Chapter 7
OD interventions: People and process

Learning objectives

- To demonstrate an understanding of the interventions used to manage individual and group performance
- To identify the characteristics of goal-setting, performance appraisal and reward systems
- To understand human process interventions, including the T-group, process consultation and team building
- To review and understand the effectiveness of these interventions in producing change

Activities

Review questions
(See text p. 268)

1  How can you best describe a ‘process consultant’?

A process consultant implements process consultation (PC), which is a general model for carrying out helping relationships in groups. PC helps managers, employees and groups assess and improve processes, such as communication, interpersonal relations, group performance and leadership. Schein argues that effective consultants and managers are good helpers, aiding others to get things done and to achieve their set goals. Process consultation is an approach to performing this helping relationship. It aims to ensure that those receiving help own their problems and gain the skills and expertise to diagnose and solve them. Thus, it is an approach to helping people and groups to help themselves.

Schein defines process consultation as ‘a set of activities on the part of the consultant that helps the client to perceive, understand and act upon the process events which occur in the client’s environment’. The process consultant does not offer expert help by providing solutions to problems as in the doctor-patient model. Rather, the process consultant observes groups and people in action, helps them diagnose the nature and extent of their problems and teaches them how to solve their own problems.
The stages of process consultation follow those described for planned change in Chapter 2 – Understanding change, and Chapter 3 – Leadership and the role of the change agent. However, when used in process consultation, these stages are not as clear-cut, because each step constitutes an intervention. For example, the process consultant has intervened merely by conducting some preliminary interviews with group members. By being interviewed, the members may begin to see the situation in a new light.

2 **Describe the two major components of group problem-solving.**

The two major components of group problem-solving are *problem identification* and *decision making*. People often distort, omit or ignore information around them that provides important cues regarding the existence of problems, and make the wrong decision as a result. To achieve the optimal solution or decision, groups must be able to recognise and identify the problem and to distinguish between problems (either task-related or interpersonal) and symptoms. However, in instances where cohesive groups tend to accept questionable solutions, groupthink may occur. A ‘devil’s advocate’ may help to achieve the best solution by challenging every solution suggested.

3 **What are the basic implications of the model for conflict resolution?**

The model of conflict resolution implies that conflicts occur because some individuals show concern for their own outcomes (distribution) and some for others’ outcomes (integration). Also, the way that conflict is solved can have both positive and negative effects on individuals and organisations. Constructive conflicts can bring problems that have previously been ignored out into the open, whereas disruptive conflicts can yield strong negative emotions among organisation members.

4 **In a third-party consultation, what skill must the third party develop in order to be successful?**

Third-party intervention focuses on conflicts arising between two or more people within the same organisation. Conflict is inherent in groups and organisations and can arise from a variety of sources, including differences in personality, task orientation and perceptions among group members, and competition over scarce resources.

It is important to emphasise that conflict is neither good nor bad *per se*. Conflict can enhance motivation and innovation and lead to a greater understanding of ideas and views. On the other hand, conflict can prevent people from working together constructively and destroy necessary task interactions among group members. Consequently, third-party intervention is used primarily in situations where conflict significantly disrupts necessary task interactions and work relationships among members.
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Third-party intervention varies considerably according to the kind of issues that underlie the conflict. Conflict can arise over substantive issues, such as work methods, pay rates and conditions of employment or it can emerge from interpersonal issues, such as personality conflicts and misperceptions. When applied to substantive issues, conflict-resolution interventions traditionally involve resolving labour-management disputes through arbitration or mediation. These methods require considerable training and expertise in law and labour relations and are not generally considered to be part of OD practice.

However, when conflict involves interpersonal issues, OD has developed approaches to control and resolve it. These third-party interventions help the parties to interact directly with each other to facilitate the diagnosis and resolution of the conflict. That ability to facilitate conflict resolution is a basic OD skill and applies to all of the process interventions discussed in this chapter. Consultants, for example, frequently help organisation members to resolve interpersonal conflicts that invariably arise during process consultation and team building.

