

Values  
Attitudes  
Job Satisfaction

## CHAPTER

## 4

# VALUES, ATTITUDES, AND JOB SATISFACTION

When you prevent me from doing anything I want to do, that is persecution; but when I prevent you from doing anything you want to do, that is law, order and morals.

—G. B. Shaw



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- 1** Explain the source of an individual's value system
- 2** List the dominant values in today's work force
- 3** Describe the three primary job-related attitudes
- 4** Summarize the relationship between attitudes and behavior
- 5** Identify the role consistency plays in attitudes
- 6** Clarify how individuals reconcile inconsistencies
- 7** Explain what determines job satisfaction
- 8** State the relationship between job satisfaction and behavior
- 9** Describe the current level of job satisfaction among Americans in the workplace
- 10** Identify four employee responses to dissatisfaction



**Nina Lui (see photo) is an elementary school teacher at P.S. 234 in New York City.** Lori Gaunt manages a bakery and café in Seattle. Two very different jobs, yet Nina and Lori share one thing in common: They both express very positive attitudes about their work.<sup>1</sup>



“I work in a terrific school,” says Nina. “Collaboration is encouraged, and we’re given the time to sit together and bounce ideas off one another—to be a think tank. There’s a lot of debate and a sense of encouragement and support.” Lori Gaunt’s comments sound very similar, “I feel as if my opinions count a lot, and I’ve been instrumental in making changes. The owner isn’t hands-off, but she loves what I do and tells me to run with it. It’s neat to have that much freedom.”

Are Nina’s and Lori’s attitudes toward work unusual nowadays? In a world where layoffs are a way of life and we read regularly about increased stress levels in the workplace, are Nina and Lori exceptions? Or do the majority of workers feel positive about their jobs? You might be surprised by the answers.

A recent Gallup poll surveyed Americans nationwide to find out their attitudes toward their jobs and their workplaces.<sup>2</sup> In spite of all the negative stories you may have read in the media, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 representing “extremely satisfied,” 71 percent of the respondents rated their level of satisfaction with their place of employment at 4 or 5, while only 9 percent rated it at 1 or 2. Closer analysis of the findings

indicated that a large part of these positive findings could be explained by the fact that jobs were generally meeting the primary needs of workers. They considered the following factors critical to their satisfaction and job performance: the opportunity to do what they do best; having their opinions count; and getting the opportunity to learn and grow. Sixty-two of the respondents indicated that in the previous seven days they had received recognition or praise for good work; and 84 percent said they had had the opportunity at work to learn and grow during the previous year.

These positive attitudes toward work are not an aberration. Studies consistently show that workers are satisfied with their jobs. This is applicable over time as well as across national boundaries. Regardless of which studies you choose to look at, when American workers are asked if they are satisfied with their jobs, the results tend to be very similar: Between 70 and 80 percent report they're satisfied with their jobs.<sup>3</sup> These numbers do tend to vary with age—with older workers reporting the highest satisfaction. But even young people—under age 25—report levels of satisfaction in excess of 70 percent.<sup>4</sup>

While there was some concern in the late 1970s that satisfaction was declining across almost all occupational groups,<sup>5</sup> recent reinterpretations of these data and additional longitudinal studies indicate that job satisfaction levels have held steady for decades—through economic recessions as well as prosperous times.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, these results are gen-

- ◆ Between 70 and 80 percent of American workers report they are satisfied with their jobs.



erally applicable to other developed countries. For instance, comparable studies among workers in Canada, Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, France, and Mexico indicate more positive than negative results.<sup>7</sup>

How does one explain these findings? One answer is that whatever it is people want from their jobs, they seem to be getting it. But two additional points should be added.

First, people don't select jobs randomly. They tend to gravitate toward jobs that are compatible with their interests, values, and abilities.<sup>8</sup> Since people are likely to seek jobs that provide a good person–job fit, reports of high satisfaction shouldn't be totally surprising. Second, based on our knowledge of cognitive dissonance theory, we might expect employees to resolve inconsistencies between dissatisfaction with their jobs and their staying with those jobs by not reporting the dissatisfaction. So these positive findings might be tainted by efforts to reduce dissonance. ♦



In this chapter, we look more carefully at the concept of job satisfaction and what managers can do to increase it among their workers. First, however, we consider how values influence employee behavior.

## Values

Is capital punishment right or wrong? How about racial quotas in hiring—are they right or wrong? If a person likes power, is that good or bad? The answers to these questions are value laden. Some might argue, for example, that capital punishment is right because it is an appropriate retribution for crimes like murder and treason. However, others might argue, just as strongly, that no government has the right to take anyone's life.

**Values** represent basic convictions that “a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence.”<sup>9</sup> They contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual's ideas as to what is right, good, or desirable. Values have both content and intensity attributes. The content attribute says that a mode of conduct or end-state of existence is *important*. The intensity attribute specifies *how important* it is. When we rank an individual's values in terms of their intensity, we obtain that person's **value system**. All of us have a hierarchy of values that forms

- ◆ Is capital punishment right or wrong? If a person likes power, is that good or bad? The answers to these questions are value laden.

### values

Basic convictions that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence.

### value system

A hierarchy based on a ranking of an individual's values in terms of their intensity.



our value system. This system is identified by the relative importance we assign to such values as freedom, pleasure, self-respect, honesty, obedience, and equality.

## Importance of Values

Values are important to the study of organizational behavior because they lay the foundation for the understanding of attitudes and motivation and because they influence our perceptions. Individuals enter an organization with preconceived notions of what “ought” and what “ought not” to be. Of course, these notions are not value free. On the contrary, they contain interpretations of right and wrong. Furthermore, they imply that certain behaviors or outcomes are preferred over others. As a result, values cloud objectivity and rationality.

Values generally influence attitudes and behavior.<sup>10</sup> Suppose that you enter an organization with the view that allocating pay on the basis of performance is right, whereas allocating pay on the basis of seniority is wrong or inferior. How are you going to react if you find that the organization you have just joined rewards seniority and not performance? You’re likely to be disappointed—and this can lead to job dissatisfaction and the decision not to exert a high level of effort since “it’s probably not going to lead to more money, anyway.” Would your attitudes and behavior be different if your values aligned with the organization’s pay policies? Most likely.



## Sources of Our Value Systems

Where do our value systems come from? A significant portion is genetically determined. The rest is attributable to factors like national culture, parental dictates, teachers, friends, and similar environmental influences.

Studies of twins reared apart demonstrate that about 40 percent of the variation in work values is explained by genetics.<sup>11</sup> So the values of your biological parents play an important part in explaining what your values will be. Still the majority of the variation in values is due to environmental factors.

When we were children, why did many of our mothers tell us “you should always clean your dinner plate”? Why is it that, at least historically in North America, achievement has been considered good and being lazy has been considered bad? The answer is that, in every culture, certain values have developed over time and are continuously reinforced. Achievement, peace, cooperation, equity, and democracy are societal values that are considered desirable in North America. These values are not fixed, but when they change, they do so very slowly.

A significant portion of the values we hold is established in our early years—from parents, teachers, friends, and others. Many of your early ideas of what is right and wrong were probably formulated from the views expressed by your parents. Think back to your early views on such topics as education, sex, and politics. For the



most part, they were the same as those expressed by your parents. As you grew up and were exposed to other value systems, you may have altered a number of your values. For example, in high school, if you desired to be a member of a social club whose values included the conviction that “every person should carry a gun,” there is a good probability that you changed your value system to align with that of the members of the club, even if it meant rejecting your parents’ value that “only gang members carry guns, and gang members are bad.”

Interestingly, values are relatively stable and enduring.<sup>12</sup> This has been explained as a result of both their genetic component and the way in which they’re learned.<sup>13</sup> Concerning this second point, we were told as children that certain behaviors or outcomes were always desirable or always undesirable. There were no gray areas. You were told, for example, that you should be honest and responsible. You were never taught to be just a little bit honest or a little bit responsible. It is this absolute or “black-or-white” learning of values, when combined with a significant portion of genetic imprinting, that more or less assures their stability and endurance.

The process of questioning our values, of course, may result in a change. We may decide that these underlying convictions are no longer acceptable. More often, our questioning merely acts to reinforce those values we hold.

◆ Values are relatively stable and enduring.

## **Exhibit 4-1 Terminal and Instrumental Values in Rokeach Value Survey**

### **Terminal Values**

A comfortable life (a prosperous life)  
An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)  
A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)  
A world at peace (free of war and conflict)  
A world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)  
Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)  
Family security (taking care of loved ones)  
Freedom (independence, free choice)  
Happiness (contentedness)  
Inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)  
Mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)  
National security (protection from attack)  
Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)  
Salvation (saved, eternal life)  
Self-respect (self-esteem)  
Social recognition (respect, admiration)  
True friendship (close companionship)  
Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)

### **Instrumental Values**

Ambitious (hardworking, aspiring)  
Broad-minded (open-minded)  
Capable (competent, effective)  
Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)  
Clean (neat, tidy)  
Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)  
Forgiving (willing to pardon others)  
Helpful (working for the welfare of others)  
Honest (sincere, truthful)  
Imaginative (daring, creative)  
Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)  
Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)  
Logical (consistent, rational)  
Loving (affectionate, tender)  
Obedient (dutiful, respectful)  
Polite (courteous, well mannered)  
Responsible (dependable, reliable)  
Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)

Source: M. Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

## Exhibit 4-2 Mean Value Ranking of Executives, Union Members, and Activists (Top Five Only)

Executives		Union Members		Activists	
Terminal	Instrumental	Terminal	Instrumental	Terminal	Instrumental
1. Self-respect	1. Honest	1. Family security	1. Responsible	1. Equality	1. Honest
2. Family security	2. Responsible	2. Freedom	2. Honest	2. A world	2. Helpful of peace
3. Freedom	3. Capable	3. Happiness	3. Courageous	3. Family	3. Courageous security
4. A sense of accomplishment	4. Ambitious	4. Self-respect	4. Independent	4. Self-	4. Responsible respect
5. Happiness	5. Independent	5. Mature love	5. Capable	5. Freedom	5. Capable

Source: Based on W.C. Frederick and J. Weber, "The Values of Corporate Managers and Their Critics: An Empirical Description and Normative Implications," in W.C. Frederick and L.E. Preston (eds.), *Business Ethics: Research Issues and Empirical Studies* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1990), pp. 123–44.

