MGT/P/B 224

Managing People in Modern Organizations

Course Overview, Readings, Requirements, and Schedule

Course Overview

In the course of your career you will need to make decisions regarding how to manage, compensate, and motivate people. These are not trivial decisions; they have distinct consequences that can affect the success of your organization. As many managers and organizations now realize, effectively managing an organization’s human assets can serve as a key source of competitive advantage. As such, decisions about managing people must be carefully thought out with regard to the organization’s strategy, environment, and goals.

In MGT/P/B 224, we will explore the different choices firm make in governing and managing their workers—decisions as to wages, benefits, working conditions, ways of organizing work, and other management policies and practices. We will analyze employment systems’ fit with firms’ environments and strategies, and the consequences of policies and practices under different systems. The general goal is to enable you to think both strategically and systematically about managing an organization’s human assets.

This course is divided into three main sections. In the first, we consider the importance of alignment: the alignment of human resource practices with a firm’s external environment and strategy, and aligning human resource practices so they are internally consistent. In the second, we examine several key human resource practices and their relationship to developing an effective organization. And in the third, we focuses on a set of issues that are particularly relevant to today’s workforce and rapidly changing organizations.

Required Readings   Course packet

There is no textbook for the course. The readings are drawn from a number of sources. They include some academic articles, excerpts from longer works, cases, and short articles from the popular and business presses. Some additional materials may be distributed as the course progresses.

Course Requirements and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Individual Briefing Reports</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Your grade will be based on

(1) A group project analyzing the employment systems and management practices of 2 organizations of your choice. The project will consist of a paper (12 pages max., double-spaced) as well as a group presentation on the final day of class. It is due Session 10 and the paper and presentation together are worth 40% of your grade. More details will be given on the project as the quarter gets underway.

(2) Two individual briefing reports, which are together worth 25% of your grade. Briefing report #1 is due at the beginning of Session 4; briefing report #2 is due at the beginning of Session 7. Papers cannot exceed 3 double-spaced pages in length—if you do this, the excess material will be ignored. Good analyses will present the case issues in relation to the course concepts and the other readings for relevant sessions. I also evaluate the quality of writing and presentation, the use of examples, and correctness of spelling and usage in assigning a grade. Papers will not be accepted after the date on which they are due.

(3) Participation. Participation counts for 35% of your grade, and includes class attendance, informed involvement in class discussions, cases and exercises. Attendance is critical for your learning in the class – if you cannot attend class, make sure to notify me in advance via e-mail. Participation is evaluated seriously: I appreciate timely, relevant, and interesting contributions that are constructive and contribute toward moving the discussion forward.

(4) I use the following scheme to grade student participation in each class:
   3: Excellent
   2: Good
   1: Satisfactory
   0: Absent with reasonable cause and advance notification;
   -3: Absent without cause

Notice! For all written assignments:
1. I do not accept late papers.
2. Please adhere to all page limits, using 12 point font size and double spacing (and no fiddling with margins, either!). Any excess material will be ignored.
3. Please do not bother with fancy covers or folders; they are unnecessary and only make it harder for me to carry a pile of papers home!

Academic Integrity: All students who take this course are governed by the University of California's standards of ethical conduct for students, in particular, the sections on academic conduct and integrity. These sections set forth the responsibilities of students and faculty to maintain a spirit of academic honesty and integrity at U.C. Davis. It is essential that you are aware of this code of conduct and the disciplinary actions that may be taken in the event of a violation. A copy of the Code of Academic Conduct may be found in your student handbook or at: http://sja.ucdavis.edu/pdf/CAC.pdf. Further details may be obtained from the GSM Associate Dean or the Office of Judicial Affairs.
Winter 2010: Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Session 1: Course Introduction
Assigned readings:
- “Get Big, Stay Small”, Alex Frankel, Punching In: The unauthorized adventures of a front-line employee, Ch. 5.
- Pgs. 1-14 of Starbucks’s FY09 Annual Report

Session 2: HR Alignment: The Five Factors
Assigned readings:
- “The Five Factors”, James N. Baron and David M. Kreps, Strategic Human Resources, Ch. 2.
- Case: “Perlegen Sciences.” Linda Hill.
Study Questions:
1. Perform a Five Factors analysis of Perlegen’s current situation.
2. What are the characteristics of the HR system at Perlegen?
3. What are areas of alignment and misalignment? How well does Perlegen’s HR system fit the Five Factors overall?

Session 3: Human Resources as Competitive Advantage
Assigned readings:
- “Distinctive Human Resources as Firms’ Core Competencies,” Peter Cappelli and Anne Crocker-Heft, Organizational Dynamics, 24(3), 1996, p. 7-22
- Case: Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc.
Study Questions:
1. What are Harrah’s HR practices, and how are they aligned (or misaligned) with its strategy?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Harrah’s gainsharing program?
3. What advice would you have for Winn about her recommendation to Loveman?

Session 4: Internal alignment of HR Practices
Assigned reading:
- “Producing competitive advantage through the effective management of people,” Jeffrey Pfeffer, Academy of Management Executive, 1995, p. 55-72
- “Consistent HR Practices,” Baron and Kreps, Strategic Human Resources, Ch. 3.
- Case: “Club Med” A and B
Study Questions:
1. Evaluate Club Med’s HR system, including recruitment, training, placement, and performance evaluation. Is this system internally aligned?
2. How do these HR practices fit with the external environment and with Club Med’s strategy?
3. What would you change at Club Med?
1st Briefing paper due: “My organization’s HR practices are aligned/misaligned with its strategy because…”

Session 5: HRM and Organizational Culture

Assigned readings:
- Case: Dreyer’s Grand Ice Cream

Study Questions:
4. Perform a Five Factors analysis of Dreyer’s current situation, paying special attention to its culture.
5. How well does Dreyer’s HR policies fit with its culture? With other factors?
6. Is a restructuring of HR policies warranted given the current situation?

Session 6: Knowledge work and the Professions

Assigned Readings:
- Case #1: “The Case of the Part Time Partner”

Study Questions
1. What are the characteristics of the HR system?
2. How do they fit with the legal profession’s cultural norms and the firms’ external environment?
3. Should Rick, Julie, and Tim be made partners? Why or why not? What are the right tests for promotion to partnership?

- Case #2: “Beyond the Part Time Partner: A Part Time Law Firm?”

Group Project: Status Report due

Session 7: Information Technology and the Changing Workplace

Assigned readings:

Study questions:
1. What are the characteristics of Booz-Allen’s new knowledge management system, and how does the HR system support it (or not)? As part of your answer, outline the characteristics of the HR system.
2. What are the obstacles to implementing a knowledge management system?
3. How does the new KOL system fit with Booz-Allen’s business strategy?

2nd Briefing paper due: “What an analysis of the internal alignment of my organization’s HR practices reveals...”

Session 8: Contingent Work
Assigned readings:
- Case: read one of the following in depth and skim the others (I will assign the in-depth reading in-class during Session 7!):

Study questions:
1. What are the key characteristics of the environment and employment system you read about (clerical workers, film project, soft developers)?
2. How does this system fit with the environment (and do you see any misalignments)?
3. What outcomes result from this system? Describe outcomes for both the firms and the workers.

Session 9: Diversity in the Workplace
Assigned readings:
- Case: Karen Leary

Session 10: Group presentations

Team reviews due