Third-party consultation interventions cannot resolve all interpersonal conflicts in organisations, nor should they. Interpersonal conflicts are frequently not severe or disruptive enough to warrant attention. Sometimes conflicts may simply fade away without any intervention.

Third-party consultants must acquire some skills in order to be successful. These include:

- considerable skill at diagnosis, intervention and follow-up
- high sensitivity to their own feelings as well as those of others
- the ability to recognise that some tension and conflict are inevitable
- the knowledge that too much conflict can be dysfunctional to both individuals and an organisation
- sensitivity to the situation and the ability to use different intervention strategies and tactics to help
- professional expertise in third-party intervention
- the ability to be perceived as neutral and unbiased on the issues and outcomes of the conflict resolution.

5 The results of team building can be classified into three main areas. What are they?

The results of team building can be classified into the following three areas:

- individual level – gaining a better understanding of the way authority, inclusion, emotions, control and power affect problem-solving and data-gathering, so the team can then begin with different alternatives
• group level – the cultivation of a spirit of openness, trust and risk taking and, therefore, the ability to perform more effectively
• organisational level – increased productivity, improved quality.

6 Outline five forms of intervention. When are they used?
Continuous change interventions extend transformational change into a nonstop process of strategy setting, organisation designing and implementing the change. Rather than focus on creating and implementing a particular strategy and organisation design, continuous change addresses the underlying structures, processes and activities for generating new forms of competitive advantage. Thus, the focus is on learning, changing and adapting – on how to produce a constant flow of new strategies and designs and not just on how to transform existing ones.

Self-designing organisations have the capability to alter themselves fundamentally and continuously. Creating them is a highly participative process in which multiple stakeholders set strategic direction, design appropriate structures and processes and implement them. This intervention includes considerable innovation and learning as organisations gain the capacity to design and implement significant changes continually.

Learning organisations are those with the ability to learn how to change and improve themselves constantly. Distinct from individual learning, this intervention helps organisations move beyond solving existing problems to gaining the capability to improve constantly. It results in the development of a learning organisation where empowered members take responsibility for changing the organisation and learning how to do this better and better.

Built-to-change organisations include design elements and managerial practices that are all geared for change, not just normal operations. This intervention provides design and implementation guidelines for building change capability into the structures, processes and behaviours of the organisation so that it can respond continually to a rapidly changing environment.

Human resource management interventions are concerned with the management of individual and group performance: goal setting, performance appraisal and reward systems. Human process interventions are aimed at interpersonal relations and group dynamics.

Structural interventions are designed to help organisations to gain a comprehensive understanding of their environments and to devise appropriate responses to external demands. This includes an assessment of the larger environment in order to develop strategies for relating to it more effectively. The
intervention results in a clear strategic mission for the organisation, as well as action plans for influencing the environment in favoured directions.

7 What are the characteristics of a system-wide process intervention?

Waddell, Cummings and Worley (see text p. 257) define system-wide process intervention as a change program directed at improving processes such as:

- organisational problem-solving;
- leadership ‘visioning’; and
- task accomplishment between groups, for a major subsystem or for an entire organisation.

There are several types of process interventions or approaches:

Organisation confrontation meeting

Waddell, Cummings and Worley define the confrontation meeting as an intervention designed to mobilise the resources of an entire organisation to identify problems, set priorities and action targets, and begin working on identified problems. Members are encouraged to identify and confront pressing issues and to utilise the problem-solving resources of a major sub-system or an entire organisation effectively. This approach is especially relevant for organisations undergoing stress (see text p. 258).

Intergroup relations

The intergroup-relations approach is designed to help solve a variety of organisational problems. This consists of two interventions:

- **Microcosm groups** involve a generic change strategy addressing processes such as the co-ordination of organisational units and diversity within the organisation.
- **Intergroup conflict resolution meetings** are specifically oriented toward conflict processes. These aim to mitigate dysfunctional conflicts between groups or departments and typically involve a consultant helping the two groups to understand the causes of the conflict and choose appropriate solutions.

