Interview with USAA Executive

Q: How did your interviewee decide he wanted to be a manager

A: I fell in love with claims and also a leader in the army that was my favorite job. At USAA we have shared military values with the military. Once I knew that claims were where I wanted to be

Q: What career path did you follow at USAA?

A: Typical leadership path at USAA, became a subject matter expert, MCS designed to basically groom future leaders and provide a culture training. 90% of candidates go on to be managers.

Q: Have you found that Education been a factor in career development?

A: I don’t think I would have become a manager w/o a degree, the degree was helpful but everything that comes along w/ education discipline, provides

Q: Have you found that obtaining professional certifications and designations been a factor in career development?

A: USAA is concerned about compliance and it provides weight during the promotion process which is based n metrics and development w/ development team/self

Q: Has your interviewee found that volunteering been a factor in career development?

A: Yes because volunteers is something that is personally rewarding and it strengthens your relationships w/ your co-workers. it is viewed as a positive non-controversial team building exercises

Q: What has surprised your interviewee most about what it means to be an effective leader (as opposed to the popular view of what a successful leader is and/or does)?

A: Metrics are important to help coach effectively but what it comes down to are behaviours I focus on things that are successful to structure your day and to motivate, work-life balance open and honest dialogue when things are going well as far as behaviors and structure that typically strong results follow, if they don’t if you’re open-minded they’ll typically take constructive feedback well and diver

Q: What advice do you have for someone in my position relating to short term and long term goals

A: I think that learning the right behaviours and goal setting, having a structure to your day and making a list of achievable goals that are realistic and looking at long and short term goals are actually achievable not overextending yourself and enjoying what you do and being curious constantly learning to do personal development doing education volunteerism having work-life balance.

Q: Are there any factors that influence your decision making logic as a manager?

A:

Q: What techniques have been effective for you in handling change at USAA?

A:

Q: Can you think of any examples of changes that you’ve encountered that you’d like to talk about?

A:

Q: Do you have any thoughts on Social Learning Theory (skill can be gained by observation and imitation)?

Q: Do you have any thoughts on Agile Methodologies (SCRUM) (iterative/incremental approach to projects)

A:

Q: Do you have any thoughts on McClelland’s Three-Needs (The needs for Achievement, Affiliation, and Power)

A:

Q: Do you have any thoughts on Goal Setting Theory (SMART/developing action plans to motivate)

A:

Q: Do you have any thoughts on Equity Theory. (are the contributions of team members fairly distributed)

A: Goal and equity is something that I try to do.

Q: What techniques have been successful for you in motivating your employees?

A: Team building, huddle, empowerment when an employee can make decisions to get things done w/o asking for permission it allows them to make decisions timely. FooD!! People enjoy food and its better when you eat with others so I think that also helps the team building

Q: How do measure the value of a leader?

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1: Explains why this class is important and not just common sense. Management is a skill that needs to be developed. How is the value of a leader measured? Efficiently versus Effectively. Macro versus micro versus meso. Correlation versus causation.

Chapter 2: Motivation affects employee productivity and it is good to treat yourself but better to love what you do. Money is a motivator but only up to a certain point. Maslow’s needs have been discredited. Herzberg's two-factor theory talks about pleasure versus no pleasure and displeasure vs no displeasure. Goal setting theory is the model where we are motivated to do well when we have difficult (but achievable) goals, which has led to the popular mnemonic with which you may already be familiar: SMART goals, which are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMARTER goals are also evaluated and reevaluated). Jason talked about goal setting theory the most in our interview. Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model, has heavily influenced the way that managers and human resources departments design jobs for maximal motivation. According to this model, we are motivated by five facets of jobs, which can be described via the mnemonic "VISAF" (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback). Equity (or being impartial and fair, especially in comparison to the treatment of others) when out of balance people try to change their inputs/outputs to bring back to equilibrium. Equivalency theory is when we have an idea in our minds of several steps in the process of putting forth the effort to reach our goals, and based on our perception of those stages, we will modify our behavior. The role of emotions in the workplace has become more important in recent times. MBTI Other ways of describing personality include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which divides individuals into one of 16 descriptive categories based on the combination of their traits on four dimensions. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is more difficult to measure and has to do with the awareness of one's emotional capacity and the ability to base one's actions off this knowledge. Moreover, satisfied employees are more likely to remain committed to the company, to perform well, and to attract other, similarly high-quality potential employees to the organization. Motivation is one of the most important and most difficult precepts to get right, in order to be a good manager. Theories of motivation can make the difference between a well-liked manager and a loathed one, a high-production work environment and a low-production one, and even a happy place to work and a stressful one.

