

THEORY TO PRACTICE: EFFECITVE MANAGERIAL SKILLS

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Effective Managerial Skills:

Increasing Efficiency by Eliminating Bad Behaviors

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In this paper I will explore three methods of correcting bad behaviors that require that the practitioner focus on replacing a bad **stimulus-response** association with a positive stimulus-response association.

Example

Aiden August is a hard-working, determined and competent department manager within an American local university department. He is tasked with managing a department consisting of eight employees and a rotating roster of student workers each semester. Due to declines in student enrollment, the university has charged all department managers with the responsibility of identifying and correcting office behaviors that prove to be inefficient and destructive to the complicated processes flowing across departments and the perceived competence of the university. While observing the office behaviors of his employees, Aiden identified three bad behaviors that needed to be addressed: lack of urgency towards completing assignments during the off peak season, hostility towards management when receiving criticism or reinforcement and diverting attention from the student when providing customer service over the phone. Upon reviewing these bad behaviors, Aiden decided to correct these outcomes by using one of three methods of correction.

To correct the behavior of tackling task in a timely manner during the office's off peak season, Aiden decided to utilize the **Exhaustion method**. The exhaustion method informs us that one can correct behavior by providing the associated stimuli repeatedly until exhausting the subjects bad response. Only after pushing the subject to the point of exhaustion can you correct the bad behavior by introducing the desired stimulus-response association. For Aiden's situation,

employees' putting off paperwork until it has collected to a sizeable amount rather than completing it as it is received, the exhaustion method is a great means to start with. He can develop additional paperwork and assignments during the off peak season to condition his employees to complete tasks and paperwork upon their receipt of them rather than prolonging their processing by allowing them to accumulate and bottleneck. This will help ensure efficiency and preparedness for the massive influx of paperwork during the office's peak season and ensure that other departments within the university are able to complete tasks dependent on his office's prerequisite tasks.

Aiden was also surprised to take notice of the amount of hostility that has begun to creep up among a few of his employees towards suggestions and criticisms of their assignments and the quality of their work. He decided that the **Threshold method** was the appropriate means to correct this disruptive behavior. The threshold method advises that to correct a bad behavior you introduce the stimulus in smaller quantities so as to not trigger the undesirable response. Using these small incremental stimuli allows one to condition and prime the subject to become acclimated to the stimulus and to diminish the bad behavior. With Aiden's situation, he has decided to be more observant and involved in his employees' work so that he can have more frequent instances of providing criticism rather than providing it as one cumulative response. Small criticisms can be veiled as suggestions and can help build trust and rapport within his subordinates. After a period of time, this method of providing feedback can help elevate hostile and polluting attitudes within the office and can help reinforce authority and chain of command.

Aiden's final office observation was that employees were slacking on their professionalism and attention to student's needs while providing customer service over the phone. Far too many of his employees were distracting themselves with the internet and their cell

phones while handling student calls. This bad behavior often resulted in poor exchange of information, lack of fully understanding the needs of the student and careless transferring of calls to the inappropriate department. To rectify this glaring issue, Aiden took direction from the **Incompatibility method**. The incompatibility method requires that the subject is exposed to the stimulus within an environment that doesn't afford them the opportunity for their typical response. To place his employees in a restrictive environment with similar stimuli, Aiden devised a rotating schedule for the office staff to work the floor's common lobby front desk. Working the front desk exposes his employees to the act of answering and addressing student's concerns and questions but in an environment that requires that they do this face to face. The inability to hide their actions, requires that the employees be present, in the moment, and that they afford all of their attention to the students they are assisting. Face to face communications will also help in ensuring that correct information is given and that students are given clear and concise direction. The greater frequency employees are asked to work the front desk, the quicker and stronger the corrected **S-R association** can be developed.

Geared with the knowledge and experience provided with these three corrective behavior methods, Aiden is well qualified to ensure that his office is at the forefront of developing a competent and efficient university department: a trend that will hopefully help in developing a strong customer service relationship and student satisfaction.

References

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Effective Managerial Skills:

Efficient Mentoring through Modeled Learning

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In this paper I will explore the **characteristics of effective models** within the workplace and how **modeling** affects behavior.

Example

Aiden August, department manager for a prestigious state school, has recently been recognized for his work in building student satisfaction and a sense of competence within his campus department. As a result of these accomplishments, as well as, his experience with student workers, the campus has designated him as a student worker mentor within the Enrollment Management division. As a mentor, Aiden is expected to work closely with all new student workers and help facilitate their understanding of office procedures and shape them to be useful, competent and motivated members of the campus community. Seeing as Aiden is a busy individual himself, he decides the best way to be a proper mentor is to **model** the behaviors he expects out of the division's student workers. Modeling serves as a visual, and sometime audible, cue as to what behaviors are appropriate and desirable. It can also be an effective means of relaying what behaviors are inappropriate or undesirable as well. For Aiden to effectively utilize modeling, he has to understand what the characteristics of an effective model are and determine how best to exemplify those attributes about his self.