## Types of Values

Can we classify values? The answer is: Yes! In this section, we review two approaches to developing value typologies.

**ROKEACH VALUE SURVEY** Milton Rokeach created the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS).<sup>14</sup> The RVS consists of two sets of values, with each set containing 18 individual value items. One set, called **terminal values**, refers to desirable end-states of existence. These are the goals that a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime. The other set, called **instrumental values**, refers to preferable modes of behavior, or means of achieving the terminal values. Exhibit 4-1 gives common examples for each of these sets.

Several studies confirm that the RVS values vary among groups.<sup>15</sup> People in the same occupations or categories (e.g., corporate managers, union members, parents, students) tend to hold similar values. For instance, one study compared corporate executives, members of the steelworkers' union, and members of a community activist group. Although a good deal of overlap was found among the three groups,<sup>16</sup> there were also some very significant differences. (See Exhibit 4-2). The activists had value preferences that were quite different from those of the other two groups. They ranked "equality" as their most important terminal value; executives and union members ranked this value 14 and 13, respectively. Activists ranked "helpful" as their second-highest instrumental value. The other two groups both ranked it 14. These differences are important, since executives, union members, and activists all have a vested interest in what corporations do. "When corporations and critical stakeholder groups such as these [other]

### **terminal values**

Desirable end-states of existence; the goals that a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime.

### **instrumental values**

Preferable modes of behavior or means of achieving one's terminal values.

two come together in negotiations or contend with one another over economic and social policies, they are likely to begin with these built-in differences in personal value preferences . . . Reaching agreement on any specific issue or policy where these personal values are importantly implicated might prove to be quite difficult.”<sup>17</sup>

**CONTEMPORARY WORK COHORTS** Your author has integrated a number of recent analyses of work values into a four-stage model that attempts to capture the unique values of different cohorts or generations in the U.S. work force.<sup>18</sup> (No assumption is made that this framework would universally apply across all cultures.)<sup>19</sup> Exhibit 4-3 proposes that employees can be segmented by the era in which they entered the work force. Because most people start work between the ages of 18 and 23, the eras also correlate closely with the chronological age of employees.

Workers who grew up influenced by the Great Depression, World War II, U.S. leadership in world manufacturing, the Andrews Sisters, and the Berlin blockade entered the work force from the mid-1940s through the late 1950s believing in the Protestant work ethic. Once hired, they tended to be loyal to their employer. In terms of the terminal values on the RVS, these employees are likely to place the greatest importance on a comfortable life and family security.

### Exhibit 4-3 Dominant Values in Today's Work Force

Stage	Entered the Work Force	Approximate Current Age	Dominant Work Values
I. Protestant work ethic	Mid-1940s to late 1950s	55–75	Hard work, conservative; loyalty to the organization
II. Existential	1960s to mid-1970s	40–55	Quality of life, nonconforming, seeks autonomy; loyalty to self
III. Pragmatic	Mid-1970s to late 1980s	30–40	Success, achievement, ambition, hard work; loyalty to career
IV. Generation X	1990 to present	Under 30	Flexibility, job satisfaction, leisure time; loyalty to relationships

Employees who entered the work force during the 1960s through the mid-1970s were influenced heavily by John F. Kennedy, the civil rights movement, the Beatles, the Vietnam war, and baby-boom competition. They brought with them a large measure of the “hippie ethic” and existential philosophy. They are more concerned with the quality of their lives than with the amount of money and possessions they can accumulate. Their desire for

autonomy has directed their loyalty toward themselves rather than toward the organization that employs them. In terms of the RVS, freedom and equality rate high.

Individuals who entered the work force from the mid-1970s through the late-1980s reflect the society's return to more traditional values, but with far greater emphasis on achievement and material success. As a generation, they were strongly influenced by Reagan conservatism, the defense buildup, dual-career households, and \$150,000 starter homes. Born toward the end of the baby-boom period, these workers are pragmatists who believe that ends can justify means. They see the organizations that employ them merely as vehicles for their careers. Terminal values like a sense of accomplishment and social recognition rank high with them.

Our final category encompasses what has become known as generation X. Their lives have been shaped by globalization, economic stagnation, the fall of communism, MTV, AIDS, and computers. They value flexibility, life options, and the achievement of job satisfaction. Family and relationships are very important to this cohort. Money is important as an indicator of career performance, but they are willing to trade off salary increases, titles, security, and promotions for increased leisure time and expanded lifestyle options. In search of balance in their lives, these more recent entrants into the work force are less willing to make personal sacrifices for the sake

- ◆ The lives of generation X have been shaped by globalization, economic stagnation, the fall of communism, MTV, AIDS, and computers.



of their employer than previous generations were. On the RVS, they rate high on true friendship, happiness, and pleasure.

An understanding that individuals' values differ but tend to reflect the societal values of the period in which they grew up can be a valuable aid in explaining and predicting behavior. Employees in their thirties and sixties, for instance, are more likely to be conservative and accepting of authority than their existential co-workers in their forties. And workers under 30 are more likely than the other groups to balk at having to work weekends and more prone to leave a job in mid-career to pursue another that provides more leisure time.

## Values, Loyalty, and Ethical Behavior

Did a decline in business ethics set in sometime in the late 1970s? The issue is debatable.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, a lot of people think so. If there has been a decline in ethical standards, perhaps we should look to our four-stage model of work cohort values (see Exhibit 4-3) for a possible explanation. After all, managers consistently report that the actions of their bosses is the most important factor influencing ethical behavior in their organizations.<sup>21</sup> Given this fact, the values of those in middle and upper management should have a significant bearing on the entire ethical climate within an organization.

Through the mid-1970s, the managerial ranks were dominated by Protestant-work-ethic types (Stage I) whose loyalties were to their employer. When faced with ethical dilemmas, their decisions were made in terms of what was best for their organization. Beginning in the mid-to-late 1970s, individuals with existential values began to rise into the upper levels of management. They were soon followed by pragmatic types. By the late 1980s, a large portion of middle- and top-management positions in business organizations were held by people from Stages II and III.

The loyalty of existentials and pragmatics is to self and careers, respectively. Their focus is inward and their primary concern is with “looking out for number one.” Such self-centered values would be consistent with a decline in ethical standards. Could this help explain the alleged decline in business ethics beginning in the late 1970s?

The potential good news in this analysis is that recent entrants to the work force, and tomorrow’s managers, appear to be less self-centered. Since their loyalty is to relationships, they are more likely to consider the ethical implications of their actions on others around them. The result? We might look forward to an uplifting of ethical standards in business over the next decade or two merely as a result of changing values within the managerial ranks.

- ◆ Recent entrants to the work force, and tomorrow’s managers, appear to be less self-centered.



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## OB in the News

### Ford Uses Generational “Value Groups” to Help Develop Cars

James C. Bulin, a mid-level design staffer at Ford Motor Co., has come up with an idea that is radically changing the way Ford designs its vehicles. He breaks potential buyers into generational value groups, then uses these data to tailor the design and marketing of a specific vehicle to a specific target audience.

Bulin has identified six distinct generations, each with shared traits and tastes that influence its car-buying habits. His six categories are:

*Depression kids* (born 1920–34). They always plan for a rainy day. They are also status seekers, preferring cars that are longer, lower, wider, and more colorful. They trade up every year.

They believe trucks belong on a farm or construction site.

*Quiet generation* (1935–45). Members of this generation prefer cars with individuality to generic look-alike vehicles. They have not embraced trucks, except for custom wheels.

*Baby boomers* (1946–64). They seek instant gratification and want others to think they make smart purchase decisions. They have embraced minivans and sport-utility vehicles.

*Lost generation* (1965–69). Members of this group feel disenfranchised because they grew up in the boomers’ shadow. They’re waiting for life to get better and are not affluent. They drive

small sport-utility vehicles and offbeat niche vehicles.

*Birth dearth* (1970–77). These individual grew up in the rich 1980s and acquired a taste for excellence, which their jobs won't support. They drive sport-utility vehicles and practical sedans.

*Baby boomlet* (1978–present). Although they have a strong desire for the affluence of their parents' generation, they're unlikely to have as much money. Their car choices are still forming.

Using these value groups, Bulin targeted the preferences of baby boomers. For instance, boomers equate strength with being trim and fit. So Ford made the F-150 look lean and mus-

cular, narrowing the cab by 2 inches and lengthening it by 5 inches. They also added a rearward-swinging third door behind the front passenger door to ease entry and exit for boomers with growing children.

This approach has been remarkably effective. While the old model pickup got two-thirds of its sales from people over age 50, 80 percent of the new models are expected to be bought by boomers. Sales for the newly redesigned F-150s are up 18 percent over the older model.

*Source:* Based on K. Naughton, "How Ford's F-150 Lapped the Competition," *Business Week*, July 29, 1996, pp. 74–76.



## Take It to the Net

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## Values Across Cultures

In chapter 1, we described the new global village and said “managers have to become capable of working with people from different cultures.” Because values differ across cultures, an understanding of these differences should be helpful in explaining and predicting behavior of employees from different countries. A comparison of American and Japanese cultures can help illustrate this point.<sup>22</sup>

American children are taught early the values of individuality and uniqueness. In contrast, Japanese children are indoctrinated to be “team players,” to work within the group, and to conform. A significant part of an American student’s education is to learn to think, analyze, and question. Their Japanese counterparts are rewarded for recounting facts. These different socialization practices reflect different cultures and, not surprisingly, result in different types of employees. The average U.S. worker is more competitive and self-focused than the Japanese worker. Predictions of employee behavior, based on U.S. workers, are likely to be off-target when they are applied to a population of employees—such as the Japanese—who prefer and perform better in standardized tasks, as part of a work team, with group-based decisions and rewards.

