CHAPTER 6

Motivation: Organizational Applications

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by defining learning, one of the fundamental processes underlying behavior and, in turn motivation. It continues with a detailed discussion of social learning, and self-efficacy – a central part of the social learning theory.

The principles of operant conditioning are discussed, focusing on:

* Positive reinforcement
* Negative reinforcement
* Punishment
* Extinction

Behavior modification from a managerial perspective is introduced, followed by coverage of the reinforcement theory and the application of this theory to the work environment in the form of OB modification. The five core steps in implementing behavior modification in an organization are described. Coverage of the reinforcement theory concludes with an overview of relevant research and a critical assessment of the theory.

Since effective self-management appears to offer potential benefits to employees and organizations, the self-management or self-regulation approach to motivation is introduced next. Discussion focuses on the situations where self-regulation is likely to occur, and a three-stage model of the self-regulation process is presented (see Figure 6.3).

In goal-setting theory, the process of establishing goals involves superior and subordinate working together to set subordinate’s goals for a specified period of time. An overview of the theory's concepts (goal, goal specificity, goal difficulty, goal intensity, and goal commitment) is presented, as well as the five key steps in goal‑setting, some significant research findings, and a critical assessment of the theory. Goal setting can be a powerful technique for getting employees to set and strive to attain specific, relatively hard goals.

For motivation of behavior rewards must be offered to employees they deem as being meaningful. The main objectives of reward programs are to attract qualified people to join the organization, to keep employees coming to work, and to motivate employees to achieve high levels of performance.

Rewards can be of two types:

* Extrinsic rewards are external to the job (pay, promotion, fringe benefits)
* Intrinsic rewards are part of the job itself (responsibility, challenge, and feedback characteristics of the job)

There is a discussion of rewards as they relates to turnover, absenteeism, job performance and organizational commitment. Rewards are correlated to high performing organizations. Finally, a critique of performance-based rewards is highlighted. Examples are: rewards injure relationships, rewards are really punishment, rewards have a Skinner bias, rewards ignore reason, and reward discourage risk taking.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the chapter, students should be able to:

1. Explain differences between social learning theory and reinforcement theory.

2. Discuss how self-managing can be useful in developing a motivation program in an organizational setting.

3. Describe how expectancy, equity, and goal-setting theories are used in organizational applications to motivate employees.

4. Define intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and how these rewards influence employee motivation.

5. Explain different reward programs found in high-performance organizations.

6. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of using nontraditional reward programs in organizations.

