Exhibit SB-1 provides a matrix indicating the relevant self-assessment and skill-module for Chapters 2 through 18 in your textbook.

For each of the 16 skills, we provide the following:
2. A review of basic skill concepts and specific behaviors associated with developing competence in the skill.
3. A short scenario designed to provide you with an opportunity to practice the behaviors associated with the skill.
4. Several reinforcement activities to give you additional opportunities to practice and learn the behaviors associated with the skill.

This section on skill-building has been added to help readers apply and use OB concepts. The 16 skills selected were chosen because of their relevance to developing competence in interpersonal skills and their linkage to one or more of the topic areas in this book.

To maximize the learning of skills, we suggest combining text content and self-assessment feedback with the skill-building modules in this section. The self-assessments are available online at [www.prenhall.com/onekey](http://www.prenhall.com/onekey).

---

**Skill-Building Modules**

*Exhibit SB-1 From Knowledge to Skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill-Building Chapter/Topic</th>
<th>Self-Assessment</th>
<th>Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Individual Behavior</td>
<td>Disciplining Others (#33)</td>
<td>Effective Disciplining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Values and Attitudes</td>
<td>Diversity Awareness (#9)</td>
<td>Valuing Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Personality and Emotions</td>
<td>EI Score (#23)</td>
<td>Reading Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Perception and Decisions</td>
<td>How Creative Am I? (#5)</td>
<td>Creative Problem-Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Applied Motivation</td>
<td>Job Motivation (#18)</td>
<td>Designing Motivating Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/9. Groups and Teams</td>
<td>Leading a Team (#34)</td>
<td>Creating Effective Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Communication</td>
<td>Listening Skills (#28)</td>
<td>Active Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Basic Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership Style (#29)</td>
<td>Choosing a Leadership Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Contemporary Leadership</td>
<td>Do I Trust Others? (#31)</td>
<td>Developing Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Power and Politics</td>
<td>Political Orientation (#37)</td>
<td>Becoming Politically Adept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Conflict and Negotiation</td>
<td>Negotiation Style (#40)</td>
<td>Negotiating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Organization Structure</td>
<td>Willingness to Delegate (#42)</td>
<td>Delegating Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Right Culture? (#44)</td>
<td>Reading an Organization’s Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. HR Policies and Practices</td>
<td>Feedback Skills (#43)</td>
<td>Performance Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Organizational Change</td>
<td>Responding to Change (#49)</td>
<td>Managing Resistance to Change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Effective Disciplining**

**Self-Assessment Interpretation**

Complete the self-assessment (#33) on discipline. This instrument assesses how good you are at disciplining others. Use the results to reflect on how you would discipline an employee and how disciplinary action influences an employee’s learning.

**Skills Concepts and Behaviors**

If an employee’s performance regularly isn’t up to par or if an employee consistently ignores the organization’s standards and regulations, a manager may have to use discipline as a way to control behavior. What exactly is discipline? It is actions taken by a man-
The essence of effective disciplining can be summarized by the following eight behaviors.1

1. Respond immediately. The more quickly a disciplinary action follows an offense, the more likely it is that the employee will associate the discipline with the offense rather than with you as the dispenser of the discipline. It’s best to begin the disciplinary process as soon as possible after you notice a violation.

2. Provide a warning. You have an obligation to warn an employee before initiating disciplinary action. This means that the employee must be aware of the organization’s rules and accept its standards of behavior. Disciplinary action is more likely to be interpreted by employees as fair when they have received a clear warning that a given violation will lead to discipline and when they know what that discipline will be.

3. State the problem specifically. Give the date, time, place, individuals involved, and any mitigating circumstances surrounding the violation. Be sure to define the violation in exact terms instead of just reciting company regulations or terms from a union contract. It’s not the violation of the rules per se about which you want to convey concern. It’s the effect that the rule violation has on the work unit’s performance. Explain why the behavior can’t be continued by showing how it specifically affects the employee’s job performance, the unit’s effectiveness, and the employee’s colleagues.

4. Allow the employee to explain his or her position. Regardless of what facts you have uncovered, due process demands that you give the employee the opportunity to explain his or her position. From the employee’s perspective, what happened? Why did it happen? What was his or her perception of the rules, regulations, and circumstances?

5. Keep the discussion impersonal. Penalties should be connected with a given violation, not with the personality of the individual violator. That is, discipline should be directed at what the employee has done, not at the employee.

6. Be consistent. Fair treatment of employees demands that disciplinary action be consistent. If you enforce rule violations in an inconsistent manner, the rules will lose their impact, morale will decline, and employees will likely question your competence. Consistency, however, need not result in treating everyone exactly alike; doing that would ignore mitigating circumstances. It’s reasonable to modify the severity of penalties to reflect the employee’s history, job performance record, and the like. But the responsibility is yours to clearly justify disciplinary actions that might appear inconsistent to employees.

7. Take progressive action. Choose a punishment that’s appropriate to the crime. Penalties should get progressively stronger if, or when, an offense is repeated. Typically, progressive disciplinary action begins with a verbal warning and then proceeds through a written reprimand, suspension, a demotion or pay cut, and finally, in the most serious cases, dismissal.

8. Obtain agreement on change. Disciplining should include guidance and direction for correcting the problem. Let the employee state what he or she plans to do in the future to ensure that the violation won’t be repeated.

Practicing the Skill

Read through the following scenario, then practice your skill in a role-play conducted either in front of the class or in groups of two.

You’re a team leader in the customer services department at Mountain View Microbrewery. Sandy is the newest member of your 10-person team, having been there only six weeks. Sandy came to Mountain View with good recommendations from his or her previous job as a customer support representative at a car dealership. However, not long after joining your team, Sandy was late in issuing an important purchasing order. When you talked to Sandy about it, you were told it was “lost.” But you discovered it in Sandy’s in-box, where it had been properly placed. Then, just last week, Sandy failed to make an immediate return call to an unhappy customer who could easily have been satisfied at that point. Instead, the customer worked himself into a rage and vented his unhappiness in a letter to the company’s CEO. The latest incident with Sandy came up just yesterday. As part of your company’s quality-improvement program, your team members prepare periodic reports on the service they provide to each customer and turn these reports over to an upper-management team who evaluates them. Sandy didn’t meet the deadline for getting his or her report into this evaluation group and you received a call from one of the team members wanting to know where this report was. Because Sandy is still on probation for another six weeks, it appears that the time has come for the two of you to talk about his or her failure to meet expected work-performance goals.
**Self-Assessment Interpretation**

Complete the self-assessment (#9) on diversity attitudes. This instrument taps five dimensions that represent the range of positive and negative reactions to workplace diversity.

**Skill Concepts and Behaviors**

Diversity covers a wide variety of issues, including communicating with employees whose first language isn’t English, helping a diverse team cope with conflict, learning which rewards are valued by different groups, and dealing with discrimination. You can improve your handling of diversity issues by following these eight behaviors.2

1. **Embrace diversity.** Successfully valuing diversity starts with accepting the principle of multiculturalism. Accept the value of diversity for its own sake—not simply because you have to. You need to reflect your acceptance in all you say and do.

2. **Recruit broadly.** When you have job openings, work to get a diverse applicant pool. Avoid relying on referrals from current employees, since this tends to produce candidates similar to your present workforce.

3. **Select fairly.** Make sure your selection process doesn’t discriminate. Particularly, ensure that selection tests are job-related.

4. **Provide orientation and training for minorities.** Making the transition from outsider to insider can be particularly difficult for nontraditional employees.