**A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING CULTURES** One of the most widely referenced approaches for analyzing variations among cultures has

been done by Geert Hofstede.<sup>23</sup> He surveyed more than 116,000 IBM employees in 40 countries about their work-related values. He found that managers and employees vary on five value dimensions of national culture. They are listed and defined as follows:

- ◆ **Power distance.** The degree to which people in a country accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. Ranges from relatively equal (low power distance) to extremely unequal (high power distance).
- ◆ **Individualism versus collectivism.** Individualism is the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups. Collectivism is the equivalent of low individualism.
- ◆ **Quantity of life versus quality of life.** Quantity of life is the degree to which values like assertiveness, the acquisition of money and material goods, and competition prevail. Quality of life is the degree to which people value relationships, and show sensitivity and concern for the welfare of others.<sup>24</sup>
- ◆ **Uncertainty avoidance.** The degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situations. In countries that score high on uncertainty avoidance, people have an increased level of anxiety, which manifests itself in greater nervousness, stress, and aggressiveness.
- ◆ **Long-term versus short-term orientation.** People in cultures with long-term orientations look to the future and value thrift and

### **power distance**

A national culture attribute describing the extent to which a society accepts that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally.

### **individualism**

A national culture attribute describing a loosely knit social framework in which people emphasize only the care of themselves and their immediate family.

### **collectivism**

A national culture attribute that describes a tight social framework in which people expect others in groups of which they are a part to look after them and protect them.

### **quantity of life**

A national culture attribute describing the extent to which societal values are characterized by assertiveness and materialism.



persistence. A short-term orientation values the past and present, and emphasizes respect for tradition and fulfilling social obligations.

Exhibit 4-4 provides a summary of how a number of countries rate on these five dimensions. For instance, not surprisingly, most Asian countries are more collectivist than individualistic. On the other hand, the United States ranked highest among all countries surveyed on individualism.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR OB** Most of the concepts that currently make up the body of knowledge we call *organizational behavior* have been developed by Americans using American subjects within domestic contexts. A comprehensive study, for instance, of more than 11,000 articles published in 24 management and organizational behavior journals over a ten-year period revealed that approximately 80 percent of the studies were done in the United States and had been conducted by Americans.<sup>25</sup> Follow-up studies continue to confirm the lack of cross-cultural considerations in management and OB research.<sup>26</sup> What this means is that (1) not all OB theories and concepts are universally applicable to managing people around the world, especially in countries where work values are considerably different from those in the United States; and (2) you should take into consideration cultural values when trying to understand the behavior of people in different countries.

### **quality of life**

A national culture attribute that emphasizes relationships and concern for others.

### **uncertainty avoidance**

A national culture attribute describing the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid them.

### **long-term orientation**

A national culture attribute that emphasizes the future, thrift, and persistence.

### **short-term orientation**

A national culture attribute that emphasizes the past and present, respect for tradition, and fulfilling social obligation.

## Exhibit 4-4 Examples of Cultural Dimensions

Country	Power Distance	Individualism*	Quantity of Life**	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long-term Orientation***
China	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
France	High	High	Moderate	High	Low
Germany	Low	High	High	Moderate	Moderate
Hong Kong	High	Low	High	Low	High
Indonesia	High	Low	Moderate	Low	Low
Japan	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
Netherlands	Low	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Russia	High	Moderate	Low	High	Low
United States	Low	High	High	Low	Low
West Africa	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low

\* A low score is synonymous with collectivism. \*\* A low score is synonymous with high quality of life. \*\*\* A low score is synonymous with a short-term orientation.

Source: Adapted from G. Hofstede, "Cultural Constraints in Management Theories," *Academy of Management Executive*, February 1993, p. 91.

## Attitudes

**Attitudes** are evaluative statements—either favorable or unfavorable—concerning objects, people, or events. They reflect how one feels about something. When I say "I like my job," I am expressing my attitude about work.

### attitudes

Evaluative statements or judgments concerning objects, people, or events.



Attitudes are not the same as values, but the two are interrelated. You can see this by looking at the three components of an attitude: cognition, affect, and behavior.<sup>27</sup>

The belief that “discrimination is wrong” is a value statement. Such an opinion is the **cognitive component** of an attitude. It sets the stage for the more critical part of an attitude—its **affective component**. Affect is the emotional or feeling segment of an attitude and is reflected in the statement “I don’t like Jon because he discriminates against minorities.” Finally, and we’ll discuss this issue at considerable length later in this section, affect can lead to behavioral outcomes. The **behavioral component** of an attitude refers to an intention to behave in a certain way toward someone or something. So, to continue our example, I might choose to avoid Jon because of my feeling about him.

Viewing attitudes as made up of three components—cognition, affect, and behavior—is helpful toward understanding their complexity and the potential relationship between attitudes and behavior. But for clarity’s sake, keep in mind that the term *attitude* essentially refers to the affect part of the three components.

## Sources of Attitudes

Attitudes, like values, are acquired from parents, teachers, and peer group members. We are born with certain genetic predispositions.<sup>28</sup>

### **cognitive component of an attitude**

The opinion or belief segment of an attitude.

### **affective component of an attitude**

The emotional or feeling segment of an attitude.

### **behavioral component of an attitude**

An intention to behave in a certain way toward someone or something.

Then, in our early years, we begin modeling our attitudes after those we admire, respect, or maybe even fear. We observe the way family and friends behave, and we shape our attitudes and behavior to align with theirs. People also imitate the attitudes of popular individuals and those they admire and respect. If the “right thing” is to favor eating at McDonald’s, you’re likely to hold that attitude.

In contrast to values, your attitudes are less stable. Advertising messages, for example, attempt to alter your attitudes toward a certain product or service: If the people at Ford can get you to hold a favorable feeling toward their cars, that attitude may lead to a desirable behavior (for them)—your purchase of a Ford product.

In organizations, attitudes are important because they affect job behavior. If workers believe, for example, that supervisors, auditors, bosses, and time-and-motion engineers are all in conspiracy to make employees work harder for the same or less money, then it makes sense to try to understand how these attitudes were formed, their relationship to actual job behavior, and how they might be changed.

## Types of Attitudes

A person can have thousands of attitudes, but OB focuses our attention on a very limited number of job-related attitudes. These job-related attitudes tap positive or negative evaluations that

employees hold about aspects of their work environment. Most of the research in OB has been concerned with three attitudes: job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment.<sup>29</sup>

**JOB SATISFACTION** The term *job satisfaction* refers to an individual's general attitude toward his or her job. A person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive attitudes toward the job, while a person who is dissatisfied with his or her job holds negative attitudes about the job. When people speak of employee attitudes, more often than not they mean job satisfaction. In fact, the two are frequently used interchangeably. Because of the high importance OB researchers have given to job satisfaction, we'll review this attitude in considerable detail later in this chapter.

**JOB INVOLVEMENT** The term **job involvement** is a more recent addition to the OB literature.<sup>30</sup> While there isn't complete agreement over what the term means, a workable definition states that job involvement measures the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with his or her job and considers his or her perceived performance level important to self-worth.<sup>31</sup> Employees with a high level of job involvement strongly identify with and really care about the kind of work they do.

◆ Most of the research in OB has been concerned with three attitudes: job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment.

**job involvement**  
The degree to which a person identifies with his or her job, actively participates in it, and considers his or her performance important to self-worth.



High levels of job involvement have been found to be related to fewer absences and lower resignation rates.<sup>32</sup> However, it seems to more consistently predict turnover than absenteeism, accounting for as much as 16 percent of the variance in the former.<sup>33</sup>

**ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT** The third job attitude we shall discuss is **organizational commitment**, which is defined as a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization.<sup>34</sup> So, high *job involvement* means identifying with one's specific job, while high *organizational commitment* means identifying with one's employing organization.

As with job involvement, the research evidence demonstrates negative relationships between organizational commitment and both absenteeism and turnover.<sup>35</sup> In fact, studies demonstrate that an individual's level of organizational commitment is a better indicator of turnover than the far more frequently used job satisfaction predictor, explaining as much as 34 percent of the variance.<sup>36</sup> Organizational commitment is probably a better predictor because it is a more global and enduring response to the organization as a whole than is job satisfaction.<sup>37</sup> An employee may be dissatisfied with his or her particular job and consider it a temporary condition, yet not be dissatisfied with the organization as a whole. But when

### **organizational commitment**

The degree to which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization.

dissatisfaction spreads to the organization itself, individuals are more likely to consider resigning.

## Attitudes and Consistency

Did you ever notice how people change what they say so it doesn't contradict what they do? Perhaps a friend of yours has consistently argued that the quality of American cars isn't up to that of the imports and that he'd never own anything but a foreign import. But his dad gives him a late-model American-made car, and suddenly they're not so bad. Or, when going through sorority rush, a new freshman believes that sororities are good and that pledging a sorority is important. If she fails to make a sorority, however, she may say, "I recognized that sorority life isn't all it's cracked up to be, anyway!"

Research has generally concluded that people seek consistency among their attitudes and between their attitudes and their behavior. This means that individuals seek to reconcile divergent attitudes and align their attitudes and behavior so they appear rational and consistent. When there is an inconsistency, forces are initiated to return the individual to an equilibrium state where attitudes and behavior are again consistent. This can be done by altering either the attitudes or the behavior, or by developing a rationalization for the discrepancy.

- ◆ Did you ever notice how people change what they say so it doesn't contradict what they do?





The enthusiasm of these Pep Boys employees demonstrates an attitude that fits with their company's philosophy of giving customers extraordinary "Banner Service." High organizational commitment means employees work hard to ensure that customers drive away happy with their car-repair and maintenance products and service. Committed employees are important to Pep Boys, as the company's reputation of offering excellent service facilitates the opening of new stores and service centers throughout the country.

