



Teaching Conference for  
Management Educators

Proposal for the 2017 OBTC

Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through the Integration of  
Management Concepts and Theories and Current News and  
Events Using the Wall Street Journal

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**Title:            Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through the  
Integration of Management Concepts and Theories and  
Current News and Events Using the Wall Street  
Journal**

**Abstract:** Employers have expressed a desire to hire college graduates who can exhibit critical thinking skills and possess an understanding of current business trends and events and their implications for strategic decision making. This session will present three learning activities (Analyze and Critique, Point-Counterpoint, Management Consultants) using the Wall Street Journal, the #1 source of business news. These activities will provide students with a platform for developing critical thinking, verbal communication, teamwork, and presentation skills. These activities will also enhance the relevance and usefulness of management concepts and theories in understanding and addressing challenging problems facing organizations.

**Key Words:** Critical Thinking Skills, Teamwork, Verbal Communication Skills, Presentation Skills

## **Teaching Implications**

The objectives of this session are:

- To develop critical thinking skills related to current news events and topics.
- To develop verbal communication, teamwork, and presentation skills through the analysis and discussion of current news events and topics.
- To enhance student engagement, understanding, and application of management concepts and theories to “real world” issues and events occurring in organizations.

## **Contribution to Management Pedagogy/Andragogy**

Too often, students react to management concepts and theories as being “just a bunch of common sense” or “irrelevant” for their future job and career success as leaders, managers, and individual contributors after graduation. The learning activities presented in this session will help to change these concerns for many students by providing a concrete methodology including templates and a facilitator’s guide for instructors that will make it easy for them to integrate into a wide range of management courses including strategic management, leadership, organizational behavior, and human resource management.

## **Session Description and Plan**

Total Session Time: 60 Minutes

Session Overview and Objectives (5 minutes)

Overview of Wall Street Journal Resources (10 minutes)

### **Learning Activity #1: Analyze and Critique (15 minutes)**

Learning Objective: For students to work in teams to use management concepts or theories specified in the discussion questions to analyze issues in an article.

Participant Involvement: Participants will be broken up into small groups of 3-5 participants and given a short article from the Wall Street Journal to read along with 1-2 discussion questions. Each team will discuss the article and summarize their responses to the discussion questions on flip chart paper. Each team will make a brief presentation of their analysis with other teams providing feedback and comments.

### Examples of Wall Street Journal Articles That Can Be Used

“Apple Sets its Sights on Hollywood with Plans for Original Content”  
(Strategic Management)

“Wells Fargo Offers Breakdown of Those Affected by Sales Scandal”  
(Human Resource Management)

“Softbank and One Web CEOs Diverge in Leadership Styles”  
(Organizational Behavior)

### **Learning Activity #2: Point-Counterpoint (15 minutes)**

Learning Objective: For students to work in teams and to argue for one specific position on a controversial issue addressed in an article.

Participant Involvement: Participants will be broken up into small groups of 3-5 participants and given a short article from the Wall Street Journal to read along with 1-2 discussion questions. Each team will discuss the article and summarize their responses to the discussion questions on flip chart paper. Each team will make a brief presentation of their analysis including a formal statement and justification of their position. Other teams will be able to ask questions and offer comments to refute the positions of other teams.

### Examples of Wall Street Journal Articles That Can Be Used

“Voters Could Push the Minimum Wage to \$12 or Higher in Four Years”  
(Human Resource Management)

“Nintendo Looks to Switch Fortunes with Hybrid Games Console” (Strategic Management)

“Do Bike Helmet Laws Do More Harm than Good?” (General Management)

### **Learning Activity #3: Management Consultants (15 minutes)**

Learning Objective: For students to work in teams to analyze the problems facing an organization and to develop a set of recommendations for addressing the problems.

Participant Involvement: Participants will be broken up into small groups of 3-5 participants and given a short article from the Wall Street Journal to read that describes one or more key challenges facing an organization. Each team will discuss the article and summarize their recommendations on flip chart paper. Each team will make a brief presentation of their analysis and recommendations for addressing the problem(s) facing the organization. Other teams will have an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

#### **Examples of Wall Street Journal Articles That Can Be Used**

“Can Reckitt Benckiser Clean Up its Reputation?” (General Management)

“Sears Buys Time with Craftsman Brand Sale, Store Closures”

“Volkswagen’s Road to Recovery Has Bigger Bumps Ahead”

#### **Application to Conference theme**

By leveraging resources available via the Wall Street Journal website and other news sources, students are exposed to activities that encourage agile and critical thinking that will help to prepare them for an ever changing world.

#### **Unique Contribution to OBTC**

This proposal has not been submitted to any other conference for consideration.