

Chapter Two

The Changing Environment of Organizations

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Chapter Overview

The environment of all organizations is changing at an unprecedented rate. People work in different ways and places than in the past, the workplace is increasingly diverse, ethical challenges are a constant issue, and globalization is commonplace.

Understanding and addressing the environment of a business has traditionally been the purview of top managers. But the effects of today’s changing environment permeate the entire organization. Hence, to truly understand the behavior of people in organizational settings, it is also necessary to understand the changing environment of business.

This chapter is intended to provide the framework for such understanding. Specifically, as illustrated in Figure 2.1, we introduce and examine five of the central environmental forces for change faced by today’s organizations: diversity, globalization, technology, ethics and corporate governance, and new employment relationships. An understanding of these forces will then set the stage for our in-depth discussion of contemporary organizational behavior (OB).

Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Describe the nature of diversity in organizations.
2. Describe the different types of diversity and barriers to inclusion that exist in the workplace.
3. Discuss the emergence of globalization and cross-cultural differences and similarities.
4. Discuss the changing nature of technology and its impact on business.
5. Describe emerging perspectives on ethics and corporate governance.
6. Discuss the key issues in new employment relationships.

Real-World Challenge: Global Diversity at Coca-Cola

Summary: With over 10,300 global employees, and around a third of them outside the United States, beverage giant The Coca-Cola Company is a global business that operates in a multicultural world both in the workplace and in the marketplace. The company recognizes that its ability to thrive in a multicultural world is both critical to its financial performance and consistent with its values. Accordingly, diversity is recognized by Coca-Cola as an important component of its vision for the company in 2020. The Coca-Cola Company understands that although it has been recognized as a diversity leader, there is always more it can do.

Real-World Challenge: Imagine that the company's leaders ask you for advice on how to build a diverse and inclusive workforce that allows it to leverage the potential of its diverse employees to enhance the company's performance. After reading this chapter, what would you tell them?

Real-World Response: Diversity is taken seriously at all levels in The Coca-Cola Company. Senior executives including the chairman and CEO are involved with many nonprofits involving underrepresented groups, and corporate goals are linked to individuals' diversity metrics including being a cross-cultural mentor and the recruitment, promotion, engagement, and retention of diverse employees. The company also offers a variety of diversity education programs that have evolved from minimizing conflict to strengthening the company's ability to amplify, respect, value, and leverage employee differences to influence sustainable business outcomes. Rather than just focusing on diversity numbers, The Coca-Cola Company focuses on fostering an inclusive culture using social psychology research on unconscious bias and change in management techniques.

Chapter Outline

I. DIVERSITY AND BUSINESS

Diversity refers to the variety of observable and unobservable similarities and differences among people.

Some differences, such as gender, race, and age, are often the first diversity characteristics to come to mind. But diversity is much more than demographics and can reflect combinations of characteristics rather than a single attribute. Each individual also has a variety of characteristics, and combinations of them can result in diversity.

II. TYPES OF DIVERSITY

A. Types of Diversity

Surface-level diversity refers to observable differences in people, including race, age, ethnicity, physical abilities, physical characteristics, and gender.

Deep-level diversity refers to individual differences that cannot be seen directly, including goals, values, personalities, decision-making styles, knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes.

Three other types of within-group diversity reflect different types of deep-level diversity.

Separation diversity refers to differences in position or opinion among group members reflecting disagreement or opposition—dissimilarity in an attitude or a value, for example, especially with regard to group goals or processes.

Variety diversity refers to differences in a certain type or category, including group members' expertise, knowledge, or functional background.

Disparity diversity refers to differences in the concentration of valuable social assets or resources—dissimilarity in rank, pay, decision-making authority, or status, for example.

Table 2.1 summarizes these five types of diversity.

B. Trends in Diversity

Some short-term demographic trends are strong enough to suggest that the changing demographic mix in the workforce will continue to increase the importance of understanding and leveraging diversity.

The Census Bureau projects that by 2020 the U.S. workforce will consist of 62.3 percent White non-Hispanics, 18.6 percent Hispanics, 12 percent Blacks, and 5.7 percent Asians.

Longer-term U.S. demographic projections further highlight the increasingly diverse character of the United States:

- The population is projected to become older.
- By 2050, the total population is forecasted to increase 49 percent.
- Non-Hispanic Whites are expected to decrease from 69.4 percent to 50.1 percent of the total population by 2050.
- People of Hispanic origin are projected to increase 188 percent by 2050.
- The Black population is projected to increase by 71 percent by 2050.
- The Asian population is forecasted to grow 213 percent by 2050.

In 2017, only 23 of the Fortune 500 CEOs were minorities, and White people held 82.5% of total seats on corporate boards of directors.

Many countries and regions face talent shortages at all levels, and those gaps are expected to worsen. Talent shortages are forecasted to rise globally.

C. Generational Differences

Age-based diversity is a major issue facing many organizations today. Figure 2.2 provides a clear indicator of why this is true.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows a dramatic increase in workers aged sixty-five and older in the past decade alone.