For example, a recruiter for the ABC Company, whose job it is to visit college campuses, identify qualified job candidates, and sell them on the advantages of ABC as a place to work, would be in conflict if he personally believes the ABC Company has poor working conditions and few opportunities for new college graduates. This recruiter could, over time, find his attitudes toward the ABC Company becoming more positive. He may, in effect, brainwash



Back



Forward



Home



Reload



Images



Open



Print



Find



Stop

Netsite : 

## OB in the News

### “How Do Tobacco Executives Live with Themselves?”

**H**ow do tobacco executives explain their responsibility for a product that kills more than 420,000 Americans a year? How do they reject the overwhelming evidence connecting smoking with lung and throat cancer, emphysema, and heart disease? By insisting that direct causation has not been proved? These executives are quick to point out to critics that their product is legal, that they don't encourage nonsmokers to take up smoking, and that what they are really promoting is freedom of choice.

Philip Morris is both the largest tobacco company in America and the largest consumer-products company in the world. A reporter from *The*

*New York Times* interviewed several Philip Morris executives. One of them was Steven C. Parrish, 44, general counsel and senior vice president for external affairs, Philip Morris, U.S.A. He and his wife have a daughter, 11, and a son, 4. For the record, he does smoke cigarettes.

After graduating from the University of Missouri, Parrish joined a Kansas City law firm and later became a partner in the firm. In his law practice he represented Philip Morris. The company approached Parrish about working full time.

Philip Morris is a great company in terms of its business success, its reputation, and all that sort of thing. The people really impressed me.

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And I really like representing the tobacco workers, who run the machinery and make the cigarettes. Really good people—the kind I thought I'd represent when I was growing up [in a small Missouri town]. . . . I didn't have any qualms about joining a tobacco company.

"A year or two ago, my daughter came home from school, and said, 'I have a homework assignment I need you to help me with. Tomorrow we're going to talk about drugs like marijuana, cocaine, and alcohol. We're also going to talk about cigarettes and whether or not they're addictive. I want to know what you think about cigarettes.' And I told her that a lot of people believe that cigarette smoking is addictive but I don't believe it. And I told her the Surgeon General says some 40 million people have quit smoking on their own. But if she

asked me about the health consequences, I would tell her that I certainly don't think it's safe to smoke. It's a risk factor for lung cancer. For heart disease. But it's a choice. We're confronted with choices all the time. Still, I'd have to tell her that it might be a bad idea. I don't know. But it might be.

"You might say that we ought to do everything we can do reasonably to make sure that nobody ever smokes another cigarette. But you wouldn't say that people who work for tobacco companies can't look themselves in the mirror because they're somehow lesser human beings than people who work for a drug company or a steel company."

Based on R. Rosenblatt, *The New York Times Magazine*, March 20, 1994, pp. 34–41.

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## Take It to the Net

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We invite you to visit the Robbins page on the Prentice Hall Web site at:  
<http://www.prenhall.com/robbinsorgbeh>  
for this chapter's World Wide Web exercise.

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himself by continually articulating the merits of working for ABC. Another alternative would be for the recruiter to become overtly negative about ABC and the opportunities within the firm for prospective candidates. The original enthusiasm that the recruiter may have shown would dwindle, probably to be replaced by open cynicism toward the company. Finally, the recruiter might acknowledge that ABC is an undesirable place to work, but think that, as a professional recruiter, his obligation is to present the positive side of working for the company. He might further rationalize that no workplace is perfect; therefore, his job is not to present both sides of the issue, but rather to present a rosy picture of the company.

## Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Can we also assume from this consistency principle that an individual's behavior can always be predicted if we know his or her attitude on a subject? If Mr. Jones views the company's pay level as too low, will a substantial increase in his pay change his behavior, that is, make him work harder? The answer to this question is, unfortunately, more complex than merely a "Yes" or "No."

Leon Festinger, in the late 1950s, proposed the theory of **cognitive dissonance**.<sup>38</sup> This theory sought to explain the linkage between attitudes and behavior. Dissonance means an inconsistency. Cognitive dissonance refers to any incompatibility that an

**cognitive dissonance**  
Any incompatibility between two or more attitudes or between behavior and attitudes.



individual might perceive between two or more of his or her attitudes, or between his or her behavior and attitudes. Festinger argued that any form of inconsistency is uncomfortable and that individuals will attempt to reduce the dissonance and, hence, the discomfort. Therefore, individuals will seek a stable state where there is a minimum of dissonance.

Of course, no individual can completely avoid dissonance. You know that cheating on your income tax is wrong, but you “fudge” the numbers a bit every year, and hope you’re not audited. Or you tell your children to brush after every meal, but *you* don’t. So how do people cope? Festinger would propose that the desire to reduce dissonance would be determined by the *importance* of the elements creating the dissonance, the degree of *influence* the individual believes he or she has over the elements, and the *rewards* that may be involved in dissonance.

If the elements creating the dissonance are relatively unimportant, the pressure to correct this imbalance will be low. However, say that a corporate manager—Mrs. Smith—believes strongly that no company should pollute the air or water. Unfortunately, Mrs. Smith, because of the requirements of her job, is placed in the position of having to make decisions that would trade off her company’s profitability against her attitudes on pollution. She knows that dumping the company’s sewage into the local river (which we shall assume is legal) is in the best economic interest of her firm.

What will she do? Clearly, Mrs. Smith is experiencing a high degree of cognitive dissonance. Because of the importance of the elements in this example, we cannot expect Mrs. Smith to ignore the inconsistency. There are several paths that she can follow to deal with her dilemma. She can change her behavior (stop polluting the river). Or she can reduce dissonance by concluding that the dissonant behavior is not so important after all (“I’ve got to make a living, and in my role as a corporate decision maker, I often have to place the good of my company above that of the environment or society”). A third alternative would be for Mrs. Smith to change her attitude (“There is nothing wrong in polluting the river”). Still another choice would be to seek out more consonant elements to outweigh the dissonant ones (“The benefits to society from manufacturing our products more than offset the cost to society of the resulting water pollution”).

The degree of influence that individuals believe they have over the elements will have an impact on how they will react to the dissonance. If they perceive the dissonance to be an uncontrollable result—something over which they have no choice—they are less likely to be receptive to attitude change. If, for example, the dissonance-producing behavior is required as a result of the boss’s directive, the pressure to reduce dissonance would be less than if the behavior was performed voluntarily. While dissonance exists, it can be rationalized and justified.

Rewards also influence the degree to which individuals are motivated to reduce dissonance. High rewards accompanying high dissonance tend to reduce the tension inherent in the dissonance. The rewards act to reduce dissonance by increasing the consistency side of the individual's balance sheet.

These moderating factors suggest that just because individuals experience dissonance they will not necessarily move directly toward consistency, that is, toward reduction of this dissonance. If the issues underlying the dissonance are of minimal importance, if an individual perceives that the dissonance is externally imposed and is substantially uncontrollable by him or her, or if rewards are significant enough to offset the dissonance, the individual will not be under great tension to reduce the dissonance.

What are the organizational implications of the theory of cognitive dissonance? It can help to predict the propensity to engage in attitude and behavioral change. If individuals are required, for example, by the demands of their job to say or do things that contradict their personal attitude, they will tend to modify their attitude in order to make it compatible with the cognition of what they have said or done. Additionally, the greater the dissonance—after it has been moderated by importance, choice, and reward factors—the greater the pressures to reduce it.

## Measuring the A–B Relationship

We have maintained throughout this chapter that attitudes affect behavior. The early research work on attitudes assumed that they were causally related to behavior; that is, the attitudes that people hold determine what they do. Common sense, too, suggests a relationship. Is it not logical that people watch television programs that they say they like or that employees try to avoid assignments they find distasteful?

However, in the late 1960s, this assumed relationship between attitudes and behavior (A–B) was challenged by a review of the research.<sup>39</sup> Based on an evaluation of a number of studies that investigated the A–B relationship, the reviewer concluded that attitudes were unrelated to behavior or, at best, only slightly related.<sup>40</sup> More recent research has demonstrated that the A–B relationship can be improved by taking moderating contingency variables into consideration.

**MODERATING VARIABLES** One thing that improves our chances of finding significant A–B relationships is the use of both specific attitudes and specific behaviors.<sup>41</sup> It is one thing to talk about a person’s attitude toward “preserving the environment” and another to speak of his or her attitude toward recycling. The more specific the attitude we are measuring, and the more specific we are in identifying a related behavior, the greater the probability that we can show

a relationship between A and B. If you ask people today whether or not they are concerned about preserving the environment, most will probably say “Yes.” That doesn’t mean, however, that they separate out recyclable items from their garbage. The correlation between a question that asks about concern for protecting the environment and recycling may be only  $+ .20$  or so. But as you make the question more specific—by asking, for example, about the degree of personal obligation one feels to separate recyclable items—the A–B relationship is likely to reach  $+ .50$  or higher.

Another moderator is social constraints on behavior. Discrepancies between attitudes and behavior may occur because the social pressures on the individual to behave in a certain way may hold exceptional power.<sup>42</sup> Group pressures, for instance, may explain why an employee who holds strong antiunion attitudes attends pronoun organizing meetings.

Still another moderating variable is experience with the attitude in question.<sup>43</sup> The A–B relationship is likely to be much stronger if the attitude being evaluated refers to something with which the individual has experience. For instance, most of us will respond to a questionnaire on almost any issue. But is my attitude toward starving fish in the Amazon any indication of whether or not I’d donate to a fund to save these fish? Probably not! Getting the views of college students, with no work experience, on job factors that are important in determining whether or not they would stay put in a



job is an example of an attitude response that is unlikely to predict much in terms of actual turnover behavior.

**SELF-PERCEPTION THEORY** While most A–B studies yield positive results<sup>44</sup>—that attitudes do influence behavior—the relationship tends to be weak before adjustments are made for moderating variables. But requiring specificity, an absence of social constraints, and experience in order to get a meaningful correlation imposes severe limitations on making generalizations about the A–B relationship. This has prompted some researchers to take another direction—to look at whether or not behavior influences attitudes. This view, called **self-perception theory**, has generated some encouraging findings. Let’s briefly review the theory.<sup>45</sup>

When asked about an attitude toward some object, individuals recall their behavior relevant to that object and then infer their attitude from their past behavior. So if an employee were asked about her feelings about being a training specialist at U.S. West, she would likely think, “I’ve had this same job at U.S. West as a trainer for ten years, so I must like it!” Self-perception theory, therefore, argues that attitudes are used, *after the fact*, to make sense out of an action that has already occurred rather than as devices that precede and guide action.