Large-group interventions

These interventions involve getting a broad variety of stakeholders into a meeting to clarify important values, develop new ways of working, articulate a new vision for the organisation or solve pressing organisational problems.

**Grid® Organization Development**

This intervention specifies a particular method for managing an organisation. It is a packaged organisation development program that includes standardised instruments for measuring organisational practices and specific procedures for helping organisations achieve the prescribed approach.
8 Identify the characteristics of intergroup conflict resolution methods.

Conflict occurring between groups can, at times, be an effective and productive method for identifying and resolving problems within an organisation. At other times, conflict results in groups becoming defensive and polarised, which affects productivity and effectiveness, and causes animosity. The degree of direction maintained in the conflict determines whether conflict will be advantageous or detrimental. Intergroup resolution aims to provide this direction.

Ultimately, intergroup conflict resolution aims to help two groups within an organisation resolve dysfunctional conflict. This requires an external consultant to develop a strategy of open communication, objective criticism and feedback. This approach involves open discussion of misperceptions and discrepancies that each group holds about each other and tries to identify the inaccuracies contained within them. Then, if each group can work through these problems to see a realistic vision of the other, then team cohesion may follow.

Different approaches to resolving intergroup conflict form a continuum, varying from behavioural solutions to keep the relevant parties physically separate to attitudinal change solutions that require intense interaction with important rewards clearly tied to co-operation.

9 What are the two basic assumptions about managerial behaviour in the management grid?

The management grid assumes that there are two areas underlying the managerial behaviour or thought processes:

- **Concern for production**: This emphasises accomplishing productive tasks. It covers a wide range of considerations, such as the number of creative ideas developed; the quality of policy decisions; the thoroughness and quality of staff services, efficiency and workload measurements; or the number of accounts or units processed.

- **Concern for people**: This emphasises those who get the work done. This encompasses a diversity of issues, including concern for the individual’s personal worth; good working conditions; a degree of involvement or commitment to completing the job; security; a fair salary structure and fringe benefits; and good social and other relationships.

10 What are the steps involved in improving interdepartmental/intergroup relationships?

A basic strategy for improving interdepartmental or intergroup relationships is to change the perceptions (perhaps, more accurately, misperceptions) that the two
groups have of each other. One formal approach for accomplishing this consists of a 10-step procedure, originally described by Blake and his associates:

1. A consultant external to the two groups obtains their agreement to work directly on improving intergroup relationships. (The use of an outside consultant is highly recommended because without the moderating influence of such a neutral third party, it is almost impossible for the two groups to interact without becoming deadlocked and polarised in a defensive position.)

2. A time is set for the two groups to meet; preferably away from normal work situations.

3. The consultant, together with the managers of the two groups, describes the purpose and objectives of the meeting: the development of better mutual relationships, the exploration of the perceptions the groups have of each other, and the development of plans for improving the relationship. The two groups are asked the following or similar questions: ‘What qualities or attributes best describe our group?’, ‘What qualities or attributes best describe the other group?’ and ‘How do we think the other group will describe us?’ Then the two groups are encouraged to establish norms of openness for feedback and discussion.

4. The two groups are then placed in separate rooms and asked to write their answers to the three questions. Usually, an outside consultant works with each group to help the members become more open and to encourage them to develop lists that accurately reflect their perceptions of their own image and of the other group.

5. After completing their lists, the two groups come together again. A representative from each group presents the written statements. Only the two representatives are allowed to speak. The primary objective at this stage is to make certain that the images, perceptions and attitudes are presented as accurately as possible and to avoid the arguments that might arise if the two groups openly confronted each other. Questions, however, are allowed to ensure that both groups clearly understand the written lists. Justifications, accusations or other statements are not permitted.

6. When it is clear that the two groups thoroughly understand the content of the lists, they again separate. By this time, a great number of misperceptions and discrepancies have already been brought to light.

7. The task of the two groups (almost always with a consultant as a process observer) is to analyse and review the reasons for the discrepancies. The emphasis is on solving the problems and reducing the misperceptions.