Today's workforce is characterized in terms of four generational groups according to their range of birth years: seniors (1922–1943); baby boomers (1943–1963); Generation X (1964–1980); and Generation Y, also referred to as the Millennial Generation (1980–2000).

The U.S. workforce is aging at the same time Generation Y, the largest generation since the baby boomers, is entering the workforce. This increases the importance of understanding the role of age in organizations and how to manage generational differences at work.

The influence of age in training environments has been extensively studied. Age was negatively associated with learning scores in an open learning program for managerial skills. Older trainees demonstrated lower motivation, reduced learning, and less post-training confidence in comparison with younger trainees. This suggests that age has a negative relationship with learning, and that part of its influence may be due to motivation.

Increasing conscientiousness and knowledge counteract some of the negative effects of aging that result from reductions in information processing speed and motivation to learn.

Some organizations are using reverse mentoring to bridge generational differences and transfer the technology skills younger workers bring to the workplace to more senior employees.

D. Diversity Issues for Managers

Why should we care about diversity? As managers, diversity awareness will enable us to hire, retain, and engage the best talent, which will help to maximize the organization's performance. Diversity also fosters greater creativity and innovation.

1. The Business Case for Diversity

One reason that organizations should promote diversity is performance. Recent research has found that firm performance increases when employees have more positive attitudes toward diversity.

Diversity contributes to a firm's competitive advantage when it enables all employees to contribute their full talents and motivation to the company.

Diversity management is also important for legal reasons. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 allows monetary damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination. Obeying the law and promoting diversity is consistent with hiring the people best suited for the job and organization.

2. Barriers to Inclusion

Given both the performance benefits and legal imperatives of diversity, then, what prevents companies from becoming inclusive and making the most of their diversity? A report of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission identified several common diversity barriers that exist in many organizations. These barriers, summarized in Table 2.2, stem from a variety of decision-making and psychological factors as well as from employee unawareness.

Understanding and proactively addressing the barriers can minimize their impact and enhance inclusion.

a. The "Like Me" Bias

Consciously or unconsciously, we tend to associate with others whom we perceive to be like ourselves. This bias is part of human nature.

b. Stereotypes

A stereotype is a belief about an individual or a group based on the idea that everyone in that particular group will behave the same way. Stereotypes are harmful because they result in judgments about an individual based solely on his or her being part of a particular group, regardless of his or her unique identity. Stereotypes are often negative and erroneous and thus adversely affect the targeted individuals.

c. Prejudice

Even if an organization has a strong commitment to inclusion, it is possible that the beliefs and actions of individual employees or managers are inconsistent with the organization's policies and values.

d. Perceived Threat of Loss

As voluntary efforts are made by companies to promote inclusion, members of groups who traditionally have been the predominant employees of a particular workforce or occupation may grow anxious or angry. If they perceive a direct threat to their own career opportunities, they may feel that they need to protect their own prospects by impeding the prospects of others.

e. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism reflects the belief that one's own language, native country, and cultural rules and norms are superior to all others. Ethnocentrism often has less to do with prejudice and more to do with inexperience or ignorance about other people and environments.

f. Unequal Access to Organizational Networks

All organizations have formal and informal networks. These organizational networks influence knowledge sharing, resource accessibility, and work opportunities. Women and minorities are often excluded from informal organizational networks, which can be important to job performance, mentoring opportunities, and being seen as a candidate for promotion.

3. Managing Diversity

The most important element in effectively leveraging the positive potential of diversity is top management support for diversity and for diversity initiatives.

An inclusive environment is created when all employees' cultural awareness and empathy are enhanced through diversity training and all employees are given equal access to mentors and other influential company employees.

Creating fair company policies and practices that give all employees equal access to performance feedback, training and development, and advancement opportunities is also critical.

Diversity initiatives are more successful when the company is able to keep employees thinking about diversity issues, even when they do not feel a direct, negative impact.

Training and mentoring can also help. Diversity training and diversity education need to communicate that bias is a part of being human. It is not realistic to claim or to pursue an “I’m totally unbiased” stance with regard to diversity.

Case Study: Diversity at Wegmans

Summary: East coast grocer Wegmans views diversity as more than just a legal or moral obligation or business necessity—to them it is a business opportunity. The company strives to attract and retain a workforce that reflects different backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints and mirrors the communities in which it operates. Wegmans believes that to be a great place to shop, they must first be a great place to work. Wegmans emphasizes diversity in hiring to refresh stores with new ideas. Corporate values including respect, caring, empowerment, and high standards have helped the company repeatedly appear on *Fortune’s* list of the 100 Best Companies to Work For. (The company was ranked number 2 in 2017.)