Chapter 3: Leadership and teams what makes us effective at work. Managing teams is difficult because a team is not just the sum of its parts. Forming a team takes time and patience. n 1965, Dr. Bruce Tuckman offered a model of team development: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. Tuckman refined the model in 1975 and added a fifth stage called Adjourning. The fifth stage is not always applicable. Roles, Size, Cohesion, and Diversity. In order for the group to perform efficiently, each role is filled with little or no redundancy, and each member of the team accepts and performs his or her role effectively. Employees experience the negative impacts of role conflict when they are faced with opposing role expectations. SCRUM teams are 7 people +/-2 (O’Connell, 2017). It is a complicated issue, but the gist is that more cohesive teams should ideally have attitudes that are aligned with the formal organizational goals. If they are, then the group members are more likely to work toward their goals—and if those goals, as understood by the group member, are positive ones, then cohesion (up to a point) is positive; but where a team has high cohesiveness but negative attitudes, then the productivity of the group really suffers. That is what the major contingency theories of leadership try to address—when is it good to be one kind of leader over another? According to the Fiedler contingency model, it is important to have the style oAccording to the Fiedler contingency model, it is important to have the style of leadership matched with how much control that leader has in a particular situation. Based on whether a leader's style was task-oriented or relationship-oriented, Fiedler's theory did admit that some people would not be easily recognizable as one or the other, but rather fall somewhere in the middle; and this theory did not allow for the possibility that a leader's style would change over his or her lifetime based on experience or circumstance.f leadership matched with how much control that leader has in a particular situation. Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) is concerned less with leaders' qualities and more with their followers and how ready they are—that is, are they able and willing to finish a particular task? House and partially reliant on some of the elements from the expectancy theory of motivation, is called path-goal theory. According to this model, a leader needs to provide the requisite support and direction (hence, "path") to his or her followers so that they may achieve their objectives (hence, "goal"). There are four types of leader behaviors, as described by this model: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. These behaviors can change to suit the situation, according to House—unlike Fiedler's belief that leaders cannot adapt their leadership styles. Evidence does support this theory, though the results are not unmixed. The most widely studied and supported theories of leadership are these contemporary theories: leader-member exchange (LMX), transactional vs. transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, visionary leadership, and servant leadership. Leader-member exchange, or LMX, recognizes that leaders often have an "in-group"—that is, for better or worse, they sometimes have favored employees with whom they seem to get along and who receive more perks and status. According to LMX, those in the "out-group" will be awarded lower ratings on their performance reviews, be less satisfied in their jobs, and experience higher turnover as a result. But those in the "in-group," if both they and the leader work to maintain the relationship, can be very successful and happy and, most likely, will support the leader and help him or her to accomplish necessary tasks. This theory is strongly supported by data and is very popular in the literature today. A transactional leader is one who leads via the use of transactions, or social exchanges—in other words, you do something for me, and I will do something for you in return. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, are more inspirational and transformative, encouraging those who work for them to achieve beyond their expectations. Servant leadership is popular with a certain segment of managerial researchers and proponents, and it involves the notion that a good leader puts his or her followers first, a natural outgrowth of the desire to serve them and to humbly take on the tasks necessary to lead.

Chapter 4: Step one in the rational decision-making process is the recognition and identification of the problem. For a manager, this could be any number of things, including whom to hire from a list of strong candidates, which marketing strategy to use, obstacles to expanding into a certain location, or poor performance among his or her subordinates, for example.