Self-perception theory has been well supported.<sup>46</sup> While the traditional attitude–behavior relationship is gen-

### **self-perception theory**

Attitudes are used after the fact to make sense out of an action that has already occurred.

- ◆ It seems that we are very good at finding reasons for what we do, but not so good at doing what we find reasons for.

erally positive, it is also weak. In contrast, the behavior–attitude relationship is quite strong. So what can we conclude? It seems that we’re very good at finding reasons for what we do, but not so good at doing what we find reasons for.<sup>47</sup>

## An Application: Attitude Surveys

The preceding review should not discourage us from using attitudes to predict behavior. In an organizational context, most of the attitudes management would seek to inquire about would be ones with which employees have some experience. If the attitudes in question are specifically stated, management should obtain information that can be valuable in guiding their decisions relative to these employees. But how does management get information about employee attitudes? The most popular method is through the use of **attitude surveys**.<sup>48</sup>

Exhibit 4-5 illustrates what an attitude survey might look like. Typically, attitude surveys present the employee with a set of statements or questions. Ideally, the items are tailored to obtain the specific information that management desires. An attitude score is achieved by summing up responses to individual questionnaire items. These scores can then be averaged for job groups, departments, divisions, or the organization as a whole.

### **attitude surveys**

Eliciting responses from employees through questionnaires about how they feel about their jobs, work groups, supervisors, and/or the organization.

## Exhibit 4-5 Sample Attitude Survey

Please answer each of the following statements using the following rating scale:

5 = Strongly agree

4 = Agree

3 = Undecided

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly disagree

Statement	Rating
1. This company is a pretty good place to work.	___
2. I can get ahead in this company if I make the effort.	___
3. This company's wage rates are competitive with those of other companies.	___
4. Employee promotion decisions are handled fairly.	___
5. I understand the various fringe benefits the company offers.	___
6. My job makes the best use of my abilities.	___
7. My workload is challenging but not burdensome.	___
8. I have trust and confidence in my boss.	___
9. I feel free to tell my boss what I think.	___
10. I know what my boss expects of me.	___



Results from attitude surveys can frequently surprise management. For instance, Michael Gilliland owns and operates a chain of 12 food markets.<sup>49</sup> He and his management team developed a ten-item job-satisfaction questionnaire, which they administer to all employees twice a year. Recently Gilliland was surprised to find the worst complaints coming from employees at the store with the best working conditions and the most benefits. Careful analysis of the results uncovered that, although the manager at this store was well liked, employees were frustrated because he was behind on their performance reviews and had failed to fire a particularly unproductive employee. As one of Gilliland's associates put it, "We'd assumed it would be the happiest store, but it wasn't."

A corporatwide attitude survey at BP Exploration revealed that employees were unhappy with the way their direct superiors managed them.<sup>50</sup> In response, management introduced a formal upward-appraisal system which allows the company's 12,000 employees to evaluate their boss's managerial performance. Now managers pay a lot more attention to the needs of their employees because their employees' opinions play an important part in determining the manager's future in the organization.

Using attitude surveys on a regular basis provides managers with valuable feedback on how employees perceive their working conditions. Consistent with our discussion of perceptions in the previous chapter, the policies and practices that management views

# From Concepts to Skills

## Changing Attitudes

**C**an you change unfavorable employee attitudes? Sometimes! It depends on who you are, the strength of the employee's attitude, the magnitude of the change, and the technique you choose to try to change the attitude.<sup>52</sup>

Employees are most likely to respond to change efforts made by someone who is liked, credible, and convincing. If people like you, they're more apt to identify and adopt your message. Credibility implies trust, expertise, and objectivity. So you're more likely to change an employee's attitude if that employee sees you as believable, knowledgeable about what you're talking about, and unbiased in your presentation. Finally, successful attitude change is enhanced when you

present your arguments clearly and persuasively.

It's easier to change an employee's attitude if he or she isn't strongly committed to it. Conversely, the stronger the belief about the attitude, the harder it is to change it. In addition, attitudes that have been expressed publicly are more difficult to change because it requires one to admit he or she has made a mistake.

It's easier to change attitudes when that change isn't very significant. To get an employee to accept a new attitude that varies greatly from his or her current position requires more effort. It may also threaten other deeply held attitudes and create increased dissonance.

All attitude-change techniques are not equally effective across situa-

tions. Oral persuasion techniques are most effective when you use a positive, tactful tone; present strong evidence to support your position; tailor your argument to the listener; use logic; and support your evidence by appealing to the employee's fears, frustrations, and other emotions. But people are more likely to embrace

change when they can experience it. The use of training sessions where employees share and personalize experiences, and practice new behaviors, can be powerful stimulants for change. Consistent with self-perception theory, changes in behavior can lead to changes in attitudes.

as objective and fair may be seen as inequitable by employees in general or by certain groups of employees. That these distorted perceptions have led to negative attitudes about the job and organization should be important to management. This is because employee behaviors are based on perceptions, not reality. Remember, the employee who quits because she believes she is underpaid—when, in fact, management has objective data to support that her salary is highly competitive—is just as gone as if she had actually been underpaid. The use of regular attitude surveys can alert management to potential problems and employees' intentions early so that action can be taken to prevent repercussions.<sup>51</sup>

## Attitudes and Work Force Diversity

Managers are increasingly concerned with changing employee attitudes to reflect shifting perspectives on racial, gender, and other diversity issues. A comment to a co-worker of the opposite sex, which 15 years ago might have been taken as a compliment, can today become a career-limiting episode.<sup>53</sup> As such, organizations are investing in training to help reshape attitudes of employees.



Diversity training at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care emphasizes practical conflict management. The managed care organization uses real-life case studies of situations employees face daily. The training includes role-playing workshops to teach employees how to respond to differences among people with sensitivity and respect. Harvard Pilgrim serves a growing number of racial and ethnic minority customers and a large gay and lesbian population. Its diversity training helps employees in providing care to diverse customers who demand that health care workers are not judgmental.



A recent survey of U.S. organizations with 100 or more employees found that 47 percent of them sponsored some sort of diversity training.<sup>54</sup> Some examples: Police officers in Escondido, California receive 36 hours of diversity training each year. Pacific Gas & Electric Co. requires a minimum of four hours of training for its 12,000 employees. The Federal Aviation Administration sponsors a mandatory eight-hour diversity seminar for employees of its Western Pacific region.

What do these diversity programs look like and how do they address attitude change?<sup>55</sup> They almost all include a self-evaluation phase. People are pressed to examine themselves and to confront ethnic and cultural stereotypes they might hold. Then participants typically take part in group discussions or panels with representatives from diverse groups. So, for instance, a Hmong man might describe his family's life in Southeast Asia, and explain why they resettled in California; or a lesbian might describe how she discovered her sexual identity, and the reaction of her friends and family when she came out.

Additional activities designed to change attitudes include arranging for people to do volunteer work in community or social service centers in order to meet face-to-face with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds and using exercises that let participants feel what it's like to be different. For example, when par-

- ◆ A survey of U.S. organizations with 100 or more employees found that 47 percent of them sponsored some sort of diversity training.

ticipants see the film *Eye of the Beholder*, where people are segregated and stereotyped according to their eye color, participants see what it's like to be judged by something they have no control over.

## Job Satisfaction

We have already discussed job satisfaction briefly—earlier in this chapter as well as in chapter 1. In this section, we want to dissect the concept more carefully. How do we measure job satisfaction? What determines job satisfaction? What is its effect on employee productivity, absenteeism, and turnover rates? We answer each of these questions in this section.

### Measuring Job Satisfaction

We've previously defined job satisfaction as an individual's general attitude toward his or her job. This definition is clearly a very broad one.<sup>56</sup> Yet this is inherent in the concept. Remember, a person's job is more than just the obvious activities of shuffling papers, waiting on customers, or driving a truck. Jobs require interaction with co-workers and bosses, following organizational rules and policies, meeting performance standards, living with working conditions that are often less than ideal, and the like.<sup>57</sup> This means that an employee's assessment of how satisfied or dissatisfied he or she is

with his or her job is a complex summation of a number of discrete job elements. How, then, do we measure the concept?

The two most widely used approaches are a *single global rating* and a *summation score* made up of a number of job facets. The single global rating method is nothing more than asking individuals to respond to one question, such as “All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job?” Respondents then reply by circling a number between one and five that corresponds to answers from “highly satisfied” to “highly dissatisfied.” The other approach—a summation of job facets—is more sophisticated. It identifies key elements in a job and asks for the employee’s feelings about each. Typical factors that would be included are the nature of the work, supervision, present pay, promotion opportunities, and relations with co-workers.<sup>58</sup> These factors are rated on a standardized scale and then added up to create an overall job satisfaction score.

Is one of the foregoing approaches superior to the other? Intuitively, it would seem that summing up responses to a number of job factors would achieve a more accurate evaluation of job satisfaction. The research, however, doesn’t support this intuition.<sup>59</sup> This is one of those rare instances in which simplicity wins out over complexity. Comparisons of one-question global ratings with the more lengthy summation-of-job-factors method indicate that the former is more valid. The best explanation for this outcome is that

the concept of job satisfaction is inherently so broad that the single question actually becomes a more inclusive measure.

## What Determines Job Satisfaction?

We now turn to the question: What work-related variables determine job satisfaction? An extensive review of the literature indicates that the more important factors conducive to job satisfaction are mentally challenging work, equitable rewards, supportive working conditions, and supportive colleagues.<sup>60</sup> To this list, we'd also add the importance of a good personality–job fit and an individual's genetic disposition (some people are just inherently upbeat and positive about all things, including their job).