1. In what ways can diverse employees contribute to Wegmans’ business performance?

Research finds that firm performance increases when employees have positive attitudes toward diversity. Diversity contributes to a firm’s competitive advantage when it enables all employees to contribute their full talents and motivation to the company. Diverse groups can use their diverse backgrounds to develop a more comprehensive view of a problem and broader list of possible solutions. The broader social network of diverse employees also gives workgroups and organizations access to a wider variety of information and expertise. Further, diversity can be a source of creativity and innovation that can create a competitive advantage.

2. What types of diversity do you think Wegmans should focus on? Why?

Wegmans should focus on deep-level diversity, which is individual differences that cannot be seen directly, including goals, values, personalities, decision-making styles, knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes. These “invisible” characteristics in others take more time to learn about but can have stronger effects on group and organizational performance than surface-level characteristics.

3. What are the downsides, if any, of building a diverse workforce?

As employees, the better we are able to work with all types of people, the more effective we will be in our jobs. As managers, diversity awareness will enable us to hire, retain, and engage the best talent, which will help to maximize the organization’s performance. Diversity also fosters greater creativity and innovation. A strong business case can be made for diversity. Diversity management is also important for legal reasons. Laws prohibit employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Other laws offer protections to additional groups, including employees with disabilities and workers over the age of forty. Obeying the law and promoting diversity is consistent with hiring the people best suited for the job and organization. There seem to be no downsides to building diversity into the workforce.

III. GLOBALIZATION AND BUSINESS

Another environmental factor that affects OB is *globalization*, the internationalization of business activities and the shift toward an integrated global economy. From a business standpoint, the widespread effects of globalization are relatively new, at least in the United States.

A. Trends in Globalization

In 2018, the volume of international trade in current dollars was about 50 times greater than the amount in 1960.

Four major factors account for much of the growth in international trade

First, communication and transportation have improved dramatically over the past several decades. It is simply easier to conduct international business today than was the case just a few years ago.

Second, businesses have expanded internationally to increase their markets.

Third, more and more firms are moving into international markets to control costs, especially to reduce labor costs.

Finally, many organizations have become international in response to competition. If an organization starts gaining strength in international markets, its competitors often must follow suit to avoid falling too far behind in sales and profitability.

B. Cultural Competence

One of the worst, yet easiest, mistakes people can make is to assume that other people are just like them. People from different cultures see and do things in different ways. **Cultural competence** is the ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures.

There are four components of cultural competence:

1. Awareness of our own cultural worldview and of our reactions to people who are different.
2. Our attitude toward cultural differences.
3. Knowledge of different worldviews and cultural practices.
4. Cross-cultural skills.

C. Cross-Cultural Differences and Similarities

We now turn our attention to differences and similarities in behavior across cultures.

1. General Observations

Cultural and national boundaries do not necessarily coincide. Given this basic assumption, one major review of the literature on international management reached five basic conclusions.

First, behavior in organizational settings does indeed vary across cultures.

Second, culture itself is one major cause of this variation. **Culture** is the set of shared values, often taken for granted, that helps people in a group, an organization, or a society to understand which actions are considered acceptable and which are deemed unacceptable.

Third, although the causes and consequences of behavior within organizational settings remain quite diverse across cultures, organizations and the ways they are structured appear to be growing increasingly similar.

Fourth, the same individual behaves differently in different cultural settings.

Finally, cultural diversity can be an important source of synergy in enhancing organizational effectiveness.

Global Issues: Cultural Etiquette Quiz

Summary: The text offers twelve questions or statements about business cultures and students are asked to answer the quiz questions to get an idea of how aware they are of the business cultures of other areas of the world. Answers provided at the bottom of the quiz.

2. Specific Cultural Issues

Geert Hofstede, a Dutch researcher, studied workers and managers in sixty countries and found that specific attitudes and behaviors differed significantly because of the values and beliefs that characterized those countries. Table 2.3 shows how Hofstede's categories help us summarize differences for several countries.

The two primary dimensions that Hofstede found are the individualism/collectivism continuum and power distance. *Individualism* exists to the extent that people in a culture define themselves primarily as individuals rather than as part of one or more groups or organizations.

Collectivism, on the other hand, is characterized by tight social frameworks in which people tend to base their identities on the group or organization to which they belong.

Power distance, which might also be called *orientation to authority*, is the extent to which people accept as normal an unequal distribution of power.

Hofstede also identified other dimensions of culture. *Uncertainty avoidance*, which might also be called *preference for stability*, is the extent to which people feel threatened by unknown situations and prefer to be in clear and unambiguous situations.

Masculinity, which might be more accurately called *assertiveness* or *materialism*, is the extent to which the dominant values in a society emphasize aggressiveness and the acquisition of money and other possessions as opposed to concern for people, relationships among people, and overall quality of life.

Hofstede's framework has recently been expanded to include long-term versus short-term orientation. *Long-term values* include focusing on the future, working on projects that have a distant payoff, persistence, and thrift. *Short-term values* are more oriented toward the past and the present and include respect for traditions and social obligations.

The important issue to remember is that people from diverse cultures value things differently from each other and that people need to take these differences into account as they work.