Bandura informs us that there are three types of models: **live, symbolic and verbal instructions** (p.120). Aiden will be working mainly as a **live model** and on occasion he will be providing his student workers with **verbal instruction** when he is out of the office or is occupied with assisting students or other university staff. Though these two types of models greatly differ as to their approach and execution, they do share some very similar requirements in order to be

effective. First off, Aiden (model) must appear competent. **Effective models appear competent**, capable, within the area they are exemplifying. For Aiden to be an effective model for his student workers, he needs to ensure that he exudes competence in how he behaves and conducts himself within the office and on the university's campus. In order to solicit and entice his student workers to imitate his model, they need to feel that Aiden is highly capable of accomplishing the task being asked of them and that he is a clear example of what is anticipated to be reflected in their behaviors. Aiden can posture himself to appear competent in front of his student workers by being direct, concise and accurate when answering both their questions and students' questions that may be presented within proximity of student workers. Competence is a characteristic that Aiden should be more than satisfactory at exuding, considering upper management has already acknowledged him for helping developing a sense of competence within his own department.

Another characteristic that will assist Aiden in being an effective model is **appearing powerful and prestigious** within his position of management. People are more likely to imitate individuals who appear more powerful according to Sassot and Ride in their research in 1987. Aiden can reinforce the power and prestige of his position, already recognized and authorized by upper management, by understanding his role as a supervisor and responsibly executing the responsibilities of his position. Proper and ethical handling of his subordinates in front of his student workers and the fair delegation of task within the office can help instill a sense of power within his new student workers he mentors. Open and effective dissemination of communications and goals from upper management to his office staff and student workers can also strengthen this perception of power. Furthermore, the **reinforcement of "gender-appropriate" behaviors** is often cited as a supporting characteristic of effective modeling; however, within the context of a university office environment, this characteristic may not be

applicable or necessary for Aiden's purposes of modeling. It could come across as misogynistic, closed-minded and sexist for him to focus on and intentionally reinforce "gender-appropriate" behaviors given the current social climate concerning the appropriateness of such gender expectations.

The final important characteristic that Aiden needs to take into consideration, when attempting to be an effective model for his student workers is ensuring that his modeled behavior, as well as himself, are relevant to the student workers' situation. Learners are more likely to model a model when the **model's behavior is relevant to the observer's situation**. This essentially means that learners are more likely to model behaviors that they perceive as being relevant to what is expected of them or model the behaviors of individuals that they perceive as being similar to them. An effective means to demonstrate this similarity and relevancy is for Aiden to be observed by his student workers fulfilling the roles and responsibilities expected of his student workers while utilizing the desired behaviors during these observations. If they are going to be expected to answer phones, process paperwork or visit with students face-to-face, Aiden needs to ensure that they are exposed to seeing him model the desired behaviors within these contexts. By witnessing their mentor fulfill their expected responsibilities, the student workers are more likely to understand and model appropriate office behaviors. To ensure full effectiveness of his model, Aiden will also need to initially establish with his student workers the expectations of their role within the office and of appropriate behavior to prime them for observing and eventually imitating modeled behaviors.

Now that Aiden understands what characteristics of himself he can exhibit to be an effective model, he can now turn his attention to how modeling will affect the behaviors of his student workers. The first effect of modeling he'll have to keep in mind is **modeling teaches**

new behaviors. This effect is powerful and, if used correctly, will fulfill Aiden's need to be a good mentor for his student workers and teach them new behaviors.. To properly take advantage of this effect, Aiden will need to identify absent behaviors that are necessary for his student workers to be effective in the office and then arrange that they shadow his execution of these behaviors. For teaching proper behaviors when answer phones in the office, Aiden could arrange to have a group of his student workers gather in his office while he answers student phone inquiries on speaker phone. This will allow the student workers to experience firsthand what is expected of them and teach them through modeling how to conduct themselves on the phones. Time spent between calls can be utilized to answer questions and develop a sense of relatability by sharing skills and previous experiences. To test the acquisition of the desired behavior, Aiden can ask for a volunteer or select a student worker whom he has identified as not possessing the desired behavior to imitate his behavior by taking the next call. Proper reinforcement or punishment would be necessary to encourage proper imitation.