Lecture Outline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PowerPoint Slide** | **Material from Text to Support Slide / Additional Comments** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  | Learning is one of the fundamental processes underlying behavior and, in turn, motivation. Most behavior within organizations is learned behavior. Perceptions, attitudes, goals, and emotional reactions are learned. Skills—for example, programming a computer or counseling a troubled employee—can be learned. The meanings and uses of language are learned.  **Learning** is the process by which a relatively enduring change in behavior occurs as a result of practice. The words *relatively enduring* signify that the change in behavior is more or less permanent. The term *practice* is intended to cover both formal training and uncontrolled experiences. The changes in behavior that characterize learning may be adaptive and promote effectiveness, or they may be nonadaptive and ineffective. A number of approaches have been proposed to explain the various ways in which this learning may occur. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Albert Bandura of Stanford University illustrated how people acquire new behavior by imitating role models (learning vicariously). **Social learning** refers to the fact that we acquire much of our behavior (e.g., hitting a golf ball, giving a speech, using a computer program) by observation and imitation of others in a social context.  The Bandura-inspired view of behavior is that it is a function of both personal characteristics and environmental conditions. According to Bandura, social learning theory explains behavior in terms of a continuous interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants.Bandura stresses the point that cognitive functioning must not be ignored in explaining, understanding, and modifying individual behavior. |
|  | Social learning theory introduces vicarious learning (modeling), symbolism, and self-control. We imitate parents, friends, heroes, and respected leaders because we identify with them. Each of us also uses symbolism as guides for our behavior. (We know not to pull the exit release handle on the airplane because of our mental picture of the consequences of a sudden loss in cabin pressure; we set personal goals to motivate ourselves; we use mental reminders to remember a customer’s name.) We also attempt to exercise self-control by not smoking, not drinking excessively, and not physically throwing out of the office the person who makes a personally disparaging remark about our family or ethnic background.  A central part of social learning theory is the concept of **self-efficacy**, defined as the belief that one can perform adequately in a particular situation.Self-efficacy has three dimensions: *magnitude,* the level of task difficulty a person believes she can attain; *strength,* referring to the conviction regarding magnitude as strong or weak; and *generality,* the degree to which the expectation is generalized across situations. |
|  | A concept that has a potential effect on self-efficacy is the **Pygmalion effect**, which refers to enhanced learning or performance that results from others having positive expectations of us. That is, the fact that others believe us capable of high levels of performance may lead us to perform at that level. Some believe that self-efficacy may be involved in the Pygmalion effect through the persuasive influence of others holding positive expectations |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | In another perspective, learning often occurs as a *consequence of* behavior. This type of learning is called **operant conditioning**. The person most closely associated with operant conditioning is the late world-famous behaviorist B. F. Skinner. Behaviors that can be controlled by altering the consequences (reinforcers and punishments) that follow them are referred to as **operants**. An operant is strengthened (increased) or weakened (decreased) as a function of the events that follow it. Most workplace behaviors are operants. Examples of operant behaviors include performing job-related tasks, reading a budget report, pulling a defective part off a production line, listening to a customer’s complaint about poor service, and coming to work on time. Operants are distinguished by virtue of being controlled by their consequences. |
|  | Figure 6.1 illustrates the general form of the operant conditioning process. The relationships of S1 -->R1 -->S2-->R2 are called the *contingencies of reinforcement.* |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | *Reinforcement* is an extremely important principle of learning. In a general sense, motivation is an internal cause of behavior, while reinforcement is an external cause. **Positive reinforcement** occurs when a positively valued consequence follows a response to a stimulus. Thus, positive reinforcement is anything that both increases the strength of response and induces repetitions of the behavior that preceded the reinforcement.These positive reinforcers could include items such as raises, bonuses, or promotions or less tangible things such as praise or encouragement. Without reinforcement, no measurable modification of behavior is likely to take place.  **Negative reinforcement** refers to an increase in the frequency of a behavior following removal of something that is displeasing (e.g., an undesired situation) immediately after the response. An event is a *negative reinforcer* only if its removal after a response increases the performance of that response  **Punishment** is an undesirable consequence of a particular behavior.A professor who takes off 10 points for each day a paper is late is using punishment. A mechanic who doesn’t hand in his report and is suspended for one day with a loss of pay is being punished. Punishment, when applied, is sending the message to not do something.  Extinction reduces the frequency of behavior because positive reinforcement is being withheld. When positive reinforcement for a learned response is withheld, individuals continue to practice that behavior for some period of time. If this nonreinforcement continues, the behavior decreases and eventually disappears. The decline in the response rate because of nonreinforcement is defined as **extinction**. |
|  | An application of behavior modification in organizations follows a five-step problem-solving process similar to that in Figure 6.2.  Details follow. |
|  | Behavior modification is based on the assumption that behavior is more important than its “psychological causes,” such as the needs, motives, and values held by individuals.Thus, a behaviorist such as B. F. Skinner focuses on specific behaviors and not on such intangibles as esteem needs or personality structure. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Managers conduct an analysis of the ABCs of the behavior,also called *functionally analyzing the behavior*.In **ABC analysis**, referred to earlier, the **A** designates analyzing the antecedents of **B,** the pinpointed critical behaviors; and the **C** indicates the associated consequence. Specific analyses of the ABCs attempt to determine where the problems lie. |
|  | Thomas Connellan has developed a set of performance analysis questions to get at the problem source (Table 6.1).  Details in larger print follow. |
|  |  |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Table 6.2- Systematically viewing the problem of absenteeism in terms of antecedents, behaviors, and consequences. |