D. Global Perspective

A *global perspective* is distinguished by a willingness to be open to and learn from the alternative systems and meanings of other people and cultures and a capacity to avoid assuming that people everywhere are the same.

Given globalization trends and the multicultural nature of the U.S. workforce, managers increasingly need a global perspective and a supportive set of skills and knowledge to be most effective.

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS

Technology refers to the methods used to create products, including both physical goods and intangible services.

Three specific areas of technology worth noting here are: (1) the shift toward a service-based economy, (2) the growing use of technology for competitive advantage, and (3) mushrooming change in information technology.

A. Manufacturing and Service Technologies

Manufacturing is a form of business that combines and transforms resources into tangible outcomes that are then sold to others.

Manufacturing was once the dominant technology in the United States. During the 1970s, manufacturing entered a long period of decline, primarily because of foreign competition. Over the last decade or so, U.S. manufacturing has regained a competitive position in many different industries.

During the decline of the manufacturing sector, a tremendous growth in the service sector kept the overall U.S. economy from declining at the same rate.

A **service organization** is one that transforms resources into an intangible output and creates time or place utility for its customers. Moreover, employment in service occupations is expected to grow by 20.7 percent between 2012 and 2022.

Managers have come to see that many of the tools, techniques, and methods that are used in a factory are also useful to a service firm. At the same time, though, service-based firms must hire and train employees based on a different skill set than is required by most manufacturers.

B. Technology and Competition

Technology is the basis of competition for some firms, especially those whose goals include being the technology leaders in their industries. But because of the rapid pace of new developments, keeping a leadership position based on technology is becoming increasingly challenging.

Businesses have increasingly found that they can be more competitive if they can systematically decrease cycle times (the time that it takes a firm to accomplish some recurring activity or function from beginning to end).

Twenty years ago, it took a carmaker about five years from the decision to launch a new product until it was available in dealer showrooms. Now most companies can complete the cycle in less than two years. The speedier process allows them to more quickly respond to changing economic conditions, consumer preferences, and new competitor products while recouping their product-development costs faster.

C. Information Technology and Social Media

Most people are very familiar with the swift advances in information technology. Breakthroughs in information technology have resulted in leaner organizations, more flexible operations, increased collaboration among employees, more flexible work sites, and improved management processes and systems.

On the other hand, these breakthroughs have also resulted in less personal communication, less “down time” for managers and employees, and an increased sense of urgency vis-à-vis decision making and communication—changes that have not necessarily always been beneficial.

V. ETHICS AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Ethics and related issues have also engendered renewed interest in recent years. One special aspect of business ethics, corporate governance, has also taken on increased importance. Ethics also increasingly relate to information technology.

A. Framing Ethical Issues

Figure 2.3 illustrates how many ethical situations can be framed. Specifically, most ethical dilemmas faced by managers relate to how the organization treats its employees, how employees treat the organization, and how employees and organizations treat other economic agents.

1. How an Organization Treats Its Employees

This area includes policies such as hiring and firing, wages and working conditions, and employee privacy and respect.

Wages and working conditions, although tightly regulated, are also areas for potential controversy. The same goes for employee benefits, especially if an organization takes action that affects the compensation packages—and welfare—of an entire workforce or segment of it.

Finally, most observers would also agree that an organization is obligated to protect the privacy of its employees.

2. How Employees Treat the Organization

Numerous ethical issues also stem from how employees treat the organization, especially in regard to conflicts of interest, secrecy and confidentiality, and honesty.

A conflict of interest occurs when a decision potentially benefits the individual to the possible detriment of the organization.

Divulging company secrets is also clearly unethical.

A third area of concern is honesty in general. Relatively common problems in this area include such activities as using a business telephone to make personal calls, stealing supplies, and padding expense accounts.

In recent years, new issues regarding such behaviors as personal Internet use at work have also become more pervasive. Another disturbing trend is that more workers are calling in sick simply to get extra time off.

Although most employees are basically honest, organizations must nevertheless be vigilant to avoid problems resulting from such behaviors.

3. How Employees and the Organization Treat Other Economic Agents

Managerial ethics also come into play in the relationship between the firm and its employees with other economic agents. As shown in Figure 2.3, the primary agents of interest include customers, competitors, stockholders, suppliers, dealers, and unions.

The interactions between the organization and these agents that may be subject to ethical ambiguity include advertising and promotions, financial disclosures, ordering and purchasing, shipping and solicitations, bargaining and negotiation, and other business relationships.

Another area of interest in recent years involves financial reporting by some e-commerce firms. In at least a few cases, some firms have substantially overstated their assets and earnings projections to entice more investment.

Additional complexities faced by many firms today include variations in both ethical and legal business practices in different countries. In some countries, bribes and side payments are a normal and customary part of doing business. However, U.S. laws forbid these practices, even if a firm's rivals from other countries are paying them.

B. Ethical Issues in Corporate Governance

A related area of emerging concern relates to ethical issues in *corporate governance*—the oversight of a public corporation by its board of directors.