8. When the two groups have worked through the discrepancies, as well as the areas of common agreement, they meet to share both the identified discrepancies and their problem-solving approaches to those discrepancies.
9 The two groups are then asked to develop specific plans of action for solving specific problems and for improving their relationships.

10 When the two groups have gone as far as possible in formulating action plans, at least one follow-up meeting is scheduled so that the two groups can report on actions that have been implemented, identify any further problems that have emerged and, where necessary, formulate additional action plans.

11 What are the components of the Johari window?
At the covert or hidden level of communication, sometimes one thing is said but another meant, thus giving a double message. Luft has described this phenomenon in what is called the Johari window. Figure 7.2, a diagram of the Johari window, shows that some personal issues are perceived by both the individual and others (cell 1). Other people are aware of their own issues, but they conceal them from others (cell 2). In this situation, persons may have certain feelings about themselves or about others in the work group that they do not share. Refer to Figure 7.2, p. 244.

12 What are the essential characteristics of ‘large scale interventions’?
The essential characteristics of large scale interventions include:

- Scanning units which monitor the environment.
- Collective structures to reduce/spread risk and share expertise.
- Proactive responses including engaging in political activity to influence government laws and regulations; seeking government regulation to control entry to industries; gaining legitimacy in the wider society by behaving in accordance with valued cultural norms; acquiring control over raw materials or markets by vertical and horizontal integration; introducing new products and services, using advertising to shape customer tastes and preferences.
- OD practitioners require additional knowledge and skills, such as competitive strategy, finance, marketing and political science, which are necessary to conduct such large-scale change.

Discussion and essay questions
(See text pp. 268-269)

1 What is a T-group? Discuss the basic objectives of T-groups. What are their strengths and weaknesses?
A T-group is ‘a small, unstructured group in which participants learn from their own interactions and evolving dynamics about issues such as interpersonal relations, personal growth, leadership and group dynamics’. The basic objectives of T-groups are:
• to increase the understanding, insight and self-awareness of one’s own behaviour and its impact on others, including the ways others interpret one’s behaviour
• to increase understanding and sensitivity about others’ behaviours and to gain a better interpretation of both verbal and nonverbal clues
• to gain a better understanding and awareness of group and intergroup processes
• to increase diagnostic skills in interpersonal and intergroup situations
• to improve the ability to transform learning into action, so that real-life interventions will succeed in increasing member satisfaction, output or effectiveness
• to improve individuals’ ability to analyse their own interpersonal behaviour in order to achieve more satisfying, rewarding and effective interpersonal relationships.

The strengths and weaknesses of T-groups relate to their impact on both the individual and the organisational level. At the individual level, the use of T-groups can help people gain insight into their own and others’ feelings and behaviours. In other words, a better understanding of group dynamics helps individuals to become more productive. Similarly, it was found that T-group training could bring about changes in individuals’ work situations. For instance, individuals become more flexible in role behaviour; there is more openness, receptivity and awareness within individuals; they engage in more open communication with better listening skills; and they become more independent. At the organisational level, T-groups were found to improve productivity and absenteeism and increase overall employee satisfaction and attitudes.

On the other hand, the T-group results are also sometimes unreliable, as some participants may not attend T-group sessions voluntarily. Limited information is available about the differences between voluntary and non-voluntary participants. Also, the T-group focus is based primarily on interpersonal behaviour and, thus, may not take into account the effect of culture.

Additional activity
Divide students into groups of three to five, and ask them to identify and discuss the ways in which they would implement T-groups in their own workplaces.

2 Describe the similarities and differences between a normative approach, such as Grid® Organization Development, and an organisation confrontation meeting.
Blake and Mouton’s Grid® Organization Development proposes an effective way to manage organisations. Conversely, an organisation confrontation meeting presents
only a process for mobilising resources, rather than actually specifying a definitive model to be applied.

Normative approaches, like Grid® Organization Development, fundamentally differ from organisation confrontation meetings, which assume inherent conflict between the needs of the organisation and of the people. In contrast, the Grid® Organization Development approach purports that the most effective managerial style recognises the needs of both the organisation and its members; as such, it integrates the two by involving people in making decisions about the strategies and conditions of work. These differences make each process suited for different situations. The organisation confrontation meeting is most appropriate for organisations undergoing stress.