5. **Sensitize all employees.** Encourage all employees to embrace diversity. Provide diversity training to help all employees see the value in diversity.

6. **Strive to be flexible.** Part of valuing diversity is recognizing that different groups have different needs and values. Be flexible in accommodating employee requests.

7. **Seek to motivate individually.** You need to be aware of the background, cultures, and values of employees. What motivates a single mother with two young children and who is working full time to support her family is likely to be different from the needs of a young, single, part-time employee or an older employee who is working to supplement his or her retirement income.

8. **Reinforce employee differences.** Encourage employees to embrace and value diverse views. Create traditions and ceremonies that promote diversity. Celebrate diversity by accentuating its positive aspects. But also be prepared to deal with the challenges of diversity such as mistrust, miscommunication, lack of cohesiveness, attitudinal differences, and stress.

**Practicing the Skill**

Form into groups of three. Discuss the workplace problems that each of the following employees might encounter and what you could do (as a senior manager) to help the employees overcome the problems.

- **Lester** is a 69-year-old accountant. He’s been with your organization for more than 35 years, 22 of which he has been the supervisor of cost accounting. His staff of seven is made up of four women and three men, ranging in age from 23 to 51.

- **Sonya** is the 36-year-old vice-president of research and development. She oversees a staff of nearly 20 engineers and designers, only two of whom are female. She’s been in her job for three months, was hired from outside, and replaced an executive who was widely perceived as a male chauvinist.

- **Ahman** is a recent immigrant from Iran. He is 42, is a devout Muslim, and has limited skills in the English language. He has an engineering degree from his country but since he’s not licensed to practice in the United States, he works as a parts clerk. He is unmarried and has no children but feels a strong obligation to his relatives back in Iran. He sends much of his paycheck to them.

**Reinforcement Activities**

1. Talk with several of your minority friends about biases they may perceive in school or at work. If you were a school administrator or manager, how might you deal with these types of biases?

2. Create a list of suggestions that you personally can use to improve your sensitivity to diversity issues.
Self-Assessment Interpretation
Complete the self-assessment (#23) on emotional intelligence. This instrument will provide you insights into your EI score. The higher your EI score, the better you are at accurately reading others’ emotions and feelings.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors
Understanding another person’s felt emotions is a very difficult task. But we can learn to read others’ display emotions. We do this by focusing on verbal, nonverbal, and paralinguistic cues.

1. Ask about emotions. The easiest way to find out what someone is feeling is to ask them. Saying something as simple as “Are you OK? What’s the problem?” can frequently provide you with the information to assess an individual’s emotional state. But relying on a verbal response has two drawbacks. First, almost all of us conceal our emotions to some extent for privacy and to reflect social expectations. So we might be unwilling to share our true feelings. Second, even if we want to convey our feelings verbally, we may be unable to do so. Some people have difficulty understanding their own emotions and, hence, are unable to express them verbally. So, at best, verbal responses provide only partial information.

2. Look for nonverbal cues. You’re talking with a coworker. Does the fact that his back is rigid, his teeth clenched, and his facial muscles tight tell you something about his emotional state? It probably should. Facial expressions, gestures, body movements, and physical distance are nonverbal cues that can provide additional insights into what a person is feeling. Facial expressions, for instance, are a window into a person’s feelings. Notice differences in facial features: the height of the cheeks, the raising or lowering of the brow, the turn of the mouth, the positioning of the lips, and the configuration of muscles around the eyes. Even something as subtle as the distance at which someone chooses to position him or herself from you can convey their feelings, or lack of feelings, of intimacy, aggressiveness, repugnance, or withdrawal.

3. Look for how things are said. As Janet and I talked, I noticed a sharp change in the tone of her voice and the speed at which she spoke. I was tapping into the third source of information on a person’s emotions—paralanguage. This is communication that goes beyond the specific spoken words. It includes pitch, amplitude, rate, and voice quality of speech. Paralanguage reminds us that people convey their feelings not only in what they say, but also in how they say it.

Practicing the Skill
Part A Form groups of two. Each person is to spend a couple of minutes thinking of a time in the past when he or she was emotional about something. Examples might include being upset with a parent, sibling, or friend; being excited or disappointed about an academic or athletic achievement; being angry with someone over an insult or slight; being disgusted by something someone has said or done; or being happy because of something good that happened.

Part B Now you’ll conduct two role-plays. Each will be an interview. In the first, one person will play the interviewer and the other will play the job applicant. The job is for a summer management internship with a large retail chain. Each role play will last no longer than 10 minutes. The interviewer is to conduct a normal job interview except you are to continually rethink the emotional episode you envisioned in Part A. Try hard to convey this emotion while, at the same time, being professional in interviewing the job applicant.

Part C Now reverse positions for the second role-play. The interviewer becomes the job applicant and vice versa. The new interviewer will conduct a normal job interview except that he or she will continually rethink the emotional episode chosen in Part A.

Part D Spend 10 minutes deconstructing the interview, with specific attention focused on what emotion(s) you think the other was conveying? What cues did you pick up? How accurate were you in reading those cues?

Reinforcement Activities
1. Rent a video of an emotionally laden film such as Death of a Salesman or Twelve Angry Men. Carefully watch the actors for clues to the emotions they are exhibiting. Try to determine the various emotions projected and explain how you arrived at your conclusion.

2. If you’re currently working, spend a day specifically looking for emotional cues in interactions with colleagues. Did this improve communication?
Creative Problem Solving

Self-Assessment Interpretation

Complete the self-assessment (#5) that evaluates your creativity. This instrument will determine the degree to which you display characteristics associated with a creative personality. The following will help you to tap into more of your creative talents.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors

The uniqueness and variety of problems that managers face demand that they be able to solve problems creatively. Creativity is partly a frame of mind. You need to expand your mind’s capabilities—that is, open yourself up to new ideas. Every individual has the ability to improve his or her creativity, but many people simply don’t try to develop that ability.

You can be more effective at solving problems creatively if you use the following 10 suggestions.4

1. Think of yourself as creative. Research shows that if you think you can’t be creative, you won’t be. Believing in your ability to be creative is the first step in becoming more creative.

2. Pay attention to your intuition. Every individual has a subconscious mind that works well. Sometimes answers will come to you when you least expect them. Listen to that “inner voice.” In fact, most creative people will keep a notepad near their bed and write down ideas when the thoughts come to them.

3. Move away from your comfort zone. Every individual has a comfort zone in which certainty exists. But creativity and the known often do not mix. To be creative, you need to move away from the status quo and focus your mind on something new.

4. Determine what you want to do. This includes such things as taking time to understand a problem before beginning to try to resolve it, getting all the facts in mind, and trying to identify the most important facts.

5. Think outside the box. Use analogies whenever possible. (For example, could you approach your problem like a fish out of water and look at what the fish does to cope? Or can you use the things you have to do to find your way when it’s foggy to help you solve your problem?) Use different problem-solving strategies such as verbal, visual, mathematical, or theatrical. Look at your problem from a different perspective or ask yourself what someone else, like your grandmother, might do if faced with the same situation.

6. Look for ways to do things better. This may involve trying consciously to be original, not worrying about looking foolish, keeping an open mind, being alert to odd or puzzling facts, thinking of unconventional ways to use objects and the environment, discarding usual or habitual ways of doing things, and striving for objectivity by being as critical of your own ideas as you would those of someone else.

7. Find several right answers. Being creative means continuing to look for other solutions even when you think you have solved the problem. A better, more creative solution just might be found.