Identifying the decision criteria: What factors are relevant in reaching the decision?

Allocating weights to those criteria: Some criteria will be more important to meet than others.

Developing alternatives: Essentially, brainstorming ways of meeting the criteria satisfactorily and practically.

Analyzing those alternatives: In light of the decided-upon criteria.

Selecting an alternative: Trying to maximize efficiency while also meeting all necessary criteria.

Implementing the alternative: Followed even further by an ongoing process.

Evaluating the effectiveness of that decision and, as necessary, beginning the process over again.

Assumes a completely rational manager. If we could process all the information we are gathering—both informally, through all of our senses, and through more formal information-gathering processes—our decisions would take so long as to cripple us. Heuristics thus, have the benefit of allowing us to "sidestep" some of the more time-consuming and confusing parts of the process and generally, make timely, good decisions. We are rarely faced with such seemingly "black-and-white" issues. Overconfidence Bias Selective Perception Bias Confirmation Bias Framing Bias Immediate Gratification Bias Anchoring Effect Availability Bias Representation Bias Randomness Bias Sunk Costs Error Self-serving Bias Hindsight Bias.

Overconfidence Bias Selective Perception Bias Confirmation Bias Framing Bias. Despite this, we expect managers to act as rationally as possible—which has led to the so-called "bounded rationality" model of managerial decision-making. This attempt to help managers make optimal decisions in the face of imperfect information and information processing recognizes that managers satisfice, or allow themselves to arrive at "good enough" decisions, rather than maximal decisions. It involves doing "the best you can" within the limits of our human nature and the information available to us.

Chapter 5: As depicted in Exhibit 13-1 from your textbook (see below), the "sender" of the message must encode the message, which is impacted by the sender's skill, attitudes, knowledge, and sociocultural context. The message then goes through a channel (i.e., the medium of transmission) and is decoded by the receiver (again, this is impacted by his or her skill, attitudes, knowledge, and sociocultural context). The receiver then takes part in a feedback loop—that is, the receiver provides a message in return to the sender that assures both parties that the proper message was transmitted. During this entire process, at all points of the process, "noise"—both literal and figurative noise—can interfere with the message and get in the way of the successful communication process. First, we will discuss filtering, in which the message sender, wanting the receiver to be positively receptive to the message, frames or manipulates the message itself. Information overload, something we discussed in our decision-making module, is another barrier to good communication. In fact, it is something that only seems to be getting worse in today's data-driven, 24/7, all-access, internet, and email-rich environment. The more information one receives, the more likely one is to feel information overload, and the less information one will actually process. Emotion is an important consideration when it comes to ensuring good communication, because either the sender's or the receiver's state of mind (or even that of people not directly involved in the process, depending on their relationship with the sender or receiver) can have a strong positive or negative impact on the reception of the message. When discussing the communication process, we emphasized the importance of feedback, the last step in the communication process. Because barriers to communication result in misunderstandings at both ends of the process, feedback can help to avoid the negative effects of such by catching inaccuracies, inconsistencies, misunderstandings, and other results of "noise" and bias in the process. Another effective method of managing the clarity of the process is to use simple language, which will increase the chance of consistent understanding when it comes to all the parties involved. It is a good axiom to use about an eighth-grade level of writing when communicating in the workplace—not because employees are not capable of understanding above that level, but rather because it will be much less likely that unnecessary miscommunication or misunderstanding will occur when the chance of obfuscation is diminished in this way.