There are, however, certain similarities between the two approaches. For instance, each process recognises that discussion, deliberation and debate over organisational issues results in a more committed workforce and achievable objectives. In practice, debate, for example, may involve dividing the workforce into groups and encouraging employees to recognise stereotypes and misperceptions. In doing so, it is hoped that negative polarisation between organisational units will decline, leading to a more committed, motivated and effective workforce.

3 Discuss the similarities and differences between an organisation confrontation meeting and an intergroup conflict resolution intervention.

An organisation confrontation meeting is similar to an intergroup conflict resolution meeting in that both processes seek to highlight problems, set action targets and resolve the recognised issues. Similarly, each approach encourages members to identify and confront pressing issues and effectively utilise the organisation’s problem-solving resources.

Both approaches are useful to implement when an organisation is confronted with stress. For instance, unproductive conflict between groups will generally result in a stressful environment within an organisation, thereby making an intergroup conflict resolution intervention appropriate. Likewise, an organisation confrontation meeting is most successful when implemented in an organisation undergoing stress.

A specific difference between the two groups is that the organisation confrontation meetings involve getting a broad variety of stakeholders into a large meeting to clarify important values, develop new ways of working, articulate a new vision for the organisation or solve pressing organisational problems. In contrast, the intergroup conflict intervention only seeks to address the two specific groups involved in the dysfunctional environment.
4 Outline the steps and processes in Bennis’s use of Blake’s basic design to improve relationships between two groups of State Department officials: high-level administrative officers, and officers in the Foreign Service. How might they be used in a parallel situation within an organisation? Are they appropriate? What changes, if any, might be required?

Blake’s describes ten step process is described in Review Question 10. Students should be referred to the Bennis reference and asked to complete the grid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External consultant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set time for meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultant describes purpose and objectives with group leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groups separately describe qualities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groups come together to present image, perceptions. Clarity of understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groups separate and consider any outlying misunderstandings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groups, with consultant observer, solve problem and reduce misperceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groups meet to share identified discrepancies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groups develop specific plans of action</td>
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<td>Follow up meeting to report on implemented actions</td>
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This intervention can be used in any situation where two groups are in conflict, be it in a business or social situation. The OD practitioner, as facilitator of the resolution, needs to be sensitive to negative changes in response and manage them proactively.

The processes are appropriate with any two groups who perceive inadequacies in the relationship between the two groups. The key attribute of the process is that the individual groups must work to solve their own deficits as much as the other group.
Changes could include the use of combined group work if the facilitator is confident in managing the groups without breakdown occurring.

5 The text discusses the use of microcosm groups and, as an example, outlines the use of such a group to address diversity issues within an organisation. Could the same or similar technique be used to resolve incidents of racial intolerance in the general community? If so, how? If not, why not?

A microcosm group is made up of members who represent a spectrum of ethnic backgrounds, cultures and races, and can be created to address diversity issues in the organisation. In addition to addressing diversity problems, microcosm groups have been used to carry out organisation diagnoses, solve communications problems, integrate two cultures, smooth the transition to a new structure and address dysfunctional political processes.

Such groups can and have been used by OD practitioners who work in the area of social conflict. The key interventions include ensuring that all key stakeholders are included in the group, that agreements and commitments are made prior to the group meeting, and that all discussions will be in good faith. Microcosm groups work through ‘parallel processes’, which are the unconscious changes that take place in individuals when two or more groups interact. After the groups have interacted, members often find that their characteristic patterns of roles and interactions change to reflect the roles and dynamics of the group with whom they were relating. Put simply, one group seems to ‘infect’ and become ‘infected’ by the other group.

Microsm groups will not be successful until all the stakeholders are ready to engage in social change. Some will see that as an attack on their culture, religion or ethnicity and have to be ‘made ready’ prior to engaging with the other parties to the group.