8. Believe in finding a workable solution. Like believing in yourself, you also need to believe in your ideas. If you don’t think you can find a solution, you probably won’t.

9. Brainstorm with others. Creativity is not an isolated activity. Bouncing ideas off of others creates a synergistic effect.

10. Turn creative ideas into action. Coming up with creative ideas is only part of the process. Once the ideas are generated, they must be implemented. Keeping great ideas in your mind, or on papers that no one will read, does little to expand your creative abilities.

Practicing the Skill

Every time the phone rings, your stomach clenches and your palms start to sweat. And it’s no wonder! As sales manager for Brinkers, a machine tool parts manufacturer, you’re besieged by calls from customers who are upset about late deliveries. Your boss, Carter Hererra, acts as both production manager and scheduler. Every time your sales representatives negotiate a sale, it’s up to Carter to determine whether production can actually meet the delivery date the customer specifies. And Carter invariably says, “No problem.” The good thing about this is that you make a lot of initial sales. The bad news is that production hardly ever meets the shipment dates that Carter authorizes. And he doesn’t seem to be all that concerned about the aftermath of late deliveries. He says, “Our customers know they’re getting outstanding quality at a great price. Just let them try to match that anywhere. It can’t be done. So even if they have to wait a couple of extra days or weeks, they’re still getting the best deal they can.” Somehow the customers don’t see it that way. And they let you know about their unhappiness. Then it’s up to you to try to soothe the relationship. You know this problem has to be taken care of, but what possible solutions are there? After all, how are you
Reinforcement Activities

1. Take 20 minutes to list as many medical or healthcare-related jobs as you can that begin with the letter r (for instance, radiologist, registered nurse). If you run out of listings before time is up, it’s OK to quit early. But, try to be as creative as you can.

2. List on a piece of paper some common terms that apply to both water and finance. How many were you able to come up with?

Self-Assessment Interpretation

Complete the self-assessment (#14) on goal orientation. This instrument is designed to tap a narrow set of your goals—specifically, learning and performance goals related to your college course work. It can help you determine what you want out of your educational experience.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors

Employees should have a clear understanding of what they’re attempting to accomplish. Managers have the responsibility to see that this is done by helping employees set work goals.

You can be more effective at setting goals if you use the following eight suggestions.5

1. Identify an employee’s key job tasks. Goal setting begins by defining what it is that you want your employees to accomplish. The best source for this information is each employee’s job description.

2. Establish measurable, specific, and challenging goals for each key task. Identify the level of performance expected of each employee. Specify the target toward which the employee is working.

3. Specify the deadlines for each goal. Putting deadlines on each goal reduces ambiguity. Deadlines, however, should not be set arbitrarily. Rather, they need to be realistic given the tasks to be completed.

4. Allow the employee to participate actively. When employees participate in goal setting, they’re more likely to accept the goals. However, it must be sincere participation. That is, employees must perceive that you are truly seeking their input, not just going through the motions.

5. Prioritize goals. When you give someone more than one goal, it’s important to rank the goals in order of importance. The purpose of prioritizing is to encourage the employee to take action and expend effort on each goal in proportion to its importance.

6. Rate goals for difficulty and importance. When goals are rated, individuals can be given credit for trying difficult goals, even if they don’t fully achieve them.

7. Build in feedback mechanisms to assess goal progress. Feedback lets employees know whether their level of effort is sufficient to attain the goal. Feedback should be both self-generated and supervisor-generated. Feedback should also be frequent and recurring.

8. Link rewards to goal attainment. It’s natural for employees to ask, “What’s in it for me?” Linking rewards to the achievement of goals will help answer that question.

Practicing the Skill

You worked your way through college while holding down a part-time job bagging groceries at Food Town supermarket chain. You liked working in the food industry, and when you graduated, you accepted a position with Food Town as a management trainee. Three years have passed and you’ve gained experience in the grocery store industry and in operating a large supermarket. Several months ago, you received a promotion to store manager at one of the chain’s locations. One of the things you’ve liked about Food Town is that it gives store managers a great deal of autonomy in running their stores. The company provides very general guidelines to its managers. Top management is concerned with the bottom line; for the most part, how you get there is up to you. Now that you’re finally a store manager, you want to establish an MBO-type program in your store. You like the idea that everyone should have clear goals to work toward and then be evaluated against those goals.

Your store employs 70 people, although except for the managers, most work only 20 to 30 hours per week. You have six people reporting to you: an assistant manager; a week-end manager; and grocery, produce, meat, and bakery managers. The only highly skilled jobs belong to the butchers, who have strict training and regulatory guidelines. Other less skilled jobs include cashier, shelf stocker, maintenance worker, and grocery bagger.
Specifically describe how you would go about setting goals in your new position. Include examples of goals for the jobs of butcher, cashier, and bakery manager.

Reinforcement Activities

1. Set personal and academic goals you want to achieve by the end of this college term. Prioritize and rate them for difficulty.

2. Where do you want to be in five years? Do you have specific five-year goals? Establish three goals you want to achieve in five years. Make sure these goals are specific, challenging, and measurable.

Self-Assessment Interpretation

Complete the self-assessment (#18) on a job’s motivating potential. This instrument indicates how motivating your job is. Use this information as a base for looking at the jobs for which you are responsible.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors

How do you enrich an employee’s job? The following suggestions, based on the job characteristics model, specify the types of changes in jobs that are most likely to lead to improving their motivating potential.

1. **Combine tasks.** As a manager, you should seek to take existing specialized and divided tasks and put them back together to form a new and larger module of work. This will increase skill variety and task identity.

2. **Create natural work units.** The creation of natural work units means that the tasks an employee does form an identifiable and meaningful whole. This increases employee “ownership” of the work and improves the likelihood that employees will view their work as meaningful and important rather than as irrelevant and boring.

3. **Establish client relationships.** The client is the user of the product or service that the employee works on (and may be an “internal customer” or someone outside the organization). Whenever possible, you should establish direct relationships between workers and their clients. This increases skill variety, autonomy, and feedback for the employee.

4. **Expand jobs vertically.** Vertical expansion gives employees responsibilities and control that were formerly reserved for management. It seeks to partially close the gap between the “doing” and “controlling” aspects of the job, and it increases employee autonomy.

5. **Open feedback channels.** By increasing feedback, employees not only learn how well they are performing their jobs but also whether their performance is improving, deteriorating, or remaining at a constant level. Ideally, this feedback should be received directly as the employee does the job, rather than from his or her manager on an occasional basis.

Practicing the Skill

You own and manage Sunrise Deliveries, a small freight transportation company that makes local deliveries of products for your customers. You have a total of nine employees—an administrative assistant, two warehouse personnel, and six delivery drivers.

The drivers’ job is pretty straightforward. Each morning they come in at 7:30 A.M., pick up their daily schedule, and then drive off in their preloaded trucks to make their stops. They occasionally will also pick up packages and return them to the Sunrise warehouse, where they’ll be unloaded and redirected by the warehouse workers.

You’ve become very concerned with the high turnover among your drivers. Of your current six drivers, three have been working for you less than two months and only one’s tenure exceeds six months. This is frustrating because you’re paying your drivers more than many of the larger delivery companies like UPS and FedEx. This employee turnover is getting expensive because you’re constantly having to spend time finding and training replacements. It’s also hard to develop a quality customer-service program when customers constantly see new faces.

When you’ve asked departing drivers why they’re quitting, common complaints include: “there’s no room for advancement,” “the job is boring,” and “all we do is drive.” You know that you’re going to have to do something to solve this problem.
Reinforcement Activities

1. Think of the worst job you’ve ever had. Analyze the job according to the five dimensions identified in the job characteristics model. Redesign the job in order to make it more satisfying and motivating.

