogy task.

Organizational Examples

Business-oriented references should, in general, refer to the main courses in the COBAE lower- and upper-division core—*accounting, economics, and finance, marketing, statistics and operations, and law.*

Management-oriented references should, in general, refer to the four main activities of management that you learned in MGT 360—*planning, leading, organizing, and controlling.*

Decision-making- or Creativity-oriented references should, in general, refer to one or more ideas taken from any part of our course.

#	Citation	Original Text	Organizational Context (Business, Management, Decision-making, or Creativity)	Organizational Meaning or Value
1	Antony and Cleopatra Act IV, Scene iii.	"To business that we love we rise betime, And go to't with delight."	Business-Specialization	Choosing a Profession/Delivering Value
2	Much Ado About Nothing Act II, Scene i.	"Let every eye negotiate for itself And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch Against whose charms faith melteth in blood."	Management-Communication	How to Structure a Negotiation
3	Julius Caesar Act IV, Scene iii.	"There is a tide in the affairs of men. Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries.	Management-	Seizing Opportunities

		On such a full sea are we now afloat, And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures."		
4	Richard II Act I, Scene i.	"My dear dear lord, The purest treasure mortal times afford Is spotless reputation—that away, Men are but gilded loam, or painted clay."	Business	Corporate Social Responsibility
5	Othello Act I, Scene i.	"I follow him to serve my turn upon him."	Management	Leadership/Succession Planning
6	Macbeth Act V, Scene iv.	"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow; creeps in this petty pace from day to day."	Management	Time Management
7	Twelfth Night Act I, Scene V.	"Better a witty fool, than a foolish wit."	Decision-making	Incorrect Reasoning/Logical Fallacies

Synthetic Examples

Some quotes are useful because analysis at one level in one dimension may conflict with an analysis at another level or with another dimension. In other words, we need to use broad *synthesis* of multiple perspectives, not just discrete *analysis* of a single, monolithic idea. Avoiding such conflict in an public- or private-sector organization will likely to be toxic to the organizational over time. It is management's task to be proactive and anticipate such persistent (and pernicious) conflicts. The following is an example of one such conflict.

#	Citation	Original Text	Organizational Context (Business, Management, Decision-making, or Creativity)	Organizational Meaning or Value
1	Hamlet Act I, Scene iii.	"Neither a borrower nor a lender be, For loan oft loses	Business	Debt (and similar <i>fiscal capital</i> obligations) —e.g.,

		both itself and friend, And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."		managers must make investments to strengthen production
2	(ibid)	(ibid)	Management	Persistent Conflict (and similar human capital obligations)—e.g., managers must share professionals occasionally to strengthen production

Transformative Examples

Some quotes are useful to the extent that direct substitution of *subject*, *verb*, or *object* in the sentence from the original text in the original context to the contemporary text in a modern context may be highly appropriate (and therefore persuasive). The following is an example of how we might understand management decision-making in an organizational context simply by transforming a single, excerpted quote.

#	Citation	Original Text	Context	Meaning
1	Julius Caesar Act II, Scene ii.	"Cowards die many times before their deaths, The valiant never taste of death but once."	Entrepreneurship, or risk-seeking activities	"Cowards"= extremely risk- averse individuals "Die"=cannot reap rewards "Deaths"=lack of job promotion or career growth

Sources

Some of the *themes* for this exercise were taken (broadly) from the following text:

Gerber, M. (2008), *Shakespeare and Modern Culture*, New York: Pantheon Books.

The speech from King Henry V was inspired by, and adapted from, an idea presented in the following book:

Corrigan, P. (1999), *Shakespeare on Management: Leadership Lessons for Today's Managers*, Kogan-Page.

Some of the *quotes* for this exercise were taken from the following text:

Bartlett, J., Kaplan, J. (contributor) (2005), *Bartlett's Shakespeare Quotations*, New York: Little, Brown, and Company.