Application—Critical thinking questions

These questions are ideal for organising students into groups of three to five to debate the issues. You could extend the debate by being flexible and responsive to their comments. There are no right or wrong answers for these questions as they are intended to challenge students to think about how theory might be applied to actual organisations and situations.

7.1 The government of New Zealand issued the following news release:

1 The Mayor stated: ‘Mr Poole advised us some time ago that he and the Council’s leadership team had voluntarily opted not to receive any remuneration increases or bonuses this year as part of Council-
wide saving measures in response to the recession.’ Discuss this statement and think about why the Council’s CEO and its leadership would not want to receive their bonuses. Ask yourself: would you do the same?

The most popular model to describe this relationship is the value expectancy theory. In addition to explaining how performance and rewards are related, it suggests requirements for designing and evaluating reward systems.

The value expectancy model posits that employees will expend effort to achieve performance goals that they believe will lead to outcomes that they value. However, those valued outcomes need to be known to be available. In this case, because of the GFC it was unlikely that the organisation was going to be in a position to pay over and above base salaries. It was not going to look good for the CEO if they demanded the bonuses and the idea of pre-empting a Council decision not to pay was likely to place the CEO in a strong position for the future.

Students should be encouraged to consider that reward is not necessarily monetary based and that through this type of decision they can place themselves in very strong long term positions within the organisation.

2 Do you think this type of decision will catch on in the corporate environment? In your answer think about the environmental influences that might have occurred in the Council’s management structure and influenced the CEO’s thinking.

During times of adversity, employees are forced to consider their options from a much broader perspective than just monetary reward. The context of the GFC resulted in retrenchment, few salary increases and a dearth of other opportunities, so employed people opted to sit tight in their current roles. That also included an expectation from employers that a higher level of performance would be delivered to ensure the safety of employment.

A key environmental influence was the forthcoming local body election where the current mayor was in danger of being replaced by a more left wing candidate. The CEO wisely placed himself and other senior employees in a position where they had as much social capital – ‘brownie points’ – on their side.

3 ‘Employees are likely to set higher goals than those assigned by management.’ If the remuneration freeze applied to all Council staff and not only to senior management, and the Council’s targets were met across the board, what impact do you think the freeze might have on employees’ willingness to set ‘higher goals than those assigned by management’ in the future? Why?

The key objectives of reward-systems interventions are to identify the intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes (rewards) that are highly valued and to link them to the achievement of desired performance goals. Performance contingency is based on
the premise that if targets are achieved or higher goals are met, then rewards should be given to reinforce that behaviour. While the CEO could expect that higher goals would be met during a time of extreme turbulence or hardship, it is unlikely that the higher achieving behaviour will be continued if it is not rewarded in some way.

To the extent that rewards are available, durable, equitable, timely, visible and performance-contingent, they can support and reinforce organisational goals, work designs and employee involvement.

### 7.2 FT top 50 women in world business

1. **Why do you think that in the twenty-first century articles such as this one are still written? Think about how women are perceived in the modern-day corporate environment.**

While the status of women in the boardroom has definitely improved, the improvement has not been as fast as desired. Those countries where there were good role models such as Norway, where there is a compulsory quota requirement for all publicly accountable organisations, and New Zealand – which for a time had women occupying all its senior positions of Governor General, Prime Minister and Chief Justice – maintained a small advantage, but without the role models the change has only been sustained in public sector roles.

While some research indicates that women have strength in the boardroom, it seems that women themselves do not always chose to take the governance roles. Sometimes that is because of the social responsibilities which women still carry the major share of, but at other times it is because of the masculine style which is incongruous with the way most women do business.

2. **If women had been the majority instead of the minority in the corporate and financial world, do you think the recent global financial crisis would have occurred?**

There is research to suggest that women on boards are more enquiring in relation to finances and audit of organisations. Women tend to have a higher need for more intrinsic rewards such as job security and job enrichment. However, whether that would have been enough to deter the events leading up to the GFC is doubtful as business cycles have their own patterns.