|  | .A survey of empirical research on organizational behavior modification (OBM) examined research involving quantity of performance, quality of performance, absenteeism, employee safety, employee energy conservation and theft, and customer service.The researchers found generally strong evidence that OBM is making and can make a positive contribution to organizational behavior. Absenteeism rates, quality of production, and employee safety behaviors appear to improve more often than not when organizations use OBM. |
|  | Critics have attacked behavior modification on a number of grounds. A frequent concern with the use of reinforcers is that there’s no “real” change in behavior: the person is just being “bribed” to perform. Bribery refers to the illicit use of rewards to corrupt someone’s conduct. In reinforcement, however, outcomes are typically delivered for behaviors designed to benefit the person and the organization. Thus, this criticism, although logical, really doesn’t apply to the reinforcers usually used in organizations.  Another perspective is offered by Locke, who believes that to view reinforcements as modifying responses automatically, independent of a person’s beliefs, values, or mental processes, is simply a wrong way to view human behavior. He says that this theory is simple and appealing but that the facts don’t support it. . He claims that people can learn by seeing others get reinforcement and by imitating those who are reinforced (see social learning, discussed earlier). There’s also self-reinforcement, which operant conditioning theorists ignore.  Another criticism focuses on the point that individuals can become too dependent on extrinsic reinforcers (e.g., pay). Thus, behavior may become dependent on the reinforcer and may never be performed without the promise of the reinforcer. A last criticism, especially in the case of positive reinforcement, is that its utilization may be more perceived than actual. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Managers should remember three important principles when expressing appreciation and reinforcing good behavior:  (1) Describe the desired behavior in specific terms, avoiding sweeping generalizations.  (2) Explain why the behavior was helpful to the organization.  (3) Regardless of the type of positive reinforcement given, it should always be accompanied by a personal expression of thanks. |
|  | Self-management, which is often called self-control, is defined as follows: “A person displays self-control when, in the relative absence of immediate external constraints, he engages in behavior whose previous probability has been less than that of alternatively available behaviors.”  In essence this suggests that there are times when individuals will choose behaviors that they have not chosen consistently in the past, and this selection may be based on the expectation of positive outcomes in the future from this course of action. Several features of self-management need to be noted. Self-management is a process whereby a person is faced with immediate response alternatives (e.g., to work moderately hard or to work very hard to complete the job) involving different consequences. Self-management behavior may include personal performance goals, self-instructions on how to achieve goals, self-administered consequences, a plan to behave in a particular manner, or a strategy for personally developing a set of skills. |
|  | Because effective self-management appears to offer potential benefits to employees and organizations, a general framework could prove useful. Frederick Kanfer has proposed a three-stage model that has managerial application value. Figure 6.3 shows the Kanfer model of self-regulation as applied to a work situation. |
|  | Since 1968, when Edwin Locke presented what’s now considered his classic paper,there has been considerable and growing interest in applying goal setting to organizational problems and issues. Locke proposed that **goal setting** was a cognitive process of some practical utility. His view was that an individual’s **conscious goals** and intentions are the primary determinants of behavior. That is, “one of the commonly observed characteristics of intentional behavior is that it tends to keep going until it reaches completion.” |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Goal specificity** is the degree of quantitative precision (clarity) of the goal. **Goal difficulty** is the degree of proficiency or the level of performance sought. **Goal intensity** pertains to the process of setting the goal or of determining how to reach it.To date, goal intensity hasn’t been widely studied, although a related concept, **goal commitment**, has been considered in some studies. Goal commitment is the amount of effort used to achieve a goal. |
|  | Figure 6.4 portrays applied goal setting from a managerial perspective, showing the sequence of events for such a goal-setting program. The key steps in goal setting are (1) *diagnosing* whether the people, the organization, and the technology are suited for goal setting; (2) *preparing* employees via increased interpersonal interaction, communication, training, and action plans for goal setting; (3) *emphasizing* the attributes of goals that should be understood by a manager and subordinates; (4) *conducting* intermediate reviews to make necessary adjustments in established goals; and (5) *performing* a final review to check the goals set, modified, and accomplished. Each step needs to be carefully planned and implemented if goal setting is to be an effective motivational technique. In too many applications of goal setting, steps outlined in or issues suggested by Figure 6.4 are ignored. |
|  | Locke’s 1968 paper contributed to a considerable increase in laboratory and field research on goal setting. Another force behind the increase in interest and research was the demand of managers for practical and specific techniques that they could apply in their organizations. Goal setting offered such a technique for some managers. |
|  | Locke has contrasted goal setting with the expectancy and need-for-achievement explanations of motivation.Figure 6.5 highlights differences in the explanations of the goal difficulty–performance relationship proposed by these three theories.  One explanation of the goal difficulty–performance relationship is presented as graph III in Figure 6.5. Locke predicts that a person’s performance (A) will increase as goal difficulty increases (assuming that the person is committed and has the ability to perform), until a ceiling of performance (B) is reached. Individuals who lack commitment to difficult goals have decreasing or poor performance (C). |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | In one of the more interesting studies of goal setting, a jointly designed series of experiments was conducted to study the effect of participation on goal commitment and performance.  Locke served as a third-party mediator of two views held by Latham and Erez. Latham proposed that when goal difficulty is held constant, there are virtually no differences in goal commitment or performance, regardless of whether the goal was assigned or set participatively. Erez believed that participation in goal setting is crucial to goal commitment; that is, if a person doesn’t participate, there’s little commitment to accomplish the goal.  A series of four experiments by researchers at the University of Maryland and University of Washington tested the two viewpoints of goal setting. The results indicated that there was no effect of value for participation on goal commitment or performance in any of the four experiments. The study is commendable for its completeness, the participation of researchers who disagreed with each other’s previous findings, and the use of a third-party mediator. Each of these features contributes to improved public confidence in organizational research. But despite Locke’s comments that the results of laboratory studies generalize well to the field, the laboratory setting is a weakness of the study. |