2. Spend one to three hours at various times observing employees in your college dining hall. What specific actions would you recommend to make these jobs more motivating?

Self-Assessment Interpretation

Complete the self-assessment (#34) on leading a team. This instrument evaluates how well you diagnose team development and manage the various stages of that development. The higher your score, the better you are at creating effective teams.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors

Managers and team leaders need to be able to create effective teams. You can increase the effectiveness of your teams if you use the following nine behaviors.

1. **Establish a common purpose.** An effective team needs a common purpose to which all members aspire. This purpose is a vision. It’s broader than any specific goals. This common purpose provides direction, momentum, and commitment for team members.

2. **Assess team strengths and weaknesses.** Team members will have different strengths and weaknesses. Knowing these strengths and weaknesses can help the team leader build on the strengths and compensate for the weaknesses.

3. **Develop specific individual goals.** Specific individual goals help lead team members to achieve higher performance. In addition, specific goals facilitate clear communication and help maintain the focus on getting results.

4. **Get agreement on a common approach for achieving goals.** Goals are the ends a team strives to attain. Defining and agreeing on a common approach ensures that the team is unified on the means for achieving those ends.

5. **Encourage acceptance of responsibility for both individual and team performance.** Successful teams make members individually and jointly accountable for the team’s purpose, goals, and approach. Members understand what they are individually responsible for and what they are jointly responsible for.

6. **Build mutual trust among members.** When there is trust, team members believe in the integrity, character, and ability of each other. When trust is lacking, members are unable to depend on each other. Teams that lack trust tend to be short-lived.

7. **Maintain an appropriate mix of team member skills and personalities.** Team members come to the team with different skills and personalities. To perform effectively, teams need three types of skills. They need people with technical expertise, people with problem-solving and decision-making skills, and people with good interpersonal skills.

8. **Provide needed training and resources.** Team leaders need to make sure that their teams have both the training and the resources they need to accomplish their goals.

9. **Create opportunities for small achievements.** Building an effective team takes time. Team members have to learn to think and work as a team. New teams can’t be expected to hit home runs every time they come to bat, especially at the beginning. Instead, team members should be encouraged to try for small achievements initially.

Practicing the Skill

You’re the leader of a five-member project team that’s been assigned the task of moving your engineering firm into the booming area of high-speed intercity rail construction. You and your team members have been researching the field, identifying specific business opportunities, negotiating alliances with equipment vendors, and evaluating high-speed rail experts and consultants from around the world. Throughout the process, Tonya, a highly qualified and respected engineer, has challenged a number of things you’ve said during team meetings and in the workplace. For example, at a meeting two weeks ago, you presented the team with a list of 10 possible high-speed rail projects and started evaluating your organization’s ability to compete for them. Tonya contradicted virtually all your comments, questioned your statistics, and was quite pessimistic about the possibility of getting contracts on these projects. After this latest display of displeasure, two other group members, Bryan and Maggie, came to you and complained that Tonya’s actions were damaging the team’s effectiveness. You originally put Tonya on the team for her unique
expertise and insight. You’d like to find a way to reach her and get the team on the right track to its fullest potential.

Reinforcement Activities

1. Interview three managers at different organizations. Ask them about their experiences in managing teams. Have each describe teams that they thought were effective and why they succeeded. Have each also describe teams that they thought were ineffective and the reasons that might have caused this.
2. Contrast a team in which you have been in which members trusted each other with another team in which members lacked trust with each other. How did these conditions develop? What were the consequences in terms of interaction patterns and performance?

Self-Assessment Interpretation

Complete the self-assessment (#28) on listening skills. The higher your score, the better listener you are.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors

Too many people take listening skills for granted. They confuse hearing with listening. Hearing is merely picking up sound vibrations. Listening is making sense out of what we hear; and it requires paying attention, interpreting, and remembering. Active listening is hard work and requires you to “get inside” the speaker’s head in order to understand the communication from his or her point of view.

Eight specific behaviors are associated with active listening. You can be more effective at active listening if you use these behaviors.8

1. **Make eye contact.** We may listen with our ears, but others tend to judge whether we’re really listening by looking at our eyes.
2. **Exhibit affirmative nods and appropriate facial expressions.** The effective active listener shows interest in what’s being said through nonverbal signals.
3. **Avoid distracting actions or gestures.** When listening, don’t look at your watch, shuffle papers, play with your pencil, or engage in similar distractions. They make the speaker feel that you’re bored or uninterested.
4. **Ask questions.** The critical listener analyzes what he or she hears and asks questions. This behavior provides clarification, ensures understanding, and assures the speaker that you’re really listening.
5. **Paraphrase.** Restate in your own words what the speaker has said. The effective active listener uses phrases such as “What I hear you saying is...” or “Do you mean...?” Paraphrasing is an excellent control device to check whether or not you’re listening carefully and is also a control for accuracy of understanding.
6. **Avoid interrupting the speaker.** Let the speaker complete his or her thoughts before you try to respond. Don’t try to second-guess where the speaker’s thoughts are going.
7. **Don’t overtalk.** Most of us would rather speak our own ideas than listen to what others say. Although talking might be more fun and silence might be uncomfortable, you can’t talk and listen at the same time. The good active listener recognizes this fact and doesn’t overtalk.
8. **Make smooth transitions between the roles of speaker and listener.** In most work situations, you’re continually shifting back and forth between the roles of speaker and listener. The effective active listener makes transitions smoothly from speaker to listener and back to speaker.

Practicing the Skill

Break into groups of two. This exercise is a debate. Person A can choose any contemporary issue. Some examples: business ethics, value of unions, stiffer college grading policies, gun control, money as a motivator. Person B then selects a position on this issue. Person A must automatically take the counterposition. The debate is to proceed for 8 to 10 minutes, with only one catch. Before each speaks, he or she must first summarize, in his or her own words and without notes, what the other has said. If the summary doesn’t satisfy the speaker, it must be corrected until it does.

Reinforcement Activities

1. In another class—preferably one with a lecture format—practice active listening. Ask questions, paraphrase, exhibit affirming nonverbal behaviors. Then ask yourself: Was this harder for me than a normal lecture? Did it affect my note taking? Did I ask more questions? Did it improve my understanding of the lecture’s content? What was the instructor’s response?
2. Spend an entire day fighting your urge to talk. Listen as carefully as you can to everyone you interact with and respond as appropriately as possible to understand, not to make your own point. What, if anything, did you learn from this exercise?
**Self-Assessment Interpretation**

Complete the self-assessment (#29) on leadership style. This instrument is designed to tap the degree to which you are task- or people-oriented. These results suggest your preferential style. But effective leadership depends on properly matching up leadership style with a situation that is congruent. By knowing your leadership tendency, you can put yourself into situations that will increase your likelihood for success.

**Skill Concepts and Behaviors**

Simply put, leadership style can be categorized as task- or people-oriented. Neither one is right for all situations. Although there are a number of situational variables that influence the choice of an effective leadership style, four variables seem most relevant:

1. **Task structure.** Structured tasks have procedures and rules that minimize ambiguity. The more structured a job is, the less need there is for a leader to provide task structure.
3. **Level of group support.** Members of close-knit and supportive groups help each other out. They can provide both task support and relationship support. So supportive groups make fewer demands on a leader.
4. **Follower characteristics.** Personal characteristics of followers—such as experience, ability, and motivation—influence which leadership style will be most effective. Employees with extensive experience, strong abilities, and high motivation don’t require much task behavior. They will be more effective with a people-oriented style. Conversely, employees with little experience, marginal abilities, and low motivation will perform better when leaders exhibit task-oriented behavior.