The next effect of modeling Aiden will need to understand is **modeling influences the frequency of previously learned behaviors.** This informs us that under used or latent behaviors can be revived and utilized by learners if they see others being reinforced for these behaviors. Knowing this equips Aiden with the advantage of knowing that if he can determine which student workers have previous university or office experience, he can utilize **facilitation** through **vicarious reinforcement** and revitalize those latent behaviors by reinforcing desired behaviors of existing members within the office rather than the student workers directly. This of course only works if the experience student worker observes the reinforcement for good behavior. Aiden's best opportunity for this would be reinforcing an employee who is currently modeling proper behavior while having a student worker shadows them. This would be more effective if

his reinforcement was for a behavior aside from the one under direct observation. For instance, if a student worker was observing paperwork processing but the model was interrupted and asked to answer the phone. Afterward, Aiden reinforced the desired behavior. If the student worker had previous customer phone experience, this instance of vicarious reinforcement should solicit the latent behavior to become present again in the student worker.

Aiden has also selected modeling because he understands that **modeling increases the frequency of similar behaviors**. Effective modeling is handy at encouraging behaviors similar to the behavior being modeled. This allows Aiden to be most efficient by allowing him flexibility in how he chooses which circumstances to model to each student worker. A worker with face-to-face customer service experience might be better suited for observing the phone model while a worker with phone customer service background might find more benefit from a face-to-face model. By exposing them to something new, Aiden is utilizing their previous experience to allow them to see the similarities between the two and make the association that expected behavior in one situation is in fact the same in the other.

Finally, Aiden needs to understand that **modeling may encourage previously forbidden behaviors**. While spending time reinforcing desired behaviors, Aiden must recognize and determine if there are any behaviors that are necessary but **inhibited** within his student worker(s). He would then need to ensure that when these behaviors are exhibited around the student worker who is inhibited, that the model is reinforced so as to produce a **disinhibition** effect. These behavioral effects of modeling will assist Aiden in being a proper mentor.

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Effective Managerial Skills:

Importance of Long Term Memory and Factors Affecting

Storage of New Training

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In this paper I will explore the importance of identifying factors that affect the storage of new information into long term memory storage. All employee training programs should aim to develop proper skills and behaviors within employee's long term memory for better consistency and accuracy within their job responsibilities.

Example

Campus department manager, Aiden August, has once again found himself the recipient of recognition from the university chancellor and vice chancellors for developing a wildly successful student worker mentor program. Upon reviewing the results of the student satisfaction survey for the preceding year after Aiden implemented his revised mentor program, the chancellor decided that a steady increase in student satisfaction has influenced the university to implement an Office of Employee Development. Upper management has appointed Aiden to be the Director of Employee Development and is personally charged with assessing the needs of the campus pertaining to training deficiencies and knowledge voids campus wide. Aiden's new office staff will be charged with the responsibility of developing a baseline standard of training for all new employees, developing a program to ensure that current employees are up-to-date on all university training and to develop ongoing training that reinforces long term memory storage of key university policies and practices.

To help guide and organize the immense task placed before him and his new staff, Aiden has concluded that the key to developing campus wide competency and policy literacy, he needs to effectively utilize his learner's capacity for long term memory acquisition. **Long term memory** allows for the retention of learned skills or behaviors over a long period of time. It also

constructs a foundation that allows for new skills to be developed and acquired. Upon researching long term memory and the factors that affect it, Aiden has decided to kill two birds with one stone and develop an office development orientation. The office development orientation will serve as a means to introduce his staff to their new environment and responsibilities as well as provide Aiden with a sample population to observe and see first-hand how cognitive and behavioral factors affect long term memory and what obstacles the office will need to address on a university scale.

Aiden has chosen to identify his new office staff for his observations because it represents a small population from the university with diverse backgrounds and experiences consisting of newly hired employees and employees who bring previous campus knowledge with them from their previous positions at the university. The process of developing training for his own staff can assist in his understanding of what training deficiencies exist on campus and offer him a unique look at what factors affect his employees retention of proper campus policies and practices in long term memory.

While planning the office development orientation, Aiden has identified both cognitive factors - prior knowledge, prior misconceptions and expectations - and behavioral factors - verbalization and enactment - that he wishes to observe first hand initially to better shape his approach to identifying deficiencies within campus employee knowledge and training. He has also chosen to observe these factors so that he can get a better grasp of the needs of his own offices training. He has decided to create interactions that help explore these effects on long term memory.