|  | Scattered throughout the goal-setting literature are studies that examine the effects of individual differences on goal setting. Most of these studies have dealt with the effects of education, race, and job tenure on the goal-setting process. |
|  | The research points out the need to pay attention to the total situation experienced by employees who are faced with many (and sometimes contradictory) goals. It also suggests that consideration should be given to the kinds of goals that employees set for themselves. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | It is important to recognize that there are arguments against using goal setting or becoming too enthusiastic about it. Some managers and researchers have found that  *Goal setting* is rather complex and difficult to sustain.  *Goal setting* works well for simple jobs (clerks, typists, loggers, and technicians), but not for complex jobs. Goal setting with jobs in which goals aren’t easily measured (teaching, nursing, engineering, accounting) has posed some problems.  *Goal setting* encourages game playing. Setting low goals to look good later is one game played by subordinates who don’t want to be caught short. Managers play the game of setting an initial goal that’s generally not achievable and then finding out how subordinates react.  *Goal setting* is used as another check on employees. It’s a control device to monitor performance.  *Goal accomplishment* can become an obsession. In some situations, goal setters have become so obsessed with achieving their goals that they neglect other important areas of their jobs. |
|  | Each of the theories presented has something to offer managers if used correctly, and various parts of the theories are complementary in many respects. The psychologists and social psychologists who formulated these theories were articulate in explaining needs, motives, and values. They weren’t, however, so astute at explaining what managers could do to motivate employees. And despite the abundance of complementary theories and research, many managers still choose to ignore the academically generated theories of motivation.  If anything, the discussion of theories and research indicates that instead of ignoring motivation, managers must take an active role in motivating their employees. Nine specific conclusions have been reached:  1. Managers can influence employees’ motivation. If performance needs to be improved, then managers should intervene and help create an atmosphere that encourages, supports, and sustains improvement. Motivation can be managed.  2. Managers must remember that ability, competence, and opportunity all play a role in motivation. A person with little ability or few skills will have a difficult time being productive.  3. Managers need to be sensitive to variations in employees’ needs, abilities, and goals. They must also consider differences in preferences (valences) for rewards.  4. Continual monitoring of employees’ needs, abilities, goals, and preferences is each individual manager’s responsibility.  5. Managers must attempt to channel self-motivated behavior into productive results. Some individuals practice a high degree of self-regulation and personal motivation.  Continued on next slide. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Continued from previous slide.  6. Managers as role models can be influential in motivating employees. Social learning occurs on a regular basis, and managers must be aware that their style, techniques, and work behavior are being observed and can be easily imitated.  7. Managers need to provide incentives for their employees. When employees note that valued outcomes can be achieved through performance, a major part of the motivation strategy has succeeded.  8. Establishing moderately difficult goals to direct behavior is an important part of any motivational program.  9. Managers should try to provide employees with jobs that offer equity, task challenge, diversity, and a variety of opportunities for need satisfaction.  If motivation is to be energized, sustained, and directed, managers have to understand needs, intentions, preferences, goals, reinforcement, and comparison. Failure to learn about these concepts results in many missed opportunities to motivate employees in a positive manner. |
|  | Table 6.3 briefly summarizes how well the various themes and approaches predict productivity, absenteeism, and job satisfaction. Ratings are based on available empirical research conducted in organizations primarily in the United States and Canada. Ratings also use the judgments of researchers, anecdotal information, and managerial opinions.While the data presented aren’t scientifically validated in every instance, they’re based on multiple sources of information. The knowledge and insight provided by summarizing theories, empirical studies, and opinions can provide the basis for developing motivational reward programs. |
|  | Managers who understand and are comfortable with a number of motivational approaches are better prepared to design effective and motivational reward programs. Theories set the tone and the direction of how to create a motivational atmosphere. Applying the theoretical principles to the real world is what an organizational reward system attempts to accomplish.  The main objectives of reward programs are (1) to attract qualified people to *join* the organization, (2) to *keep* employees coming to work, and (3) to *motivate* employees to achieve high levels of performance. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  | A model illustrating how rewards fit into an organization’s overall policies and programs is useful to managers. Figure 6.6 presents a model that integrates motivation, performance, satisfaction, and rewards. It suggests that the motivation to exert effort isn’t enough to cause acceptable performance. Performance results from a combination of the effort of an individual and that person’s ability, skill, and experience. Management evaluates each individual’s performance either formally or informally. As a result of the evaluation, it distributes extrinsic rewards. The rewards are evaluated by the individual. Individuals also receive or derive intrinsic rewards from the job. To the extent that rewards are adequate and equitable, the individual achieves a level of satisfaction. |
