Exercise:
Management Skills Comprehensive—"Gen Z Workforce"
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Course: *MGT 360BH*
Title: Principles of Management and Org. Behavior (Honors) (3 units)

"A manager is responsible for the application and performance of knowledge."
---Peter Drucker (1909-2005)

"Making good decisions is a crucial skill at every level."
---Peter Drucker (1909-2005)

Goal:
Professional life is mostly orderly and occasionally chaotic. *Management* life, on the other hand, is mostly chaotic, and if you are a successful manager, occasionally orderly. Most professionals try to be in their "comfort zone"; managers can't even remember what a "comfort zone" looked like back when they were a professional.

I want you to practice using theories, models, and frameworks from this class. Additionally, I want you to practice them with a real world situation.

This is an individual project; it is one deliverable per person.

Read the following Wall Street Journal articles:

(article 1)
Chaker, A. (2024, Mar 11). The New Workplace (A Special Report) --- What It's Like to Work for a Gen Z Boss (It's Different). *Wall Street Journal*.

(article 2)
Hall, J. (2024, Mar 11). The New Workplace (A Special Report) --- What Gen Z Will Lose if They Don't Have Friendships at Work. *Wall Street Journal*.

(remember—just as you did when finding the Library articles—to put double quotes around the title when searching with it in the ProQuest database)

These articles are all related to issues surrounding Generation Z ("Gen Z"). These individuals were born approximately from 1997 to 2012. This is the generation that are or soon will be the primary managers in most organizations. Each "Generation" brings its own set of values, norms, expectations, and work habits to the office. Organizations of all kinds should be expected to adapt to this new reality. Gen Z brings different skills, knowledge, and abilities to the organization both as

professionals, and more important, as managers. Some new, improved practices might emerge as Gen Z get promoted into management, but also, some traditional managerial practices might remain as timeless. As you might guess, there are many opportunities and many challenges.

What makes these articles so interesting is that many of the issues discussed require substantive action on the part of many individuals at all levels of the organization. Consequently, these individuals need some or all of the skills from our MGT 360BH course. Put differently, Management Skill Development applies to *all individuals in all organizational contexts*. We don't have to know the technical detail of each industry, firm, product, or service line; the principles learned in our course generalize widely. However, many individuals, especially managers, can benefit from our specific help because providing management skill assistance is our field, and we have education and experience in that field.

Objective:
Assume that you are the Director of Organizational Development. You report directly to the Vice-President of Human Resources at a large, Fortune 500 firm. You are in charge of all training, development, and related onboarding activities for the firm. You have been intimately involved in the design and implementation of the various training initiatives that your firm's professionals, managers, and executives have adopted over the past several years. You know that Gen Z is different. One of the challenges will be determining which of the Gen Z ideas are important and new. Of course, some priorities might not change, and sometimes, new ideas are really old ideas with new names. Probably the biggest opportunities and challenges lay with the firm's managers: they have the basic skills to succeed, of course, but you want to help them know to leverage/adapt existing skills, knowledge, and abilities and learn/apply new skills, knowledge, and abilities across multiple generations. You know that your analysis will not just be read by your immediate supervisor, but also by other senior executives at your firm.

Your task is to relate these articles to what you have learned in this class. You do this by linking each major element from an article below to one or more ideas using the best (most applicable) theory, model, or framework from our course textbook. Just to be clear: a theory, model, or framework *explains* (what has happened in the past) or *predicts* (what is likely to happen in the future). An educated person uses appropriate theory to persuade and influence. Of course, to strengthen your argument and to support your use of textbook theory, you also use a strong, appropriate analogy from a non-textbook course (Library) reading or other class materials as well.

The following are major elements from each of the articles. To make it simple, just use a single paragraph (e.g., four to seven sentences or so) to answer each of the following questions. Additionally, just label each paragraph with the relevant question number, such as "Q1". And remember to use theory from the textbook and an analogy from a Library article.

(article 1) "We talk more than most places about how to prevent burnout", says [Nadya Okamoto, 26]. "One of the things I've learned the most is to slow down….while I may be fast moving [myself], I appreciate a team around me to slow down."