The board of a public corporation is expected to ensure that the business is being properly managed and that the decisions made by its senior management are in the best interests of shareholders and other stakeholders. But in far too many cases, the recent ethical scandals alluded to previously in the text have actually started with a breakdown in the corporate governance structure.

Boards of directors are also increasingly being criticized even when they are not directly implicated in wrongdoing. The biggest complaint here often relates to board independence.

C. Ethical Issues and Information Technology

Another set of issues that have emerged in recent times involves information technology. Among the specific questions in this area are individual rights to privacy and the potential abuse of information technology by companies.

One way management can address these concerns is by posting a privacy policy on its website. The policy should explain exactly what data the company collects and who gets to see the data. It should also allow people a choice about having their information shared with others and indicate how people can opt out of data collection.

In addition, companies can offer web surfers the opportunity to review and correct information that has been collected, especially medical and financial data.

Despite the technical difficulties, government agencies are already working on Internet privacy guidelines; this means, in turn, that companies will also need internal guidelines, training, and leadership to ensure compliance.

D. Corporate Social Responsibility

A related business challenge relevant to OB is adopting a broader stakeholder perspective and looking beyond shareholder value or the short-term stock price. In general, this view is called

social responsibility. Definitions of *corporate social responsibility* often include businesses living and working together for the common good and valuing human dignity. An important part of this is how employers treat their employees.

Is it really the responsibility of businesses to be good citizens? Doing so can help a firm attract the best talent, and customers are increasingly favoring companies that do the right thing.

Although most agree with the importance of ethical behavior and socially responsible business practices in principle, some people still believe that managers should focus solely on stockholders' interests. Others argue that because business is an influential element of society, it has an obligation to solve problems of public concern, that it is in the enlightened self-interest of organizations to be socially responsible.

To have lasting effects, social responsibility efforts should be integrated into the culture of the organization.

Corporate sustainability initiatives can be top-down, with someone in a position of authority dictating to managers and employees what to do. Corporate sustainability efforts can also be grassroots, with employees identifying projects and taking the initiative to organize their own activities.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has created a variety of standards that help organizations gain international acceptance of their practices and outcomes. In addition to environmentally related standards such as sustainability and carbon emissions, the ISO publishes management standards including those for leadership, customer focus, involvement of people, and continual improvement.

VI. NEW EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

A final significant area of environmental change that is particularly relevant for businesses today involves what we call new employment relationships.

Two particularly important areas today involve the management of knowledge workers and the outsourcing of jobs to other businesses, especially when those businesses are in other countries. Managing temporary and contingency workers and tiered workforces is also becoming increasingly complex. The nature of psychological contracts is also changing.

A. The Management of Knowledge Workers

Traditionally, employees added value to organizations because of what they did or because of their experience. However, during today's "information age," many employees add value simply because of what they know. These employees are often referred to as *knowledge workers*.

As the importance of information-driven jobs grows, the need for knowledge workers will grow as well. However, these employees require extensive and highly specialized training, and not everyone is willing to make the human capital investments necessary to move into these jobs.

Compensation and related policies for knowledge workers must also be specially tailored.

B. Outsourcing and Offshoring

Outsourcing is the practice of hiring other firms to do work previously performed by the organization itself.

It is an increasingly popular strategy because it helps firms focus on their core activities and avoid getting sidetracked by secondary activities. Firms today often outsource numerous activities, including payroll, employee training, facility maintenance, and research and development.

Up to a point, at least, outsourcing makes good business sense in areas that are highly unrelated to a firm's core business activities. However, what has attracted considerably more attention in recent years is the growing trend toward outsourcing abroad in order to lower labor costs; this practice is often called *offshoring*.

C. Temp and Contingent Workers

Another trend that has impacted employment relationships in business involves the use of contingent or temporary workers.

A **contingent worker** is a person who works for an organization on something other than a permanent or full-time basis. Categories of contingent workers include independent contractors, on-call workers, temporary employees (usually hired through outside agencies), and contract and leased employees. Another category is part-time workers.

Managing contingent workers is not always straightforward, especially from a behavioral perspective. Expecting too much from such workers, for example, is a mistake that managers should avoid.

Managers must understand that they need to develop a strategy for integrating contingent workers according to some sound logic and then follow that strategy consistently over time.

D. Tiered Workforce

Yet another emerging issue in new employment relationships is what we call the tiered workforce. A **tiered workforce** exists when one group of an organization's workforce has a contractual arrangement with the organization objectively different from that of another group performing the same jobs.

These and similar arrangements, of course, may pose new challenges in the future. For instance, recently hired workers may come to feel resentment toward their more senior colleagues who are getting paid more for the same work.

E. The Changing Nature of Psychological Contracts

A final element of the business environment that both affects and is affected by employment relationships such as those discussed earlier is the **psychological contract**.

A psychological contract is a person's overall set of expectations regarding what he or she will contribute to the organization and what the organization will provide in return.