|  | A significant amount of research has been done on what determines whether individuals are satisfied with rewards. Edward Lawler has summarized five conclusions based on the behavioral science research literature.  1. *Satisfaction with a reward is a function of both how much is received and how much the individual feels should be received.* This conclusion is based on the comparisons that people make. When individuals receive less than they feel they should, they’re dissatisfied.  2. *An individual’s feelings of satisfaction are influenced by comparisons with what happens to others.* People tend to compare their efforts, skills, seniority, and job performance with others’. They then attempt to compare rewards; that is, they compare their own inputs with others’ inputs relative to the rewards received. Chapter 5 discussed this input–outcome comparison when introducing the equity theory of motivation.  3. *Satisfaction is influenced by how satisfied employees are with both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.*  4. *People differ in the rewards they desire and in the relative importance different rewards have for them.* In fact, preferred rewards vary at different points in a person’s career, at different ages, and in various situations.  5. *Some extrinsic rewards are satisfying because they lead to other rewards.* For example, a large office or an office that has carpeting or drapes is often considered a reward because it indicates the individual’s status and power. Money is a reward that leads to such things as prestige, autonomy, security, and shelter. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Rewards that are part of the job itself: the responsibility, challenge, and feedback characteristics of the job.  Figure 6.6 classifies rewards into two broad categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. **Extrinsic rewards** are rewards external to the job, such as pay, promotion, or fringe benefits; **intrinsic rewards** are those that are part of the job itself, such as the responsibility, challenge, and feedback characteristics of the job. In either category, the first consideration is how the rewards are *valued* by employees. Individuals put forth little effort unless the reward has *value.* Both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards can have value |
|  | Examples of how performance is recognized at People’s Bank, LifeScan, and Johnson Controls Inc. (Table 6.4) illustrate the vast array of recognition opportunities. |
|  | Table 6.5 summarizes the rewards we’ve discussed. As the table indicates, managers can play either a direct or an indirect role in developing and administering rewards. |
|  | Managers may assume that low turnover is a mark of an effective organization. However, some organizations would benefit if disruptive and low performers quit. Thus, the issue of turnover needs to focus on *who* is leaving as well as on frequency.  Ideally, if managers could develop reward systems that retained the best performers and caused poor performers to leave, the overall effectiveness of an organization would improve. To approach this ideal state, an equitable and favorably compared reward system must exist. The feelings of *equity* and *favorable comparison* have an external orientation. That is, the equity of rewards and favorableness involves comparisons with external parties. This orientation is used because quitting most often means that a person leaves one organization for an alternative elsewhere. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Researchers and managers agree that extrinsic and intrinsic rewards can be used to motivate job performance. It’s also clear that certain conditions must exist if rewards are to actually motivate: The rewards must be *valued* by the person, and they must be related to a specific level of job performance. |
|  | There’s little research on the relationship between rewards and organizational commitment.**Commitment** to an organization involves three attitudes: (1) a sense of identification with the organization’s goals, (2) a feeling of involvement in organizational duties, and (3) a feeling of loyalty for the organization. Research evidence indicates that the absence of commitment can reduce organizational effectiveness.Committed people are less likely to quit and accept other jobs. Thus, costs of high turnover aren’t incurred. In addition, committed and highly skilled employees require less supervision. Close supervision and a rigid monitoring control process are time-consuming and costly. Furthermore, a committed employee perceives the value and importance of integrating individual and organizational goals. The employee thinks of his goals and the organization’s goals in personal terms. |
|  | Intrinsic rewards are important for developing organizational commitment. Organizations able to meet employees’ needs by providing achievement opportunities and by recognizing achievement when it occurs have a significant impact on commitment.Thus, managers need to develop intrinsic reward systems that focus on personal importance or self-esteem to integrate individual and organizational goals and to design challenging jobs. |
|  | The typical list of rewards that managers can and do distribute in organizations has been discussed. We all know that pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities to achieve challenging goals are considered rewards by most people. It’s also generally accepted that rewards are administered by managers through such processes as reinforcement, modeling, and expectancies. Some managers are experimenting with new, innovative, yet largely untested, reward programs. Four different reward approaches that aren’t widely tested are cafeteria-style fringe benefits, banking time off, skill-based pay, and gainsharing. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Table 6.6 summarizes strengths and weaknesses. |
|  | Traditional forms of gain-sharing are the Scanlon Plan, Rucker Plan®, and Improshare®. These plans are differentiated by the measures discussed in Table 6.7. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Alfie Kohn ([www.alfiekohn.org](http://www.alfiekohn.org)) offers a compelling set of criticisms of performance-based rewards. He contends that rewards and punishments are just two sides of the same coin—and the coin doesn’t buy very much.  These are a few of Kohn’s criticisms:   * *Rewards injure relationships*. Individual rewards for performance create jealousies, envy, competition, and shame. The person not rewarded feels bad. There are always comparisons of what each person received. The result is less interpersonal goodwill and working together. * *Rewards are really punishment.* An individual who is extrinsically rewarded is reminded each time he or she receives something that the “boss” is in control. Pleasing the boss, being politically correct, and staying in a subservient role are forms of punishment. * *Rewards have a Skinner bias*.B. F. Skinner is a behaviorist who conducted most of his experiments on rodents and pigeons and wrote most of his books about people. Easy reinforcement application that works on pigeon- and rodent-dominated research is absurd. Emotions in employees are powerful, yet they are ignored by Skinner. * *Rewards ignore reason*. What makes incentive pay plans and other forms of extrinsic rewards so appealing is that they are quick fixes. Issuing these kinds of rewards does not require managers to pay any attention to why a particular behavior occurred. Why was John’s bonus larger than Mark’s bonus? What were the behavioral differences between John and Mark? * • *Rewards discourage risk taking*. When people are driven by rewards, their focus become more narrow, their creativity wanes, and they are not inclined to take risks. Taking risks may distract them from receiving a reward. Keeping a narrow, less risky orientation becomes preferred. |
|  |  |