**Practicing the Skill**

You recently graduated from college with your degree in business administration. You’ve spent the past two summers working at Connecticut Mutual Insurance (CMI), filling in as an intern on a number of different jobs while employees took their vacations. You have received and accepted an offer to join CMI full time as supervisor of the policy renewal department.

CMI is a large insurance company. In the headquarters office alone, where you’ll be working, there are more than 1,500 employees. The company believes strongly in the personal development of its employees. This translates into a philosophy, emanating from the top executive offices, of trust and respect for all CMI employees. The company is also regularly atop most lists of “best companies to work for,” largely because of its progressive work/life programs and strong commitment to minimizing layoffs.

In your new job, you’ll direct the activities of 18 policy-renewal clerks. Their jobs require little training and are highly routine. A clerk’s responsibility is to ensure that renewal notices are sent on current policies, to tabulate any changes in premiums, to advise the sales division if a policy is to be canceled as a result of nonresponse to renewal notices, and to answer questions and solve problems related to renewals.

The people in your work group range in age from 19 to 62, with a median age of 25. For the most part they are high school graduates with little prior working experience. They earn between $1,850 and $2,400 a month. You will be replacing a long-time CMI employee, Jan Allison. Jan is retiring after 37 years with CMI, the past 14 spent as a policy-renewal supervisor. Because you spent a few weeks in Jan’s group last summer, you’re familiar with Jan’s style and are acquainted with most of the department members. But people don’t know you very well and are suspicious of the fact that you’re fresh out of college and have little experience in the department. And the reality is that you got this job because management wanted someone with a college degree to oversee the department. Your most vocal critic is Lillian Lantz. Lillian is well into her 50s, has been a policy renewal clerk for over a dozen years, and—as the “grand old lady” of the department—carries a lot of weight with group members. You know that it’ll be very hard to lead this department without Lillian’s support.

Using your knowledge of leadership concepts, which leadership style would you choose? And why?

**Reinforcement Activities**

1. Think of a group or team to which you currently belong or of which you have been a part. What type of leadership style did the leader of this group appear to exhibit? Give some specific examples of the types of leadership behaviors he or she used. Evaluate the leadership style. Was it appropriate for the group? Why or why not? What would you have done differently? Why?
2. Observe two sports team (either college or professional—one that you consider successful and the other unsuccessful). What leadership styles appear to
be used in these team situations? Give some specific examples of the types of leadership behaviors you observe. How would you evaluate the leadership style? Was it appropriate for the team? Why or why not? To what degree do you think leadership style influenced the team’s outcomes?

Self-Assessment Interpretation

Complete the self-assessment (#31) on how trusting you are of others. The higher your score, the less faith you have in others.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors

Trust plays an important role in any manager’s relationships with his or her employees. Given the importance of trust, today’s managers should actively seek to develop it within their work group.

You can be more effective at developing trust among your employees if you follow these eight suggestions.9

1. **Practice openness.** Mistrust comes as much from what people don’t know as from what they do know. Openness leads to confidence and trust. So keep people informed, make the criteria on how decisions are made overtly clear, explain the rationale for your decisions, be candid about problems, and fully disclose relevant information.

2. **Be fair.** Before making decisions or taking actions, consider how others will perceive them in terms of objectivity and fairness. Give credit where credit is due, be objective and impartial in performance appraisals, and pay attention to equity perceptions in reward distributions.

3. **Speak your feelings.** Managers who convey only hard facts come across as cold and distant. If you share your feelings, others will see you as real and human. They will know who you are and their respect for you will increase.

4. **Tell the truth.** Being trustworthy means being credible. If honesty is critical to credibility, then you must be perceived as someone who tells the truth. Employees are more tolerant of hearing something “they don’t want to hear” than finding out that their manager lied to them.

5. **Show consistency.** People want predictability. Mistrust comes from not knowing what to expect. Take the time to think about your values and beliefs. Then let them consistently guide your decisions. When you know your central purpose, your actions will follow accordingly, and you will project a consistency that earns trust.

6. **Fulfill your promises.** Trust requires that people believe that you are dependable. So you need to ensure that you keep your word and commitments. Promises made must be promises kept.

7. **Maintain confidences.** You trust people who are discreet and on whom you can rely. So if people make themselves vulnerable by telling you something in confidence, they need to feel assured that you won’t discuss it with others or betray that confidence. If people perceive you as someone who leaks personal confidences or someone who can’t be depended on, you won’t be perceived as trustworthy.

8. **Demonstrate competence.** Develop the admiration and respect of others by demonstrating technical and professional ability. Pay particular attention to developing and displaying your communication, negotiation, and other interpersonal skills.

Practicing the Skill

You’ve owned and managed your wine shop for more than 15 years. During that period, you’ve grown from a store with 600 square feet and two employees to your current 15,000 square foot facility and 18 employees.

You pride yourself on treating employees well. You provide highly competitive wages, profit sharing, and generous benefits. For instance, all employees get three weeks paid vacation after one year and four weeks after five years. You also pay all the premiums on health benefits for employees and their dependents. The result has been to create a very stable and loyal workforce. In fact, you haven’t had an employee voluntarily quit in more than six years.

In the past year, the competitive environment of your business has changed drastically. Both Wal-Mart and Costco have opened stores near you and they carry a wide selection of popular wines at prices that you could never profitably match. You’ve had to drop prices on almost all of your best-selling products in order to keep customers. As a result, your profits have dried up. You’re currently barely breaking even. There won’t be any employee profit sharing for this year. Moreover, you’re beginning to realize that your generous wage and benefit offerings make it impossible for you to compete against the major warehouse chains who buy in huge quantities and pay below-market wages. You need to cut salaries and benefits. But you realize that this is likely to undermine morale and the trust you’ve built with your staff over the years. How can you reduce your employee
costs and still maintain the trust you’ve developed with your employees?

**Reinforcement Activities**

1. Keep a one-week log describing ways that your daily decisions and actions encouraged people to trust you or to not trust you. What things did you do that led to trust? What things did you do that may have led to distrust? How might you have changed your behavior so that the situations of distrust could have been situations of trust?

2. Review recent issues of a business periodical (such as *Business Week*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *Fast Company*, or the *Wall Street Journal*) for articles in which trust (or lack of trust) may have played a role. Find two articles and describe the situation. Explain how the person(s) involved might have used skills at developing trust to handle the situation.

**Self-Assessment Interpretation**

Complete the self-assessment (#37) on political orientation. This instrument is designed to assess your ability to play politics. The higher your score, the better your political skills. Individuals with strong political skills are astute in sizing up situations, have the ability to influence others, are adept at developing and using networks of people, and are skillful at appearing to be genuine and sincere.

**Skill Concepts and Behaviors**

Forget, for a moment, the ethics of politicking and any negative impressions you might have of people who engage in organizational politics. If you want to be more politically adept in your organization, follow these eight suggestions:

1. **Frame arguments in terms of organizational goals.** Effective politicking requires camouflaging your self-interest. No matter that your objective is self-serving; all the arguments you marshal in support of it must be framed in terms of the benefits that will accrue to the organization. People whose actions appear to blatantly further their own interests at the expense of the organization are almost universally denounced, are likely to lose influence, and often suffer the ultimate penalty of being expelled from the organization.