Figure 2.4 illustrates the essential nature of a psychological contract. The individual makes a variety of *contributions* to the organization—such things as effort, ability, loyalty, skills, time, and competencies.

In return for these contributions, the organization provides *inducements* to the individual. Some inducements, such as pay and career opportunities, are tangible rewards. Others, such as job security and status, are more intangible.

If either party sees an inequity in the contract, that party may initiate a change. The employee might ask for a pay raise or promotion, put forth less effort, or look for a better job elsewhere. The organization can also initiate change by training workers to improve their skills, by transferring them to another job or by firing them.

All organizations face the basic challenge of managing psychological contracts. They want value from their employees, and they need to give employees the right inducements.

Recent trends in downsizing and cutbacks have complicated the process of managing psychological contracts. Increased globalization of business also complicates the management of psychological contracts.

A related problem faced by international businesses is the management of psychological contracts for expatriate managers. In some ways, this process is more like a formal contract than are other employment relationships.

Summary and Application

Diversity is much more than demographics and can reflect combinations of characteristics in addition to a single attribute. There are many types of diversity, including surface-level and deep-level diversity.

Diversity affects individual and organizational outcomes through processes including social integration, differences in status and power, task conflict, relationship conflict, inclusion, and information processing. Barriers to inclusion include the “like me” bias, stereotypes, prejudice, perceptions of loss by persons who feel threatened by diversity initiatives, ethnocentrism, and unequal access to organizational networks. Organizations promote diversity through top management commitment, staffing, training, and mentoring.

Because societal culture influences the diverse values, customs, language, and expectations we bring with us to work, it is important to understand its effects on our own as well as on other people’s behaviors. Societal cultures can differ on a variety of characteristics, including collectivism, power distance, future orientation, and gender egalitarianism as well as determine what employees consider desirable leadership characteristics.

Globalization is playing a major role in the environment of many firms today. The volume of international trade has grown significantly and continues to grow at a very rapid pace. There are numerous cross-cultural differences and similarities that affect behavior within organizations.

Technological change has become a major driver for other forms of organizational change. It also has widespread effects on the behaviors of people inside an organization.

Although ethics has long been relevant to businesses and managers, one special aspect of business ethics, corporate governance, has also taken on increased importance. Ethics also increasingly relate to information technology.

A final significant area of organizational change facing organizations today involves new employment relationships. How well these employees are managed is seen as a major factor in determining which firms will succeed. Outsourcing is the practice of hiring other firms to do the work previously performed

by the organization itself. Contingent and temporary workers and the creation of a tiered workforce also pose special challenges.

Discussion Questions

1. Which do you think is more important to team performance: surface-level or deep-level diversity? Why?

Surface-level diversity refers to observable differences in people, including race, age, ethnicity, physical abilities, physical characteristics, and gender. Deep-level diversity is more important to team performance because it includes goals, values, decision-making styles, knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes. These dimensions directly affect team performance.

2. How can diversity create a competitive advantage for a firm?

Diversity can enhance a firm's competitive advantage because it enables all employees to contribute their full talents and motivation to the company. Effectively managing diversity brings out the best in employees, allowing them to contribute maximally to the firm's performance. Diversity can improve decision making, enhance creativity, and enable a company to better relate and respond to its customers.

3. If a subordinate came to you and said that they felt the company's new diversity hiring initiative was unfair and would compromise their well-deserved opportunities for advancement, how would you respond?

I would say that the company makes sure that highly qualified job candidates are diverse. Then I would point out that the company focuses on being a meritocracy, promotes awareness of how different groups communicate, and ensures that the assessment and promotion process does not misinterpret those styles. Finally, I would add that the company ensures that the promotion process proactively identifies diverse candidates to prevent inadvertently overlooking them.

4. What can leaders do to be effective when team members are from different cultures and have different expectations about how the leaders should behave?

Leaders can develop cultural awareness. This requires honestly examining their prejudices and biases, actively developing cross-cultural skills, learning from role models, and having a positive attitude about cultural issues. The key to cross-cultural success is awareness. A leader must be aware of how culture influences his or her interpretations of others, his or her behavior, and how people from other cultures see the leader.

5. Identify at least three ways in which the globalization of business affects businesses in your community.

Students probably will recognize that international business affects almost every aspect of business in every community. Within the work sphere, it influences product design, distribution, market segmentation, promotion, and pricing. At a higher level, it influences corporate objectives, policies, and strategies. Like it or not, every business is in the international marketplace.

6. What roles do changing technologies play in your daily activities?

Communication is faster and easier, and a wide range of options is available. Privacy may be encroached upon with greater ease than ever; unit costs of communication are lower. Entertainment is

also more varied in terms for format and accessibility, increasing a person's options. It may be more of a challenge to keep pace with the rapid changes in technology in the consumer products field as well as work-related technology, and the problem and pace of obsolescence are accelerating.