**MENTALLY CHALLENGING WORK** Employees tend to prefer jobs that give them opportunities to use their skills and abilities and offer a variety of tasks, freedom, and feedback on how well they are doing. These characteristics make work mentally challenging. Jobs that have too little challenge create boredom, but too much challenge creates frustration and feelings of failure. Under conditions of moderate challenge, most employees will experience pleasure and satisfaction.<sup>61</sup>

**EQUITABLE REWARDS** Employees want pay systems and promotion policies that they perceive as being just, unambiguous, and in

line with their expectations. When pay is seen as fair based on job demands, individual skill level, and community pay standards, satisfaction is likely to result. Of course, not everyone seeks money. Many people willingly accept less money to work in a preferred location or in a less demanding job or to have greater discretion in the work they do and the hours they work. But the key in linking pay to satisfaction is not the absolute amount one is paid; rather, it is the perception of fairness. Similarly, employees seek fair promotion policies and practices. Promotions provide opportunities for personal growth, more responsibilities, and increased social status. Individuals who perceive that promotion decisions are made in a fair and just manner, therefore, are likely to experience satisfaction from their jobs.<sup>62</sup>

**SUPPORTIVE WORKING CONDITIONS** Employees are concerned with their work environment for both personal comfort and facilitating doing a good job. Studies demonstrate that employees prefer physical surroundings that are not dangerous or uncomfortable. Temperature, light, noise, and other environmental factors should not be at either extreme—for example, having too much heat or too little light. Additionally, most employees prefer working relatively close to home, in clean and relatively modern facilities, and with adequate tools and equipment.

- ◆ Having friendly and supportive co-workers leads to increased job satisfaction.



**SUPPORTIVE COLLEAGUES** People get more out of work than merely money or tangible achievements. For most employees, work also fills the need for social interaction. Not surprisingly, therefore, having friendly and supportive co-workers leads to increased job satisfaction. The behavior of one's boss also is a major determinant of satisfaction. Studies generally find that employee satisfaction is increased when the immediate supervisor is understanding and



Supportive colleagues made Ronna Adams, a bookkeeper, feel like “Queen for a Day” when she celebrated her 20th anniversary with Walgreen’s. Her co-workers honored her with a giant surprise party. Research indicates that supportive colleagues like Ronna’s lead to increased job satisfaction. In an industry noted for high turnover, supportive colleagues contribute to keeping Walgreen’s resignations low.



friendly, offers praise for good performance, listens to employees' opinions, and shows a personal interest in them.

**DON'T FORGET THE PERSONALITY–JOB FIT!** In chapter 2, we presented Holland's personality–job fit theory. As you remember, one of Holland's conclusions was that high agreement between an employee's personality and occupation results in a more satisfied individual. His logic was essentially this: People with personality types congruent with their chosen vocations should find that they have the right talents and abilities to meet the demands of their jobs. Thus, they are more likely to be successful on those jobs and, because of this success, have a greater probability of achieving high satisfaction from their work. Studies to replicate Holland's conclusions have been almost universally supportive.<sup>63</sup> It's important, therefore, to add this to our list of factors that determine job satisfaction.

**IT'S IN THE GENES** As much as 30 percent of an individual's satisfaction can be explained by heredity.<sup>64</sup> Analysis of satisfaction data for a selected sample of individuals over a 50-year period found that individual results were consistently stable over time, even when these people changed the employer for whom they worked and their occupation. This and other research suggests that a significant portion of some people's satisfaction is genetically determined. That is, an individual's disposition toward life—positive or



negative—is established by his or her genetic makeup, holds over time, and carries over into his or her disposition toward work. Given this evidence, it may well be that, at least for some employees, there isn't much managers can do to influence employee satisfaction. Manipulating job characteristics, working conditions, rewards, and the job fit may have little effect. This suggests managers should focus attention on employee selection: If you want satisfied workers, make sure you screen out the negative, maladjusted, trouble-making fault-finders who derive little satisfaction in anything about their jobs.<sup>65</sup>

## The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

Managers' interest in job satisfaction tends to center on its effect on employee performance. Researchers have recognized this interest, so we find a large number of studies that have been designed to assess the impact of job satisfaction on employee productivity, absenteeism, and turnover. Let's look at the current state of our knowledge.

**SATISFACTION AND PRODUCTIVITY** A number of reviews were done in the 1950s and 1960s, covering dozens of studies that sought to establish the relationship between satisfaction and pro-

ductivity.<sup>66</sup> These reviews could find no consistent relationship. In the 1990s, though the studies are far from unambiguous, we can make some sense out of the evidence.

The early views on the satisfaction–performance relationship can be essentially summarized in the statement “a happy worker is a productive worker.” Much of the paternalism shown by managers in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s—forming company bowling teams and credit unions, having company picnics, providing counseling services for employees, training supervisors to be sensitive to the concerns of subordinates—was done to make workers happy. But belief in the happy worker thesis was based more on wishful thinking than hard evidence. A careful review of the research indicated that if there is a positive relationship between satisfaction and productivity, the correlations are consistently low—in the vicinity of +0.14.<sup>67</sup> This means that no more than 2 percent of the variance in output can be accounted for by employee satisfaction. However, introduction of moderating variables has improved the relationship.<sup>68</sup> For example, the relationship is stronger when the employee’s behavior is not constrained or controlled by outside factors. An employee’s productivity on machine-paced jobs, for instance, is going to be much more influenced by the speed of the machine than his or her level of satisfaction. Similarly, a stockbroker’s productivity is largely constrained by the general movement of the stock market. When the market is moving up and volume is

high, both satisfied and dissatisfied brokers are going to ring up lots of commissions. Conversely, when the market is in the doldrums, the level of broker satisfaction is not likely to mean much. Job level also seems to be an important moderating variable. The satisfaction–performance correlations are stronger for higher-level employees. Thus, we might expect the relationship to be more relevant for individuals in professional, supervisory, and managerial positions.

Another point of concern in the satisfaction–productivity issue is the direction of the causal arrow. Most of the studies on the relationship used research designs that could not prove cause and effect. Studies that have controlled for this possibility indicate that the more valid conclusion is that productivity leads to satisfaction rather than the other way around.<sup>69</sup> If you do a good job, you intrinsically feel good about it. Additionally, assuming that the organization rewards productivity, your higher productivity should increase verbal recognition, your pay level, and probabilities for promotion. These rewards, in turn, increase your level of satisfaction with the job.

The most recent research provides renewed support for the original satisfaction–performance relationship.<sup>70</sup> When satisfaction and productivity data are gathered for the organization as a whole, rather than at the individual level, we find that organizations with more satisfied employees tended to be more effective than organi-

zations with less satisfied employees. If this conclusion can be reproduced in additional studies, it may well be that the reason we haven't gotten strong support for the *satisfaction causes productivity thesis* is that studies have focused on individuals rather than the organization and that individual-level measures of productivity don't take into consideration all the interactions and complexities in the work process.

**SATISFACTION AND ABSENTEEISM** We find a consistent negative relationship between satisfaction and absenteeism, but the correlation is moderate—usually less than  $+0.40$ .<sup>71</sup> While it certainly makes sense that dissatisfied employees are more likely to miss work, other factors have an impact on the relationship and reduce the correlation coefficient. For example, remember our discussion of sick pay versus well pay in Chapter 2. Organizations that provide liberal sick leave benefits are encouraging all their employees—including those who are highly satisfied—to take days off. Assuming that you have a reasonable number of varied interests, you can find work satisfying and yet still take off work to enjoy a three-day weekend, tan yourself on a warm summer day, or watch the World Series on television if those days come free with no penalties. Also, as with productivity, outside factors can act to reduce the correlation.

An excellent illustration of how satisfaction directly leads to attendance, where there is a minimum impact from other factors, is a study done at Sears, Roebuck.<sup>72</sup> Satisfaction data were available on employees at Sears's two headquarters in Chicago and New York. Additionally, it is important to note that Sears's policy was not to permit employees to be absent from work for avoidable reasons without penalty. The occurrence of a freak April 2 snowstorm in Chicago created the opportunity to compare employee attendance at the Chicago office with attendance in New York, where the weather was quite nice. The interesting dimension in this study is that the snowstorm gave the Chicago employees a built-in excuse not to come to work. The storm crippled the city's transportation, and individuals knew they could miss work this day with no penalty. This natural experiment permitted the comparison of attendance records for satisfied and dissatisfied employees at two locations—one where you were expected to be at work (with normal pressures for attendance) and the other where you were free to choose with no penalty involved. If satisfaction leads to attendance, where there is an absence of outside factors, the more satisfied employees should have come to work in Chicago, while dissatisfied employees should have stayed home. The study found that on this particular April 2 absenteeism rates in New York were just as high for satisfied groups of workers as for dissatisfied groups. But in Chicago, the workers with high satisfaction scores had much higher

attendance than did those with lower satisfaction levels. These findings are exactly what we would have expected if satisfaction is negatively correlated with absenteeism.

**SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER** Satisfaction is also negatively related to turnover, but the correlation is stronger than what we found for absenteeism.<sup>73</sup> Yet, again, other factors such as labor market conditions, expectations about alternative job opportunities, and length of tenure with the organization are important constraints on the actual decision to leave one's current job.<sup>74</sup>

Evidence indicates that an important moderator of the satisfaction–turnover relationship is the employee's level of performance.<sup>75</sup> Specifically, level of satisfaction is less important in predicting turnover for superior performers. Why? The organization typically makes considerable efforts to keep these people. They get pay raises, praise, recognition, increased promotional opportunities, and so forth. Just the opposite tends to apply to poor performers. Few attempts are made by the organization to retain them. There may even be subtle pressures to encourage them to quit. We would expect, therefore, that job satisfaction is more important in influencing poor performers to stay than superior performers. Regardless of level of satisfaction, the latter are more likely to remain with the organization because the receipt of recognition, praise, and other rewards gives them more reasons for staying.

Consistent with our previous discussion, we shouldn't be surprised to find that a person's general disposition toward life also moderates the satisfaction–turnover relationship.<sup>76</sup> Specifically, some individuals generally gripe more than others and such individuals, when dissatisfied with their jobs, are less likely to quit than those who are more positively disposed toward life. So if two workers report the same level of job dissatisfaction, the one most likely to quit is the one with the highest predisposition to be happy or satisfied in general.