Below find some applied questions/answers to reinforce your learning when you study the content and before doing your assignments.

1. As a manager, which type of reinforcement would you most likely use with your employees: positive or negative? Discuss the pros and cons of each approach.

Pros of positive reinforcement: managers can use it to modify behavior. Positive reinforcement has shown to be very effective in reducing accidents and producing safe behaviors at the workplace. Cons of positive reinforcement are when they don’t modify the behavior in the desired direction because of competing reinforcement contingencies. Also, giving reinforcers too long after the occurrence of the desired behaviors decreases its effectiveness. One pro of negative reinforcement is that it strengthens a behavior because the behavior removes some painful or unpleasant stimulus. By working hard, the employee avoids the negative reinforcement. The con of negative reinforcement is that employees are likely to only do what is required to avoid the negative reinforcer and no more due to the negative feelings that are produced.

1. Why is it exceptionally difficult to distribute rewards based on merit?

It is difficult to distribute rewards based on merit for several reasons. High performers must receive significantly more extrinsic and intrinsic rewards than low performers. Individual extrinsic rewards for performance create jealousies, envy, competition, and shame. The result is less interpersonal goodwill and working together. An individual who is extrinsically rewarded is reminded each time he or she receives something that the “boss” is in control. Pleasing the boss, being politically correct, staying in a subservient role are forms of punishment.

1. Of the nontraditional reward systems described in the chapter, which system in your opinion would be the most challenging to successfully implement and maintain? Explain.

Some nontraditional rewards are cafeteria-style fringe benefits, banking time off, skill-based pay, and gainsharing. Cafeteria-style fringe benefits provide individuals with the opportunity to choose the benefits they prefer rather than those established by someone else. Banking time off allows employees to build up time-off credits for such behaviors as good performance or attendance. Skill-based pay compensates employees at a rate calculated and based on the skills they possess, display, and develop in performing their jobs. In gainsharing the employees share in the financial gain from an organization’s improved performance through a formula base incentive plan.