The initial interaction Aiden has devised for his staff is an open round-table discussion. The purpose of this discussion is to foster community within his new office staff but more importantly to help Aiden identify prior knowledge among members of his staff. **Prior knowledge** is important because it facilitates long term memory by assisting in the building of associations between itself and new information. It influences and speeds up the **encoding** of the new information. The office round-table discussion will allow staff members to openly talk about previous office experiences, skills and responsibilities. Identifying prior knowledge will help inform Aiden on how to develop training materials that utilize these past experiences so as to aid in developing efficient and time saving instruction.

The employees' discussion of their experiences also reinforces these skills and behaviors in long term memory through the positive behavior factor known as verbalization. **Verbalization** is a factor that is known to facilitate long term memory storage through the learner verbally talking about how they accomplish task and reflect upon what skills they utilized. The act of talking about these experiences and reflecting upon them helps bring them back into the learner's focus for the employee to develop a greater association and retention of these skills and behaviors.

The second interaction Aiden has decided to utilize is a role-playing activity. He has chosen to allow the activity to develop organically by providing little direction other than a campus situational prompt so that it can help reveal any prior misconceptions or expectations that are present within his staff member's long term memory. The act of role-playing particular campus interactions, such as answering a question from a student or assisting with website navigation, will allow Aiden to observe how an employee's prior misconceptions about policy, department/campus responsibilities or customer service affect how they model their behavior. It

will also allow him to get an idea of what expectations are held by new campus employees by how they improvise skills or responsibilities that they have no previous experience to reference.

Prior misconceptions and **expectations** can tell Aiden a lot about the condition of an employee's long term memory and what behaviors need to be addressed in future training materials. **Prior misconceptions** can create biases within a learner and prove to be an obstacle to storing new information in long term memory. This concerns Aiden because it helps identify areas of opposition that will require additional effort in correcting within his office and across campus, ultimately. **Expectations** color an individual's perception of information based around their own expectations of the material. By identifying these expectations, Aiden can develop appropriate training materials that expose these expectations and affirms or disciplines these expectations within the learner's long term memory. Expectations, if accurate, can help facilitate new learning; however, they carry the risk that the learner's expectations may cause them to overlook actual policy in favor of their expectations of how the policy reads and is implemented. This assumption can lead to inconsistency and degrade into incompetence if not properly addressed and corrected.

Aiden has also chosen the role-playing activity because of its behavioral effect known as enactment. **Enactments** facilitate long term memory storage because people more readily recall skills and learn new skills by doing rather than just talking or reading. Role-playing is a form of enactment that allows for Aiden's staff to exercise, reawaken and reinforce their long term memory storage of vital office skills. Members of the staff acting out interactions with students will facilitate that they enact proper behavior models and by doing so they can familiarize themselves with expected behaviors that may have fallen out of use due to lack of need for the employee, thus reinforcing them within their long term memory.

Though Aiden is aware that this is just a preliminary plan for his own office staff, he understands that the challenge of campus wide training and development is much larger than the training of a single small staff. These firsthand observations of factors affecting effective long term memory storage will help Aiden in understanding the challenges that will be faced as he and his staff expands and begins to tackle the campuses training deficiencies. As long as he stays observant and aware of these factors, Aiden should once again find himself, as well as his staff, as the recipient of campus appreciation.

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Managerial Professional Development:

Effective Learning and Study Tactics for Continued

Professional Development

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This paper will explore and apply effective learning and study tactics, focusing on meaningful learning, elaboration, note-taking, identifying important information and summarizing as a means to extend one's skills and facilitate professional development.

Example

Aiden August, our talented and goal driven university department manager, has come to the realization that his potential growth and upward mobility within the university is limited due to his lack of a Doctoral degree. Though many upper management positions do not require that the applicant possess a doctorate, the current applicant pool is saturated with prospective hires that do have a doctorate and have proven to be an obstacle for Aiden's upward mobility. The reality of the current job market and his competition within the university field has led Aiden to decide that he needs to enroll in a doctorate program at his university if he is ever to achieve his goal of being a Vice Chancellor, or perhaps a Chancellor, in the future.

Upon reviewing his university's doctorate programs, the resumes of individuals who hold upper management positions and speaking with a few of his colleagues, Aiden has decided to enroll in a Leadership and Management doctoral program to increase his awareness of contemporary practices in upper management. This new task that Aiden has decided to take on has his mind concerned with his readiness for enrolling in a doctorate program because it has been nearly 10 years since completing his masters. He has chosen to funnel this anxiety and concern into researching **learning and study tactics** and to develop a personal **learning and study strategy**. Learning and study strategies are an all-encompassing plan that assist in the acquisition and retention of new information, while learning and study tactics are the individual

components of said strategy. With only two months until Aiden's program begins, he has decided to use this time to review known tactics and strategies to identify and develop desirable behaviors.