## How Employees Can Express Dissatisfaction

One final point before we leave the issue of job satisfaction: Employee dissatisfaction can be expressed in a number of ways.<sup>77</sup> For example, rather than quit, employees can complain, be insubordinate, steal organizational property, or shirk a part of their work responsibilities. Exhibit 4-6 offers four responses that differ from one another along two dimensions: constructiveness/destructiveness and activity/passivity. They are defined as follows:<sup>78</sup>

- ◆ **Exit:** Behavior directed toward leaving the organization, including looking for a new position as well as resigning.
- ◆ **Voice:** Actively and constructively attempting to improve conditions, including suggesting improvements, discussing problems with superiors, and some forms of union activity.

### **exit**

Dissatisfaction expressed through behavior directed toward leaving the organization.

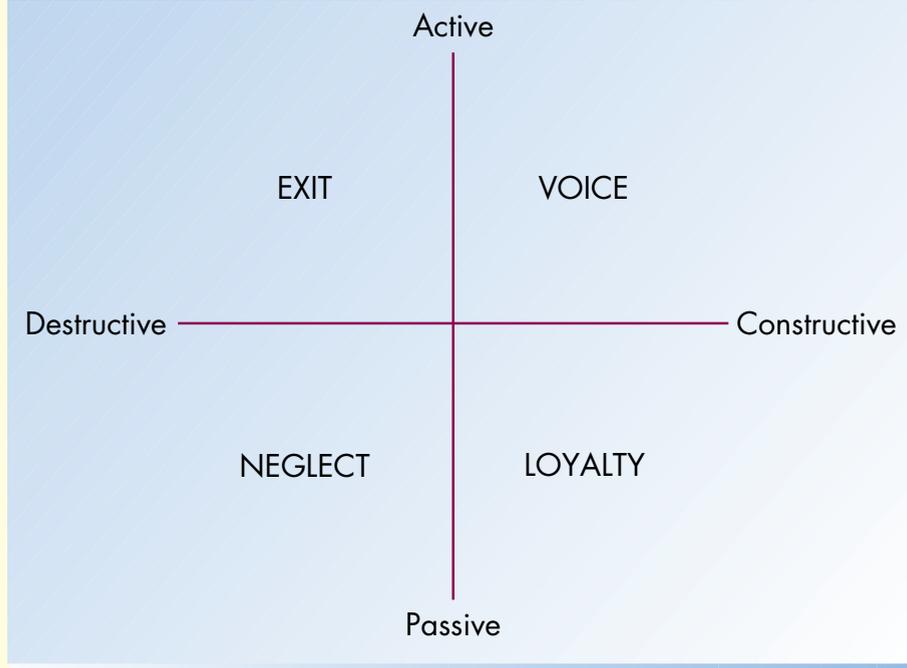
### **voice**

Dissatisfaction expressed through active and constructive attempts to improve conditions.



## Exhibit 4-6 Responses to Job Dissatisfaction

Source: C. Rusbult and D. Lowery, "When Bureaucrats Get the Blues" *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1985), p. 83. With permission.



- ◆ **Loyalty:** Passively but optimistically waiting for conditions to improve, including speaking up for the organization in the face of external criticism and trusting the organization and its management to “do the right thing.”
- ◆ **Neglect:** Passively allowing conditions to worsen, including chronic absenteeism or lateness, reduced effort, and increased error rate.

Exit and neglect behaviors encompass our performance variables—productivity, absenteeism, and turnover. But this model expands employee response to include voice and loyalty—constructive behaviors that allow individuals to tolerate unpleasant situations or to revive satisfactory working conditions. It helps us to understand situations, such as those sometimes found among unionized workers, where low job satisfaction is coupled with low turnover.<sup>79</sup> Union members often express dissatisfaction through the grievance procedure or through formal contract negotiations. These voice mechanisms allow the union members to continue in their jobs while convincing themselves that they are acting to improve the situation.

## Summary and Implications for Managers

Why is it important to know an individual’s values? Although they don’t have a direct impact on behavior, values strongly influence a person’s attitudes. So knowledge of an individual’s value system can provide insight into his or her attitudes.

**loyalty**  
Dissatisfaction expressed by passively waiting for conditions to improve.

**neglect**  
Dissatisfaction expressed through allowing conditions to worsen.

Given that people's values differ, managers can use the Rokeach Value Survey to assess potential employees and determine if their values align with the dominant values of the organization. An employee's performance and satisfaction are likely to be higher if his or her values fit well with the organization. For instance, the person who places high importance on imagination, independence, and freedom is likely to be poorly matched with an organization that seeks conformity from its employees. Managers are more likely to appreciate, evaluate positively, and allocate rewards to employees who "fit in," and employees are more likely to be satisfied if they perceive that they do fit. This argues for management to strive during the selection of new employees to find job candidates who not only have the ability, experience, and motivation to perform, but also a value system that is compatible with the organization's.

Managers should be interested in their employees' attitudes because attitudes give warnings of potential problems and because they influence behavior. Satisfied and committed employees, for instance, have lower rates of turnover and absenteeism. Given that managers want to keep resignations and absences down—especially among their more productive employees—they will want to do those things that will generate positive job attitudes.

Managers should also be aware that employees will try to reduce cognitive dissonance. More important, dissonance can be managed. If employees are required to engage in activities that

appear inconsistent to them or that are at odds with their attitudes, the pressures to reduce the resulting dissonance are lessened when the employee perceives that the dissonance is externally imposed and is beyond his or her control or if the rewards are significant enough to offset the dissonance.

## For Review

1. Contrast the Protestant work ethic, existential, pragmatic, and generation X typologies with the terminal values identified in the Rokeach Value Survey.
2. Contrast the cognitive and affective components of an attitude.
3. What is cognitive dissonance and how is it related to attitudes?
4. What is self-perception theory? How does it increase our ability to predict behavior?
5. What contingency factors can improve the statistical relationship between attitudes and behavior?
6. What role does genetics play in determining an individual's job satisfaction?
7. Are happy workers productive workers?
8. What is the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism? Turnover? Which is the stronger relationship?
9. How can managers get employees to more readily accept working with colleagues who are different from themselves?



10. Contrast exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect as employee responses to job dissatisfaction.

## For Discussion

1. “Thirty-five years ago, young employees we hired were ambitious, conscientious, hard working, and honest. Today’s young workers don’t have the same values.” Do you agree or disagree with this manager’s comments? Support your position.
2. Do you think there might be any positive and significant relationship between the possession of certain personal values and successful career progression in organizations like Merrill Lynch, the AFL-CIO, and the city of Cleveland’s police department? Discuss.
3. “Managers should do everything they can to enhance the job satisfaction of their employees.” Do you agree or disagree? Support your position.
4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using regular attitude surveys to monitor employee job satisfaction.
5. When employees are asked whether they would again choose the same work or whether they would want their children to follow in their footsteps, typically less than half answer in the affirmative. What, if anything, do you think this implies about employee job satisfaction?

## The Importance of High Job Satisfaction

The importance of job satisfaction is obvious. Managers should be concerned with the level of job satisfaction in their organizations for at least four reasons: (1) There is clear evidence that dissatisfied employees skip work more often and are more likely to resign; (2) dissatisfied workers are more likely to engage in destructive behaviors; (3) it has been demonstrated that satisfied employees have better health and live longer; and (4) satisfaction on the job carries over to the employee's life outside the job.

We reviewed the evidence between satisfaction and withdrawal behaviors in this chapter. That evidence was fairly clear. Satisfied employees have lower rates of both turnover and absenteeism. If we consider the two withdrawal behaviors separately, however, we can be more confident about the influence of satisfaction on turnover. Specifically, satisfaction is strongly and consistently negatively related to an employee's decision to leave the organization. Although

satisfaction and absence are also negatively related, conclusions regarding the relationship should be more guarded.

Dissatisfaction is frequently associated with a high level of complaints and work grievances. Moreover, highly dissatisfied employees are more likely to resort to sabotage and passive aggression. For employees with limited alternative options, who would quit if they could, these forms of destructive actions act as extreme applications of neglect.

An often overlooked dimension of job satisfaction is its relationship to employee health. Several studies have shown that employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs are prone to health setbacks ranging from headaches to heart disease. Some research even indicates that job satisfaction is a better predictor of length of life than is physical condition or tobacco use. These studies suggest that dissatisfaction is not solely a psychological phenomenon. The stress that results from dissatisfaction apparently increases one's susceptibility to heart attacks and the like. For managers, this means that even if satisfaction didn't



lead to less voluntary turnover and absence, the goal of a satisfied work force might be justifiable because it would reduce medical costs and the premature loss of valued employees by way of heart disease or strokes.

Our final point in support of job satisfaction's importance is the spin-off effect that job satisfaction has for society as a whole. When employees are happy with their jobs, it improves their lives off the job. In contrast, the dissatisfied employee carries that negative attitude home. In wealthy countries such as the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, or Japan, doesn't management have a responsibility to provide jobs from which employees can receive high satisfaction? Some benefits of job satisfaction accrue to every citizen in society.

Satisfied employees are more likely to be satisfied citizens. These people will hold a more positive attitude toward life in general and make for a society of more psychologically healthy people.

The evidence is impressive. Job satisfaction is important. For management, a satisfied work force translates into higher productivity due to fewer disruptions caused by absenteeism or good employees quitting, fewer incidences of destructive behavior, as well as lower medical and life insurance costs. Additionally, there are benefits for society in general. Satisfaction on the job carries over to the employee's off-the-job hours. So the goal of high job satisfaction for employees can be defended in terms of both dollars and cents and social responsibility.

## Job Satisfaction Has Been Overemphasized

Few issues have been more blown out of proportion than the importance of job satisfaction at work.\* Let's look closely at the evidence.

