Mind the Gaps: What Are We Missing in Teaching Management?

Laura Paglis Dwyer

University of Evansville

lp39@evansville.edu

Overview

This discussion session addresses the question of where we may be falling short in serving students' post-graduation needs. That is, what should management majors know how to do that our O.B. and H.R. courses don't cover? What topics might we be neglecting completely, or not covering in sufficient depth, or with insufficient emphasis on practical application?

* “What business schools teach doesn’t always correspond to what managers value” (Porter, 2007).
* 185 managers were asked to identify the top five most urgent problems they face. Topics related directly to dealing with employees (e.g., conflict, communication, employee performance and attitudes, developing schedules, fairly distributing work) were collectively listed 61% of the time. In contrast, topics that could be loosely categorized as not directly employee-related (e.g., developing strategy, determining appropriate organizational structure, managing change, social/environmental responsibility) were mentioned rarely – about 1% of the time for developing strategy – or not at all (Brotheridge & Long, 2007).
* Miles (2005) cites an “increasingly widely shared indictment of MBA curricula that produce a simplistic faith in rational analysis in complex settings.”
* The AACSB’s Management Education Task Force noted in its 2002 report, “Management Education at Risk”, that management skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, and negotiation continue to be cited by many alumni and recruiters as the greatest deficiencies of business education.
* Business graduates recognize the gap between their educational preparation and the reality of their jobs. In one survey, almost two-thirds said “they used their MBA skills marginally or not at all in their first management assignments” (Hill, 1992).

Discussion questions:

1. What are some topics or skills that don’t get enough attention in management textbooks?
2. How or why do you think these topics get overlooked in management coursework? Implications for curriculum design?
3. Do you have any teaching suggestions (resources, activities, etc.) for covering these topics in class?

Two teaching cases on the topic of delegating work:

Dwyer, L. P. (2015). An entrepreneur’s delegation dilemma. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Education,* 8, 49-56.

Paglis, L. L. (2014). Let’s teach what managers really do: A case on managerial delegation. *Journal of the Academy of Business Education*, 15 (Spring), 119-129*.*

References

Brotheridge, C. M. and S. Long. “The ‘Real World’ Challenges of Managers: Implications for Management Education,” *Journal of Management Development*, 26 (No. 9, 2007), 832-842.

Hill, L. A. *Becoming a Manager: Mastery of a New Identity*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, (1992).

Miles, R. E. “Telling It Like It Ought To Be,” *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4 (No. 2, 2005), 214-216.

Porter, J. “B-schools Soft on ‘Soft Skills’,” *BusinessWeek Online*, (August 3, 2007), 2-2.