7. Do you think that concerns regarding ethics will become more or less important in business? Why?

Concerns about ethics will likely remain fresh in the minds of current managers and business students, perhaps fading in future generations, especially if other issues, such as a shrinking workforce or global catastrophes, emerge. As long as business schools and organizations themselves make an effort to remind the young about ethical issues, they will remain important, if not central, to managerial thinking.

8. What are your personal opinions about international outsourcing in the garment industry? Do you think that lower prices are worth sending U.S. jobs to other countries? Explain your answer.

If one has never lost one's job due to international outsourcing, the opinion might be very positive—it can reduce labor costs, make the organization more efficient and competitive, and help develop economies that are below par. There are downsides, of course, particularly revolving around the short-term effects on individual American workers and the communities in which they live from a sudden loss of jobs. Longer-term downsizing can force individuals and organizations alike to learn new skills, streamline their operations, and change for the better!

Understand Yourself Exercise—Global Perspective

1. Do you think that you were equally able to think and act locally as you interacted with people from other cultures?

Student answers will vary depending on the experiences they've had (context, cultures, potential language barriers, etc.).

2. What did you do well and what could you have done better in these interactions?

Student answers will vary, but all students should share at least one thing they did well and one area that they could have done better in. Encourage students to think beyond typical interactions with people and to closely consider the cultural elements involved.

3. What multicultural experiences can you seek out to enhance your global perspective?

Student answers will vary depending on their backgrounds, where they live, and their academic and career plans. If any students are having trouble, suggest they consider how technology can enhance their global perspectives. They should be able to come up with creative uses for social media, taking advantage of sites like YouTube, and using search engines to find newspapers and magazines from around the world.

Group Exercise—What Does Culture Mean To You?

Learning Objective: Explain how societal culture affects how people interpret others and how others interpret them.

Summary: This exercise is done as a class, and the instructor plays the role of class secretary. First working alone, students think about what “societal culture” means. For five minutes, they think about their own culture. They define a word and then write down the cultural dimensions to describe it. After five minutes, students share their ideas, which the instructor records. Students identify categories for placing the ideas. They then answer the following questions as a class.

Task:

1. How might multiculturalism create a competitive advantage for an organization?
2. What categories are the most important to teams working in organizations?
3. What categories are the least important to teams working in organizations?
4. What does your list suggest that managers wanting to promote a multicultural workplace might do?

Video Exercises

Videos and questions can be found in the eBook and MindTap video folder.

Ethical Decision Making at Black Diamond Equipment

Summary: Black Diamond Equipment specializes in climbing and skiing equipment. The global company looks for employees who share the company’s attitude, values, and passion toward outdoor sports and ethical values. Black Diamond also promotes fair labor practices, sustainability, and low environmental impact.

Task: As a class, watch “Black Diamond Equipment” and then individually consider the following questions. After you have come up with your own ideas, form groups of four to five people and discuss your insights. Be sure to nominate someone to serve as a spokesperson to share your ideas with the class.

1. How does Black Diamond integrate social responsibility into its culture?

The founders of Black Diamond began a culture of respect for people and the Earth early in the process of beginning the business. Social responsibility is fully integrated into Black Diamond’s business priorities, relevant to achieving business objectives, inclusive of both internal and external stakeholder needs, and consistent with the firm’s cultural values and brand identity. Black Diamond respects its employees and has a passion for outdoor extreme sports. The company attracts employees who have the same values.

2. How does the global nature of the company and its markets influence how it thinks about employee diversity?

Black Diamond naturally has to take a global view of its market in order to have a viable market size. Selling to customers in one country would not be enough, Black Diamond needs that conglomerate market. In order to be a truly global company and not just a company that sells globally, the management team is a collection of individuals from different countries. This group is integrated into decision making and product development. This keeps the needs of various cultures at the focus of developing products. Black Diamond would lose these global perspectives if they had a management team comprising individuals from one country.

3. How would you describe Black Diamond’s ethics in terms of how it treats its employees at the company’s factory partners in Vietnam, China, and Bangladesh? Do you think that it is appropriate for firms like Black Diamond to scrutinize its partner factories like this? Why or why not?

Black Diamond holds high ethical standards for the treatment of its employees in the company's factory partners. Black Diamond runs a certification program for these factories that must pass certain basic needs, such as a ventilated and well-lit factory. The company also offers English language programs, extra money for education, and more importantly, human respect. Student's answers may vary on whether they feel scrutiny is important. I feel scrutiny is important and it must be a continuous process, not a one-time inspection. The responsibility for how the company treats employees rests ultimately with top management. Control measures such as the certification process is one way for owners to know that their partners share their values.

The Ethics of AI

1. Imagine if, starting tomorrow, U.S. corporate hiring and promotion programs began using American-made AI software written by a young, white male who built their subtle stereotypes against minorities, women, and older workers into the algorithms. What types of hiring and promotion conditions would different populations expect to face, given their projected increases or decreases by the year 2050?