There is no consistent relationship indicating that satisfaction leads to productivity. And, after all, isn't productivity the name of the game? Organizations are not altruistic institutions. Management's obligation is to use efficiently the resources that it has available. It has no obligation to create a satisfied work force if the costs exceed the benefits. As one executive put it, "I don't care if my people are happy or not! Do they produce?"

It would be naive to assume that satisfaction alone would have a major impact on employee behavior. As a case in point, consider the issue of turnover. Certainly there are a number of other factors that have an equal or greater impact on whether an employee decides to remain with an organization or take a job somewhere else—length of time on the job, financial situa-

tion, and availability of other jobs, to name the most obvious. If I'm 55 years old, have been with my company 25 years, perceive few other opportunities in the job market, and have no other source of income besides my job, does my unhappiness have much impact on my decision to stay with the organization? No!

Did you ever notice who seems to be most concerned with improving employee job satisfaction? It's usually college professors and researchers! They've chosen careers that provide them with considerable freedom and opportunities for personal growth. They place a very high value on job satisfaction. The problem is that they impose their values on others. Because job satisfaction is important to them, they suppose that it's important to everyone. To a lot of people, a job is merely the means to get the money they need to do the things they desire during their nonworking hours. Assuming you work 40 hours a week and sleep eight hours a night, you still have 70 hours or more a week to achieve fulfillment and satisfaction in off-the-job activities. So the importance of job satisfaction may be oversold when you rec-

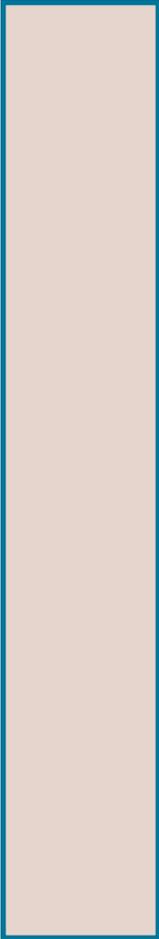


ognize that there are other sources—outside the job—where the dissatisfied employee can find satisfaction.

A final point against overemphasizing job satisfaction: Consider the issue in a contingency framework. Even if satisfaction were significantly related to performance, it's unlikely that the relationship would hold consistently across all segments of the work force. In fact, evidence demonstrates that people differ in terms of the importance that work plays in their lives. To some, the job is their central life interest. But for the majority of people, their primary interests are off the job. Non-job-oriented people tend not

to be emotionally involved with their work. This relative indifference allows them to accept frustrating conditions at work more willingly. Importantly, the majority of the work force probably falls into this non-job-oriented category. So while job satisfaction might be important to lawyers, surgeons, and other professionals, it may be irrelevant to the average worker because he or she is generally apathetic about the job's frustrating elements.

See, for instance, G. Bassett, "The Case Against Job Satisfaction," *Business Horizons*, May–June 1994, pp. 61–68.



# Learning About Yourself Exercise

## What Do You Value?

Following are 16 items. Rate how important each one is to you on a scale of 0 (not important) to 100 (very important). Write the number 0–100 on the line to the left of each item.

Not important			Somewhat important					Very important		
0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

- \_\_\_\_\_ **1.** An enjoyable, satisfying job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **2.** A high-paying job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **3.** A good marriage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **4.** Meeting new people; social events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **5.** Involvement in community activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **6.** My religion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **7.** Exercising, playing sports.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **8.** Intellectual development.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **9.** A career with challenging opportunities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **10.** Nice cars, clothes, home, and so on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **11.** Spending time with family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **12.** Having several close friends.



- \_\_\_\_\_ **13.** Volunteer work for not-for-profit organizations, like the cancer society.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **14.** Meditation, quiet time to think, pray, and so on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **15.** A healthy, balanced diet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **16.** Educational reading, television, self-improvement programs, and so on.

Turn to page 1480 for scoring directions and key.

Source: R.N. Lussier, *Human Relations in Organizations: A Skill Building Approach*, 2nd ed. (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, 1993). Used with permission.

## Working with Others Exercise

### Assessing Work Attitudes

#### Objective

To compare attitudes about the work force.

#### Time

Approximately 30 minutes.

#### Procedure

Choose the best answers for the following five questions:

1. *Generally*, American workers
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. are highly motivated and hardworking
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. try to give a fair day's effort
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. will put forth effort if you make it worthwhile
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. try to get by with a low level of effort
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. are lazy and/or poorly motivated
2. The people *I have worked with*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. are highly motivated and hardworking
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. try to give a fair day's effort
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. will put forth effort if you make it worthwhile
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. try to get by with a low level of effort
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. are lazy and/or poorly motivated
3. *Compared to foreign workers*, American workers are
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. more productive
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. equally productive
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. less productive
4. *Over the past 20 years*, American workers have (pick one)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. improved in overall quality of job performance
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. remained about the same in quality of job performance
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. deteriorated in overall quality of job performance



5. If you have a low opinion of the U.S. work force, give the one step (or action) that could be taken that would lead to the most improvement.

### GROUP DISCUSSION

- a. Break into groups of three to five members each. Compare your answers to the five questions.
- b. For each question where one or more members disagree, discuss *why* each member chose his or her answer.
- c. After this discussion, members are free to change their original answer. Did any in your group do so?
- d. Your instructor will provide data from other student attitude responses to these questions, then lead the class in discussing the implications or accuracy of these attitudes.

Source: Based on D.R. Brown, "Dealing with Student Conceptions and Misconceptions About Worker Attitudes and Productivity," *Journal of Management Education*, May 1991, pp. 259–64.

### Binney & Smith (Canada)

Binney & Smith (B&S) operates a plant in Lindsay, Ontario, to produce crayons. Their Crayola brand is familiar to almost all preschoolers and elementary school children in North America.

In 1992, the production goals for the Lindsay plant were doubled, to 4 million 16-stick boxes of assorted-color crayons. Little

### CASE INCIDENT 1

more than a year earlier, the plant produced about a quarter of that volume. Maybe somewhat surprisingly, employees have been very receptive to these much higher production goals. These employees, most of whom have been with the company for at least ten years, indicate that they're more excited about their jobs and more satisfied with their working lives than ever before.

Workers at B&S traditionally knew their own jobs well, and many of these jobs were repetitive and unchallenging. For instance, one job is to run the machine which glues labels to crayon sticks—172 labels per minute. The label-gluing machine operator was an expert at his job but knew little about the other jobs in the plant. To get the increased production, management redesigned the label-gluing machine operator's job and almost everybody else's.

Workers in the Lindsay plant now do their jobs in teams and are encouraged to learn the jobs of everyone else on their team. Team members regularly rotate jobs to increase their skills and reduce boredom. These teams have taken on the responsibility for solving their work problems. And employees in the plant now also have taken charge of tracking production, changing layouts as needed to solve quality problems, and conceiving and implementing cost-reduction ideas like recycling waste.

Employees receive no financial or material rewards for accepting these new changes. What they do get is increased recognition, the opportunity to learn new tasks, and greater control over their

work. The results have been extremely encouraging for both employees and management. Employees have increased job satisfaction and self-esteem. And the plant has more than doubled its profit in the first year of these new changes. Additionally, employees at Lindsay now have greater job security than they had before because the plant has eliminated the 15 to 25 percent cost disadvantage it previously labored under compared to the company's sister plants in the United States.

## Questions

1. How does the B&S experience in its Lindsay plant compare with the evidence on the satisfaction–productivity relationship described in this chapter? Explain why it might confirm or contradict the research.
2. B&S's historical turnover rate has been very low. Why do you think that is? Shouldn't a plant with boring and repetitive jobs like gluing 172 labels a minute on crayon sticks have high absenteeism and turnover?
3. Explain why, in spite of tremendously high new production goals, B&S employees seem more satisfied with their jobs than ever.

Source: Based on J. Wells, "Winning Colours," *Report on Business Magazine*, July 1992; cited in S.P. Robbins, D.A. DeCenzo, and R. Stuart-Kotze, *Fundamentals of Management: Canadian Edition* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall Canada, 1996), p. 246.

## Age and Attitudes

U.S. federal laws consider anyone who is 40 years of age or older to be an older worker. This means that no organization has the right to discriminate against these individuals because of their age. Yet, as more and more organizations downsize and millions of middle-aged workers are pounding the pavement looking for work, examples of age discrimination are happening every day in every profession. Statistics, for example, show that it takes older job seekers 64 percent longer to find work than younger ones. Even though age discrimination is illegal, it appears to be such an ingrained part of our culture that we may not even recognize it if and when we're doing it.

When you talk with people who hire, they'll tell you they don't discriminate. Then they list "certain realities" to face about older workers: They get sick more often, they don't stay with the company as long as younger workers do, and they can't work as hard. Of course, these realities are all false, but they nevertheless influence hiring decisions.

The actual performance of older workers is impressive. For instance, Days Inn deliberately recruited older workers to see how they performed. Days Inn found that the older workers stay with the company longer, take fewer sick days, and are just as productive as their younger counterparts.

Negative attitudes toward older workers have subtle influences on the way we perceive and behave toward them. For instance, in job interviews, differences can be seen in the treatment of younger

and older applicants. In several staged interviews with pairs of applicants—one older and one younger—the younger women were accommodated more by the interviewer. The older women were subtly discouraged. In fact, in one-third of these 24 staged interviews, a startling difference in the way older and younger job applicants were treated could be seen. In another staged interview situation, one individual made up to look younger one time and older another found a job opening at a brokerage firm offered to his “younger” self even though this “person” had less job experience and didn’t follow up on the interview with a letter or phone call. Although the interviewers didn’t appear to purposefully discriminate (after all, it *is* illegal) against the older job applicants in the way they acted and in the questions they asked, differences in attitude could still be seen.

## Questions

1. Describe the three components of an attitude and relate them to the views often held about older workers.
2. Is stereotyping part of the problem with attitudes about age? Explain.
3. What are the implications of this case for building a diverse work force?
4. What can organizations do to lessen the negative attitudes that managers and employees might hold toward older workers?

Source: Based on “Age and Attitudes,” *ABC News Primetime*; aired on June 9, 1994.