Chapter 6: Organizational Structure and Culture. Organizational design is the process by which an organization's structure is changed or put into place, and it involves considering several factors about the industry in which the organization works, its mission and vision statements, the kind of work it does, and the kind of workplace environment it wants to foster. We will discuss the following six tenets of effective organizational design and structure: work specialization, departmentalization, authority and responsibility, span of control, (de)centralization, and formalization. Mechanistic organizations are more bureaucratic than organic organizations, which are lower in formalization, specialization, and centralization. One way to think about culture is to consider it as the organizational equivalent of an individual's personality. Organizational culture usually comes about and is shaped by the founders of the organization and the mission and vision statements that those founders crafted. Several duties of managers are directly impacted by the culture of the organization in which they work, which includes: planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

Chapter 7: Change—even positive change or change from a bad situation into a neutral or good one—is inherently difficult for us in all areas of our lives—including, and perhaps especially, when it comes to the workplace. Marketplace Government Laws and Regulations Technology Economy. In addition to the preceding external forces, organizations face internal forces that often dictate modification, as well. These include an adjustment to the strategy of an organization, demographic changes in an organization's workforce (e.g., an aging workforce or one that is rapidly evolving in terms of national culture, gender, educational experience), and changes in employee attitudes (e.g., a trend of employee dissatisfaction that management wants to slow down and reverse). Any one of these can trigger change when identified by top management teams. As you learned earlier in this module, difficult change can be made less so, and the process made smoother, by a good change agent, or someone who initiates and manages all aspects of the change process. Such change agents are usually a member of management—even of top management—but they do not necessarily have to be. Anyone who is willing and able to step up and be a positive catalyst, who has the expertise necessary, and can be an effective manager of the difficult process, can be given the authority to do so. A cornerstone model for understanding organizational change was developed by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s and still holds true today. Lewin explained organizational change using the analogy of changing the shape of a block of ice. His model is known as Unfreeze – Change – Refreeze, which refers to the three-stage process of change that he describes.

Chapter 8: Orientation will usually involve some aspect of training for the job, but training and employee development can and often should be an ongoing process throughout the employee's career with the company. the resources expended in developing employees—when strategically planned and competently implemented—will usually increase the trainees' performance and, subsequently, the company's profitability. Once employees have been successfully recruited, selected, and oriented, and as they are being trained and developed, it is important to find a way to gauge their ongoing performance. Performance management, which involves establishing and communicating standards and then objectively evaluating performance against those standards, is an important facet of human resources management. Performance management techniques include goal-setting, such as Management by Objectives (MBO) appraisal methods; graphic rating scales, a common method in which employees are graded on various facets of past performance; and the "360-degree appraisal," in which employees receive written and/or quantitative evaluations from their supervisors, peers, subordinates, and even outside customers, where appropriate. It is crucial for managers to avoid or find ways of mitigating the various biases (that are insidious when it comes to evaluating employees), many of which are comparable to the biases we discussed in our decision-making module (Module 4). Another important consideration for managers, in addition to the kind of performance evaluation and the potential biases that could accompany it, is the timeliness of such evaluations.

Quotes: “Management as broadly defined by Robbins, DeCenzo, and Coulter (2017), is "the process of getting things done, effectively and efficiently, through and with other people" (p. 19).”

“Getting Things Done Management involves productivity; whether in a company, on a sports team, or in running a household, being productive is an important part of the process of management. We will, therefore, study organizational structure, culture, and change—all of which are important to understand if one hopes to get things done in an organization.”(Interactive Lecture, n.d.)

Motivation, as defined by Robbins, DeCenzo, and Coulter (2017), is "the process by which a person's efforts are energized, directed, and sustained toward attaining a goal" (p. 331).

A group, as defined by Robbins, DeCenzo, and Coulter (2017), is "two or more interacting and interdependent individuals who come together to achieve specific goals" (p. 301).

A leader, as defined by Robbins, DeCenzo, and Coulter (2017), is "someone who can influence others and who has managerial authority" (p. 363).

Heuristics, as defined by Robbins, DeCenzo, and Coulter (2017), are "judgmental shortcuts or 'rules of thumb' used to simplify decision-making" (p. 94).

Organizational culture, as defined by Robbins, DeCenzo, and Coulter (2017), is "the shared values, principles, traditions, and ways of doing things that influence the way organizational members act" (p. 45).

Once these things become clear, resulting in a job specification, which Robbins, DeCenzo, and Coulter (2017) define as "a written statement of the minimum qualifications that a person must possess to perform a given job successfully" (p. 204)