2. **Develop the right image.** If you know your organization’s culture, you understand what the organization wants and values from its employee—in terms of dress, associates to cultivate and those to avoid, whether to appear to be a risk taker or risk-averse, the preferred leadership style, the importance placed on getting along well with others, and so forth. Then you are equipped to project the appropriate image. Because the assessment of your performance isn’t always a fully objective process, you need to pay attention to style as well as substance.

3. **Gain control of organizational resources.** The control of organizational resources that are scarce and important is a source of power. Knowledge and expertise are particularly effective resources to control. They make you more valuable to the organization and, therefore, more likely to gain security, advancement, and a receptive audience for your ideas.

4. **Make yourself appear indispensable.** Because we’re dealing with appearances rather than objective facts, you can enhance your power by appearing to be indispensable. You don’t really have to be indispensable as long as key people in the organization believe that you are. If the organization’s prime decision makers believe there is no ready substitute for what you are giving the organization, they are likely to go to great lengths to ensure that your desires are satisfied.

5. **Be visible.** If you have a job that brings your accomplishments to the attention of others, that’s great. However, if you don’t have such a job, you’ll want to find ways to let others in the organization know what you’re doing by highlighting successes in routine reports, having satisfied customers relay their appreciation to senior executives, being seen at social functions, being active in your professional associations, and developing powerful allies who speak positively about your accomplishments. Of course, the skilled politician actively and successfully lobbies to get the projects that will increase his or her visibility.

6. **Develop powerful allies.** It helps to have powerful people on your side. Cultivate contacts with potentially influential people above you, at your own level, and in the lower ranks. These allies often can provide you with information that’s otherwise not readily available. In addition, there will be times when decisions will be made in favor of those with the greatest support. Having powerful allies can provide you with a coalition of support if and when you need it.
7. Avoid “tainted” members. In almost every organization, there are fringe members whose status is questionable. Their performance and/or loyalty is suspect. Keep your distance from such individuals. Given the reality that effectiveness has a large subjective component, your own effectiveness might be called into question if you’re perceived as being too closely associated with tainted members.

8. Support your boss. Your immediate future is in the hands of your current boss. Because he or she evaluates your performance, you’ll typically want to do whatever is necessary to have your boss on your side. You should make every effort to help your boss succeed, make her look good, support her if she is under siege, and spend the time to find out the criteria she will use to assess your effectiveness. Don’t undermine your boss. And don’t speak negatively of her to others.

Practicing the Skill
You used to be the star marketing manager for Hilton Electronics Corporation. But for the past year, you’ve been outpaced again and again by Sean, a new manager in the design department, who has been accomplishing everything expected of him and more. Meanwhile, your best efforts to do your job well have been sabotaged and undercut by Maria—your and Sean’s manager. For example, prior to last year’s international consumer electronics show, Maria moved $30,000 from your budget to Sean’s. Despite your best efforts, your marketing team couldn’t complete all the marketing materials normally developed to showcase all of your organization’s new products at this important industry show. And Maria has chipped away at your staff and budget ever since. Although you’ve been able to meet most of your goals with less staff and budget, Maria has continued to slice away resources from your group. Just last week, she eliminated two positions in your team of eight marketing specialists to make room for a new designer and some extra equipment for Sean. Maria is clearly taking away your resources while giving Sean whatever he wants and more. You think it’s time to do something or soon you won’t have any team or resources left.

Reinforcement Activities
1. Keep a one-week journal of your behavior describing incidences when you tried to influence others around you. Assess each incident by asking: Were you successful at these attempts to influence them? Why or why not? What could you have done differently?
2. Outline a specific action plan, based on concepts in this module, that would improve your career progression in the organization in which you currently work or an organization in which you think you would like to be employed.

Self-Assessment Interpretation
Complete the self-assessment (#40) on your negotiating style. After adjusting for situational context, we can say that generally the higher your score, the better you are at negotiating. You will, for instance, favor collaboration, rationality, a direct communication style, and other behaviors that tend to favor effective negotiations.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors
You can be more effective at negotiating if you use the following five recommended behaviors.11

1. Begin with a positive overture. Studies on negotiation show that concessions tend to be reciprocated and lead to agreements. As a result, begin bargaining with a positive overture—perhaps a small concession—and then reciprocate the other party’s concessions.
2. Address problems, not personalities. Concentrate on the negotiation issues, not on the personal characteristics of the individual with whom you’re negotiating. When negotiations get tough, avoid the tendency to attack this person. Remember it’s that person’s ideas or position that you disagree with, not him or her personally. Separate the people from the problem, and don’t personalize differences.
3. Pay little attention to initial offers. Treat an initial offer as merely a point of departure. Everyone must have an initial position. These initial offers tend to be extreme and idealistic. Treat them as such.
4. Emphasize win–win solutions. Inexperienced negotiators often assume that their gain must come at the expense of the other party. That needn’t be the case. There are often win–win solutions. But assuming a zero-sum game means missed opportunities for trade-offs that could benefit both sides. So if conditions are supportive, look for an integrative solution. Frame options in terms of the other party’s interests and look for solutions that can allow this person, as well as yourself, to declare a victory.
5. Create an open and trusting climate. Skilled negotiators are better listeners, ask more questions, focus their arguments more directly, are less defensive, and have learned to avoid words or phrases that can irritate the person with whom they’re negotiating (such as “generous offer,” “fair price,” or “reasonable arrangement”). In other words, they’re better at creating the open and trusting climate that is necessary for reaching a win–win settlement.

Practicing the Skill

As marketing director for Done Right, a regional home-repair chain, you’ve come up with a plan you believe has significant potential for future sales. Your plan involves a customer information service designed to help people make their homes more environmentally sensitive. Then based on homeowners’ assessments of their homes’ environmental impact, your firm will be prepared to help them deal with problems or concerns they may uncover. You’re really excited about the competitive potential of this new service. You envision pamphlets, in-store appearances by environmental experts, as well as contests for consumers and school kids. After several weeks of preparations, you make your pitch to your boss, Nick Castro. You point out how the market for environmentally sensitive products is growing and how this growing demand represents the perfect opportunity for Done Right. Nick seems impressed by your presentation, but he’s expressed one major concern. He thinks your workload is already too heavy. He doesn’t see how you’re going to have enough time to start this new service and still be able to look after all of your other assigned marketing duties.

Reinforcement Activities

1. Negotiate with a course instructor to raise the grade on an exam or paper on which you think you should have received a higher grade.
2. The next time you purchase a relatively expensive item (e.g., automobile, apartment lease, appliance, jewelry), attempt to negotiate a better price and gain some concessions such as an extended warranty, smaller down payment, maintenance services, or the like.

Delegating Authority

Self-Assessment Interpretation

Complete the self-assessment (#42) on willingness to delegate. This instrument taps excuses for failing to delegate and errors managers use when delegation is done improperly. The higher your score, the better your delegation skills.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors

Managers get things done through other people. Because there are limits to any manager’s time and knowledge, effective managers need to understand how to delegate. Delegation is the assignment of authority to another person to carry out specific duties. It allows an employee to make decisions. Delegation should not be confused with participation. In participative decision making, there’s a sharing of authority. In delegation, employees make decisions on their own.

A number of actions differentiate the effective delegator from the ineffective delegator. There are five behaviors that effective delegators will use.