3. **‘Studies by Catalyst and McKinsey in the US and Europe have found a correlation between the number of women in a company’s leadership and the company’s profitability.’ What might be the reasons for this correlation? How can companies take best advantage of those skills?**

These results tend to be based on the feminine characteristic of being team players rather than the overpowering need for individual leadership, attention to detail,
especially audit, and an inbuilt mechanism (based on mothering characteristics) to keep the peace between team members and work towards the common good.

Women at the board table are often the consensus builders and, rather than being cheerleaders, they are often the challengers to an argument. Students should be referred to the work of Richard Leblanc. The following website is informative: www.womenonboards.com.au

4 In your own experience, what differences, if any, have you found in the approach to managing by a female compared to a male manager?

Students should be encouraged to list the attributes of both males and females in management situations. Males have often been conditioned to usurp the leadership role, even if they do not have the experience or skill to do so. Conversely, females often opt to take the subservient role even though many are better prepared than their male counterparts. Men often have more focus on pleasing superiors while women focus on getting the job done in the most efficient way; women can more often multitask, men prefer to focus on one task at a time sometimes to the detriment of getting other tasks underway or completed.

An interesting phenomenon is being to be seen in the workplace and that is the androgenisation of roles where both masculine and feminine qualities are exhibited by both sexes. Students should be encouraged to seek out research on this subject.

Additional activity

This is an ideal application to get students to reflect on what they like and dislike about male and female managers. Arrange students in groups of three to five, and have them discuss, based on their own experiences, what attributes they like and dislike about masculine and feminine management styles.

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<tr>
<th>Feminine styles</th>
<th>Masculine Styles</th>
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<td>Attributes with examples</td>
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7.3 Developing an action plan for self-development

1 Do you think ‘self-development is the key to getting ahead in your career’? In your answer, think about your own job (if applicable) –
have you thought about self-development? If you don't have, or have never had, a job would you use a career self-development program?

One characteristic which distinguishes the ‘go-getter’ from others is their tendency to take every opportunity to get ahead in their career. That is usually in the form of education, post graduate studies, MBAs or speciality education to compliment the job they are doing. Others will also take the opportunity for experiences which might not usually be available, but which stand out in the pile of CVs.

Some life coaches suggest that for senior positions a substantial formal qualification every ten years is a requirement. That may mean post graduate study or high level leadership programs offered by leading business schools.

Ask students to write down where they want to be in five years time and beside that write down what they have to do to get there in terms of education, experience and the skills they need to gain. Then get them to make a plan about how they will achieve their goals. Follow that with class discussion identifying the differences in goals set. Discuss why some are more ambitious than others.

2 As a university student, do you think there are areas of self-development that a student could undertake? Think about areas that you can improve.

This topic could focus on skills that are required to make being a student easier. Most universities offer short courses on the use of Microsoft Word, managing long documents and databases. That includes being proficient with Endnote or similar referencing systems and getting skills in searching the World Wide Web.

Students can be reminded that all roles, including that of student, have a skill set that is desirable if they are to optimise the role.

3 Have you set yourself an action plan to achieve your career goals? How often do you review that plan and your goals in the light of changing personal and environmental circumstances?

As an extension to Question 1, get students to identify aspects of the current environment, both business and social, which might impact on their career goals. They should be encouraged to consider the influence which the rapid changes in technology have had on some roles and professions and how they can future-proof their own skill set.

4 Not all companies provide internal training schemes. Apart from university, what other training possibilities suited to you have you observed? How might you measure their appropriateness?

Students should be encouraged to research the requirements for careers they are interested in and the knowledge, skills and abilities required.

There is a huge variety of options available depending on the change in behaviour being sort. This might range from driving lessons and day release courses
for program use through to residential leadership programs and self-development courses such as Outward Bound.

Measuring the appropriateness can be contentious as private organisations rarely publish negative reports, so asking those who have completed the courses or getting advice from a careers counsellor is a good idea. In some countries the qualifications authority will provide a system which clearly identifies the level of difficulty reflected in qualifications.

**Additional suggested reading**


NZ Ministry of Women’s Affairs and IODNZ (2009) Women on Boards A Competitive Advantage. NZ Govt, Wellington


**References**


ii ibid.