The biased algorithms would prevent hiring and promotion of older workers, women, and minorities. Long-term U.S. demographic projections show that one in five people will be 65 or over by 2030. By 2050, the total population will grow but the non-Hispanic white population will decrease and Hispanic populations will increase. Also by 2050, the black population and the Asian population will increase. Using the biased software, women and minority workers will face hiring and promotion obstacles.

2. Continuing from the first question, what type of conditions would American companies using such software expect to face given the trends in the global environment of today's world?

International trade continues to increase due to communication and transportation improvements, companies wishing to increase their markets, to control costs and reduce labor costs, and in response to competition. Companies using this software would resist moving operations outside the U.S., putting them at a cost, and competitive disadvantage. They would not have the labor cost flexibility of their competitors and may lose market ground to those competitors. Overall, the company would suffer from a lack of diversity and face a critical hiring shortage given the population projections.

3. How would this fictional American company, using biased AI hiring and promotion software and lacking corporate governance, treat its employees? How would employees likely treat the company? How would employees and the organization treat other economic agents? Is the company being socially responsible?

There will likely be discrimination in hiring, pay, and promotion with poor working conditions, few benefits or rights, and little privacy. Employees may divulge or sell company secrets and information or simply behave dishonestly in general, calling in sick more often and even stealing supplies from the company. The company would likely treat customers, competitors, stockholders, suppliers, dealers, and unions unfairly. Since the definition of social responsibility includes businesses living and working together for the common good and valuing human dignity, this company is not being socially responsible.

Now What?

Imagine trying to write a project status report for Happy Time Toys with three other team members when an older team member tries to take the project over, believing that you're too inexperienced to do a good job. *What do you say or do?* Go to this chapter's "Now What?" video, watch the challenge video, and choose a response. Be sure to also view the outcomes of the two responses you didn't choose.

OB Concepts Applied: surface-level diversity; relational demography; managing age in the workplace; effects of age differences that violate social status norms; diversity as a source of competitive advantage; relationship conflict; inclusion; information processing; social categorization theory; stereotypes; culture of inclusion

Discussion Questions

1. What type(s) of barriers to inclusion exist for this group?

Relational demography refers to a group member's similarities to and differences from other group members. Bill is older and more experienced than Allison and Alex and perceives himself to be different from them. This awareness leads to a haughty attitude. "I know a lot more than you do, and I've written many of these—You kids can get back to your regular work." In fact, Bill feels like a token because he is in the numerical minority in a group based on the characteristic of age.

The group is experiencing task conflict that refers to conflict over issues, such as deadlines and work processes. Educational diversity is associated with greater task conflict (incorrect response #1). Bill feels that his experience gives him superior skills in writing reports. "I've written many of these—I'll have no problem getting it done." Alex and Allison feel more qualified to write the report and try to exclude Bill. "We came out of the best universities and have more current knowledge than you do."

Other sources of conflict include both surface-level diversity, visible differences in people, including age, and deep-level diversity, invisible differences such as knowledge. Bill is much older than Alex and Allison, but they have greater expertise in marketing and sales.

2. How can diversity be leveraged as a source of competitive advantage for this group?

Diversity can be a source of competitive advantage because group members can use their diverse backgrounds to develop a more comprehensive view of a problem, create a broader list of possible solutions, and offer a wider variety of information and expertise.

Alex suggests that the group divides up the report based on each member's area of expertise. Allison drafts the sales section, Alex drafts the marketing and financials sections, and Bill handles competitor analysis. Research shows that innovative companies intentionally use heterogeneous teams to solve problems.

3. If you were the CEO of Happy Time Toys, how would you create a culture of inclusion to help your company realize the benefits of not only age-related diversity but all types of diversity?

If diverse employees are excluded from decision making or are marginalized (incorrect response #2), their potential contributions are not realized. Alex says to Bill, "You do have more experience than we do writing this report. It probably will be better if you write it." However, Bill didn't have a good mastery of the marketing plan and couldn't finish the report on time. As a result, all three group members received disappointing performance evaluations because the report was supposed to be a team effort.

Inclusion refers to the sense of being safe, valued, and engaged in a group regardless of differences from other group members. To create a culture of inclusion, Happy Time Toys should highlight the strengths of each employee through increased involvement. Alex could further develop marketing and financial expertise through seminars, continuing education, and challenging assignments.

It is essential that the company avoids barriers to inclusion such as stereotyping others based on age. Bill thought Alex and Allison were “kids” who didn’t know anything. Alex and Allison thought Bill’s knowledge was dated because they perceived him as an old person. Stereotypes are both negative and erroneous—as new graduates from the best universities, Alex and Allison knew more than Bill about marketing, finance, and sales, but Bill knew more about writing the report. Happy Time Toys should also avoid the barrier to inclusion called “a perceived threat of loss.” Since Bill has been the predominant employee for years, he feels angry if he perceives that younger employees pose a direct threat to his career opportunities. He wanted to write the report himself because he felt the need to protect his career by impeding the careers of Alex and Allison (incorrect response #1). Ultimately, the three employees collaborated on the report and achieved inclusiveness.