1. Clarify the assignment. The place to begin is to determine what is to be delegated and to whom. You need to identify the person who’s most capable of doing the task and then determine whether he or she has the time and motivation to do the task. Assuming you have a willing and able individual, it’s your responsibility to provide clear information on what is being delegated, the results you expect, and any time or performance expectations you may have. Unless there’s an overriding need to adhere to specific methods, you should delegate only the results expected. Get agreement on what is to be done and the results expected, but let the employee decide the best way to complete the task.

2. Specify the employee’s range of discretion. Every act of delegation comes with constraints. Although you’re delegating to an employee the authority to perform some task or tasks, you’re not delegating unlimited authority. You’re delegating authority to act on certain issues within certain parameters. You need to specify what those parameters are so that the employee knows, in no uncertain terms, the range of his or her discretion.

3. Allow the employee to participate. One of the best sources for determining how much authority will be necessary to accomplish a task is the person who will be held accountable for that task. If you allow employees to participate in determining what is delegated,
how much authority is needed to get the job done, and the standards by which they’ll be judged, you increase employee motivation, satisfaction, and accountability for performance.

4. **Inform others that delegation has occurred.** Delegation should not take place in a vacuum. Not only do you and the delegatee need to know specifically what has been delegated and how much authority has been given, but anyone else who may be affected by the delegation act also needs to be informed.

5. **Establish feedback channels.** The establishment of controls to monitor the employee’s progress increases the likelihood that important problems will be identified early and that the task will be completed on time and to the desired specifications. Ideally, these controls should be determined at the time of the initial assignment. Agree on a specific time for the completion of the task and then set progress dates when the employee will report back on how well he or she is doing and any major problems that may have arisen. These controls can be supplemented with periodic checks to ensure that authority guidelines aren’t being abused, organizational policies are being followed, proper procedures are being met, and the like.

**Practicing the Skill**

You’re the director of research and development for a large pharmaceutical manufacturer. You have six people who report directly to you: Sue (your secretary), Dale (laboratory manager), Todd (quality standards manager), Linda (patent coordination manager), Ruben (market coordination manager), and Marjorie (senior projects manager). Dale is the most senior of the five managers and is generally acknowledged as the chief candidate to replace you if you are promoted or leave.

You have received your annual instructions from the CEO to develop next year’s budget for your area. The task is relatively routine but takes quite a bit of time. In the past, you’ve always done the annual budget yourself. But this year, because your workload is exceptionally heavy, you’ve decided to try something different. You’re going to assign budget preparation to one of your subordinate managers. The obvious choice is Dale. Dale has been with the company longest, is highly dependable, and, as your probable successor, is most likely to gain from the experience. The budget is due on your boss’ desk in eight weeks. Last year it took you about 30 to 35 hours to complete. However, you have done a budget many times before. For a novice, it might take double that amount of time.

The budget process is generally straightforward. You start with last year’s budget and modify it to reflect inflation and changes in departmental objectives. All the data that Dale will need are in your files, online, or can be obtained from your other managers.

You have just walked over to Dale’s office and informed him of your decision. He seemed enthusiastic about doing the budget, but he also has a heavy workload. He told you, “I’m regularly coming in around 7 A.M. and it’s unusual for me to leave before 7 P.M. For the past five weekends, I’ve even come in on Saturday mornings to get my work done. I can do my best to try to find time to do the budget.”

Specify exactly what you would say to Dale and the actions you would take if Dale agrees to do the budget.

**Reinforcement Activities**

1. When watching a video of a classic movie that has examples of “managers” delegating assignments, pay explicit attention to the incidence of delegation. Was delegating done effectively? What was good about the practice? How might it have been improved? Examples of movies with delegation examples include *The Godfather*, *The Firm*, *Star Trek*, *Nine-to-Five*, and *Working Girl*.

2. The next time you have to do a group project for a class, pay explicit attention to how tasks are delegated. Does someone assume a leadership role? If so, note how closely the delegation process is followed. Is delegation different in project or study groups than in typical work groups?

**Self-Assessment Interpretation**

Complete the self-assessment (#44) on identifying the right organizational culture for you. The result will suggest whether you fit better in a more formal and structured culture or a more informal and flexible one. Your success and satisfaction in an organization will be influenced by how well its culture fits your personal preference.
Skill Concepts and Behaviors

The ability to read an organization’s culture can be a valuable skill. For instance, if you’re looking for a job, you’ll want to choose an employer whose culture is compatible with your values and in which you’ll feel comfortable. If you can accurately assess a potential employer’s culture before you make your job decision, you may be able to save yourself a lot of grief and reduce the likelihood of making a poor choice. Similarly, you’ll undoubtedly have business transactions with numerous organizations during your professional career, such as selling a product or service, negotiating a contract, arranging a joint work project, or merely seeking out who controls certain decisions in an organization. The ability to assess another organization’s culture can be a definite plus in successfully performing those pursuits.

You can be more effective at reading an organization’s culture if you use the following behaviors. For the sake of simplicity, we’re going to look at this skill from the perspective of a job applicant. We’ll assume that you’re interviewing for a job, although these skills are generalizable to many situations. Here’s a list of things you can do to help learn about an organization’s culture.13

1. Do background work. Get the names of former employees from friends or acquaintances, and talk with them. Also talk with members of professional trade associations to which the organization’s employees belong and executive recruiters who deal with the organization. Look for clues in stories told in annual reports and other organizational literature; and check out the organization’s Web sites for evidence of high turnover or recent management shake-ups.
2. Observe the physical surroundings. Pay attention to signs, posters, pictures, photos, style of dress, length of hair, degree of openness between offices, and office furnishings and arrangements.
3. Make note about those with whom you meet. Whom did you meet? How did they expect to be addressed?
5. Look at the organization’s human resources manual. Are there formal rules and regulations printed there? If so, how detailed are they? What do they cover?
6. Ask questions of the people with whom you meet. The most valid and reliable information tends to come from asking the same questions of many people (to see how closely their responses align). Questions that will give you insights into organizational processes and practices might include: What’s the background of the founders? What’s the background of current senior managers? What are these managers’ functional specialties, and were they promoted from within or hired from outside? How does the organization integrate new employees? Is there a formal orientation program? Are there formal employee training programs and, if so, how are they structured? How does your boss define his or her job success? How would you define fairness in terms of reward allocations? Can you identify some people here who are on the “fast track”? What do you think has put them on the fast track? Can you identify someone in the organization who seems to be considered a deviant and how has the organization responded to this person? Can you describe a decision that someone made that was well received? Can you describe a decision that didn’t work out well, and what were the consequences for that decision maker? Could you describe a crisis or critical event that has occurred recently in the organization and how did top management respond?

Practicing the Skill

After spending your first three years after college graduation as a freelance graphic designer, you’re looking at pursuing a job as an account executive at a graphic design firm. You feel that the scope of assignments and potential for technical training far exceed what you’d be able to do on your own, and you’re looking to expand your skills and meet a brand-new set of challenges. However, you want to make sure you “fit” into the organization where you’re going to be spending more than eight hours every work day. What’s the best way for you to find a place where you’ll be happy and where your style and personality will be appreciated?

Reinforcement Activities

1. If you’re taking more than one course, assess the culture of the various classes in which you’re enrolled. How do the classroom cultures differ?
2. Do some comparisons of the atmosphere or feeling you get from various organizations. Because of the number and wide variety that you’ll find, it will probably be easiest for you to do this exercise using restaurants, retail stores, or banks. Based on the atmosphere that you observe, what type of organizational culture do you think these organizations might have? If you can, interview three employees at each organization for their descriptions of their organization’s culture.
**Self-Assessment Interpretation**

Complete the self-assessment (#43) on feedback skills. This instrument is designed to assess how good you are at providing performance feedback. Your results tell you how effective you are when giving feedback and can help you determine where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

**Skill Concepts and Behaviors**

Many managers are derelict in providing performance feedback, especially when it's negative. Like most of us, managers don’t particularly enjoy communicating bad news. They fear offending the other person or having to deal with the recipient’s defensiveness. Nevertheless, providing performance feedback is an important part of effective employee communication.