Q1.   Which management skill is the Gen Z manager demonstrating with this evidence from the article?

(article 1) "Research shows that Gen Z workers can be challenging to work alongside. [One survey suggests Gen Z are] lacking skills as well as motivation. [However,] what older workers see as workplace liabilities, others see as signs of potential leadership strengths. 'It's not that they don't want to work…they just don't want to work for people who treat them the way that we [Gen Z] were treated when we [Gen Z] were growing up.'"

Q2.   Take a side (or write on both sides) on this debate. That is, which management skill or skills will Gen Z need to learn to be successful in the workplace (assuming the first two sentences have merit), or alternatively, which management skill or skills do Gen Z bring to the table that are important and different than managers of other Generations (assuming the second two sentences have merit)"?

(article 1) "Work and personal lives move fluidly from one to the other. 'The idea of your authentic self and your professional self as two separate things is three or four generations off.' [Erin Burk, VP, 30's millennial"]. [Ms. Burk continues] 'You know what? You can bust your ass all day and be emotionally available. What's the harm in that?"

Q3.   Taking those statements as factual, which *new* management skill is Ms. Burk suggesting that Gen Z is <u>bringing</u> to the contemporary workplace?

Q4.   With such a change of perspective and action, which *traditional* management skill is this new management skill <u>replacing</u> in the contemporary workplace?

(article 1) "According to a report published last year by Deloitte, Gen Z workers consider "empathy" the second most important trait in a boss; their managers, on the other hand, rank it a distant fifth. (The No. 1 value for Gen Z: patience.)"

Q5.   Why is Gen Z indicating that "patience" is the number 1 value? Which management skill will managers (Gen Z or others) need to reflect and leverage that "patience" value?

Q6.   Why is Gen Z indicating that "empathy" is the number 2 value? Which management skill will managers (Gen Z or others) need to reflect and leverage that "empathy" value?

(article 1) "[Taylor Fulton-Girgis, a 25-year old marketing manager] has learned that managing different individuals means understanding their unique work styles and ways of communicating – and to try to meet them where they are, she says, rather than making them follow her own standard. You have to make time for individuals and learn different personalities.""

Q7.   Which management skill or skills is Ms. Fulton-Girgis displaying at work?

(article 2) "The rise of remote work has upended [where we make friends]: the less time we are in the office, the less time we have to form and cement the bonds of friendship. Removing the social aspect of work further encourages remote workers to keep their jobs at arm's length."

Q8.   Argue in favor or against the author's thesis. In your response, refer to at least one management skill."

(article 2) "Having a close friend at work has well-established benefits for both careers and well-being. Working people are less lonely and socially isolated than those who aren't working. At the same time, close friendships—wherever they form—boost happiness and life satisfaction. Around the office, workplace friends are advocates, mentors, and confidants—a second set of eyes and ears. A friend at work is a source of support."

Q9.   Argue in favor or against the author's thesis. In your response, refer to at least one management skill."

(article 2) "For many young workers, office friendships aren't even part of the job equation. One 24-year old worker…said that she prefers remote work and has no interest in getting a job that's in the office, although she have never really done it. The idea of socializing with work colleagues seems foreign to her—even though she admits to being lonely."

Q10.   Argue in favor or against the author's thesis. In your response, refer to at least one management skill."

(article 2) "…remote workers, especially those new to the job, aren't thinking about work all the time because they aren't hanging out with people from work either during the day or after hours. Their work-life balance entails two separate social worlds—work and life."

Q11.   Argue in favor or against the author's thesis. In your response, refer to at least one management skill."

Length:
For this exercise, I'm relatively indifferent to page length. Just write one (or two, if you prefer) paragraph for each question (double-spaced). You can probably get not much more than two paragraphs on a page. Other relevant formatting requirements ("style guide") are linked from the course web page. Recall also that for all written assignments in this course, 10% is deducted from the content score for each type of error in language use.

Performance Measurement:
The maximum number of points for content on this exercise is 10 (engagement and commitment points).