Upon a brief review of available resources on learning and study strategies and tactics, Aiden has developed his personal "Back to Basics" strategy. His learning strategy focuses on refining and awakening previously utilized behaviors. His strategy consists of five tactics that Aiden has identified as beneficial and effective for his goal of preparing for the doctorate program: meaningful learning, elaboration, note-taking, identifying important information and summarizing. These five tactics are proven means of effective learning and study, as well as, are tactics that Aiden has self-identified as having utilized during his previous experiences of information acquisition and retention. By reflecting upon these past experiences, Aiden will attempt to reacquaint himself with these behaviors and utilize them during his return to the classroom.

The first of his learning and study tactics is to engage new information presented in class is **meaningful learning**. Meaningful learning is a cognitive behavior that consists of understanding and interpreting new information by relating it to previous knowledge possessed within the individual's long-term memory. After familiarizing himself with this tactic, Aiden was able to reflect upon his experience of learning the arithmetic skill of division during elementary school. While his teacher, Mrs. Smith, tasked herself with teaching division to her 3rd grade class, she first identified that the prerequisite skill of multiplication was necessary for students to successfully gain the skill of division. Knowing multiplication and being familiar with his multiplication tables assisted Aiden in building associations while learning division. The knowledge of knowing his multiplication tables was extremely useful in his learning experience

of division because it allowed him to build associations between the possible quotients derived from dividends and divisors. Without understanding the possible multiples of the divisor, dividing the dividend by the divisor can become a task of trial and error. Just as he had done with learning the skill of division, Aiden plans to approach all new information during his doctorate program in the same way by actively participating and relating this new information to experiences and knowledge he already possesses.

Elaboration is another behavior that Aiden has identified as being both effective and pre-existing within his learning experiences and practices. Elaboration is the process by which a learner moves beyond memorization and synthesizes newly acquired information with previously known knowledge within their long-term memory to expand upon the subject. Learning and Study tactic elaboration is closely related to meaningful learning because they both rely on previous knowledge within long-term memory and building associations. Elaboration is a skill that Aiden did not have to look too far into his past to reflect upon previous examples of its practice. Aiden identified that he currently practices this tactic within his many roles as department manager. Often times he is required to attend and participate in director and management meetings on campus. The purpose of these meetings varies greatly; however, he routinely has to comprehend new information shared during these meetings and relate it to how it will affect his office directly. After understanding this new information, Aiden interprets it within the context of his office and then applies it effectively. This ultimately consists of him having to elaborate to the staff the effects of this new information within their office; illustrating changes in office policy and campus responsibilities.

While reflecting on his experiences of elaboration, Aiden identified another tactic that he commonly uses while attending meetings: **note-taking**. Note-taking is the physical behavior of

writing down new information as it is being presented to you audibly or visually. It helps in maintaining the learner's attention on the subject matter, encoding new information and as a physical storage for future reference or study. Aiden takes extensive notes while in meetings because they serve as a vital tool within his role on campus. Note-taking allows him to engage information during the meetings in physical, audible and visual means. This reinforces his understanding and retention of this information, as well as, provides concrete references when developing policies in accordance of this information. It also provides him a means to record immediate associations and reflections on the information for further development in the future.

Another two tactics employed within Aiden's "Back to Basics" strategy are **identifying important information** and **summarizing**. Identifying important information is a useful skill that consists of breaking a large amount of information down and identifying which information is more important to study and develop further. Summarizing is the process of condensing new information into your own words and emphasizing the important information and topics while omitting unnecessary details. In practice, Aiden already utilizes these tactics within his position on campus in a variety of circumstances.

Most prominent of those circumstances would be when interpreting campus policy changes and information distributed across the campus from upper management. When reviewing this new information, Aiden often doesn't have the time to saddle himself with the task of disseminating this information in its entirety to his staff. Instead, Aiden briefly reviews the information and identifies important information that concerns his office and its responsibilities. He then uses these important pieces of information, in conjunction with any notes he has taken during meetings, to build a framework to write an office memo that summarizes the information within the context of his office. These tactics have proven to be very

effective for quickly implementing campus policy changes and shifts in department responsibilities because it condenses the information down to just vital topics and further develops Aiden understanding of this information to assist in his responsibility to the campus community.

These five tactics - meaningful learning, elaboration, note-taking, identifying important details and summarizing - provide the framework for Aiden's "Back to Basics" learning and study strategy. After reflecting upon them and their utilization within his past, Aiden's unease and anxiety about returning to the classroom, after nearly ten years, has subsided because he now realizes that these tactics were never abandoned after completing his Masters degree. These tactics are utilized currently within his management position and have aided in his consistent and effective managing of his office.

References

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