You can be more effective at providing feedback if you use the following six specific suggestions.14

1. **Focus on specific behaviors.** Feedback should be specific rather than general. Avoid such statements as “You have a bad attitude” or “I’m really impressed with the good job you did.” They’re vague and although they provide information, they don’t tell the recipient enough to correct the “bad attitude” or on what basis you concluded that a “good job” had been done so the person knows what behaviors to repeat or to avoid.

2. **Keep feedback impersonal.** Feedback, particularly the negative kind, should be descriptive rather than judgmental or evaluative. No matter how upset you are, keep the feedback focused on job-related behaviors, and never criticize someone personally because of an inappropriate action.

3. **Keep feedback goal-oriented.** Feedback should not be given primarily to “blow off steam” or “unload” on another person. If you have to say something negative, make sure it’s directed toward the recipient’s goals. Ask yourself whom the feedback is supposed to help. If the answer is you, bite your tongue and hold the comment. Such feedback undermines your credibility and lessens the meaning and influence of future feedback.

4. **Make feedback well timed.** Feedback is most meaningful to a recipient when there’s a very short interval between his or her behavior and the receipt of feedback about that behavior. Moreover, if you’re particularly concerned with changing behavior, delays in providing feedback on the undesirable actions lessen the likelihood that the feedback will be effective in bringing about the desired change. Of course, making feedback prompt merely for the sake of promptness can backfire if you have insufficient information, if you’re angry, or if you’re otherwise emotionally upset. In such instances, “well timed” could mean “somewhat delayed.”

5. **Ensure understanding.** Make sure your feedback is concise and complete so that the recipient clearly and fully understands the communication. It may help to have the recipient rephrase the content of your feedback to find out whether or not it fully captured the meaning you intended.

6. **Direct negative feedback toward behavior that the recipient can control.** There’s little value in reminding a person of some shortcoming over which he or she has no control. Negative feedback should be directed at behavior that the recipient can do something about. In addition, when negative feedback is given concerning something that the recipient can control, it might be a good idea to indicate specifically what can be done to improve the situation.

**Practicing the Skill**

Craig is an excellent employee whose expertise and productivity have always met or exceeded your expectations. But recently he’s been making work difficult for other members of your advertising team. Like his coworkers, Craig researches and computes the costs of media coverage for your advertising agency’s clients. The work requires laboriously leafing through several large reference books to find the correct base price and add-on charges for each radio or television station and time slot, calculating each actual cost, and compiling the results in a computerized spreadsheet. To make things more efficient and convenient, you’ve always allowed your team members to bring the reference books they’re using to their desks while they’re using them. Lately, however, Craig has been piling books around him for days and sometimes weeks at a time. The books interfere with the flow of traffic past his desk and other people have to go out of their way to retrieve the books from Craig’s pile. It’s time for you to have a talk with Craig.

**Reinforcement Activities**

1. Think of three things that a friend or family member did well recently. Did you praise the person at the time? If not, why? The next time someone close to you does something well, give him or her positive feedback.
2. You have a good friend who has a mannerism (for instance, speech, body movement, or style of dress) that you think is inappropriate and detracts from the overall impression that he or she makes. Come up with a plan for talking with this person. What will you say? How will you handle his or her reaction?

Managing Resistance to Change

Self-Assessment Interpretation

Complete the self-assessment (#49) on how well you respond to turbulent change. The higher your score, the more comfortable you are with change. Not all people, of course, handle change well. Use your score to understand the type of changes that may intimidate people.

Skill Concepts and Behaviors

Managers play an important role in organizational change, often serving as change agents. However, managers may find that change is resisted by employees. After all, change represents ambiguity and uncertainty, or it threatens the status quo. How can this resistance to change be effectively managed?

You can be more effective at managing resistance to change if you use the following suggestions.15

1. Assess the climate for change. A major reason that some changes succeed and others fail is the readiness for change. Assessing the climate for change involves asking a number of questions. The more affirmative answers you get to the following questions, the more likely it is that change efforts will succeed:

   - Is the sponsor of the change high up enough to have power to deal effectively with resistance?
   - Is senior management supportive of the change and committed to it?
   - Is there a strong sense of urgency from senior management about the need for change, and is this feeling shared by the rest of the organization?
   - Do managers have a clear vision of how the future will look different from the present?
   - Are there objective measures in place to evaluate the change effort, and have reward systems been explicitly designed to reinforce them?
   - Is the specific change effort consistent with other changes going on within the organization?
   - Are functional managers willing to sacrifice their self-interests for the good of the organization as a whole?
   - Does management pride itself on closely monitoring changes and actions taken by competitors?

Are managers and employees rewarded for taking risks, being innovative, and looking for new and better solutions?

Is the organizational structure flexible?

Does communication flow both down and up in the organization?

Has the organization successfully implemented major changes in the recent past?

Is employee satisfaction and trust in management high?

Is there a high degree of interaction and cooperation between organizational work units?

Are decisions made quickly and do decisions take into account a wide variety of suggestions?

2. Choose an appropriate approach for managing the resistance to change. There are six tactics that have been suggested for dealing with resistance to change. Each is designed to be appropriate for different conditions of resistance. These include education and communication (used when resistance comes from lack of information or inaccurate information), participation (used when resistance stems from people not having all the information they need or when they have the power to resist), facilitation and support (used when those with power will lose out in a change), manipulation and co-optation (used when any other tactic will not work or is too expensive), and coercion (used when speed is essential and change agents possess considerable power). Which one or more of these approaches will be effective depends on the source of the resistance to the change.

3. During the time the change is being implemented and after the change is completed, communicate with employees regarding what support you may be able to provide. Your employees need to know that you are there to support them during change efforts. Be prepared to offer the assistance that may be necessary to help your employees enact the change.

Practicing the Skill

You’re the nursing supervisor at a community hospital employing both emergency room and floor nurses. Each of these teams of nurses tends to work almost exclusively with others doing the same job. In your
professional reading, you’ve come across the concept of cross-training nursing teams and giving them more varied responsibilities, which has been shown to improve patient care while at the same time lowering costs. You call the two team leaders, Sue and Scott, into your office to explain that you want the nursing teams to move to this approach. To your surprise, they’re both opposed to the idea. Sue says she and the other emergency room nurses feel they’re needed in the ER, where they fill the most vital role in the hospital. They work special hours when needed, do whatever tasks are required, and often work in difficult and stressful circumstances. They think the floor nurses have relatively easy jobs for the pay they receive. Scott, leader of the floor nurse team, tells you that his group have the heaviest extra experience that the floor nurses bring to the hospital. The floor nurses claim they have the heaviest responsibilities and do the most exacting work. Because they have ongoing contact with patients and families, they believe they shouldn’t be called away from vital floor duties to help the ER nurses complete their tasks.

**Reinforcement Activities**

1. Think about changes (major and minor) that you have dealt with over the past year. Perhaps these changes involved other people and perhaps they were personal. Did you resist the change? Did others resist the change? How did you overcome your resistance or the resistance of others to the change?

2. Interview managers at three different organizations about changes they have implemented. What was their experience in implementing the change? How did they manage resistance to the change?

**Endnotes**