

The culture of an organization is a key factor in setting the tone and feel of the work environment. A strong corporate culture encourages everyone in the organization to help create and maintain a positive, creative, and productive workplace.

Instilling Corporate Culture

As you learned in Chapter 8, corporate culture is the collective or shared values, beliefs, traditions, philosophy, and character or personality of the organization. Companies recruit potential employees who they believe will fit in with their culture. Companies expect employees to be a part of their culture and to adhere to its values and traditions. Any employee who expects to be successful must develop a thorough understanding of the culture and demonstrate a passion for being a part of it. Therefore, logic dictates that managers work with the corporate culture in efforts to set up employees for success.

Corporate culture is often shaped when a company is founded and provides the guiding principles on which it operates for many years. Though the environment in which a successful company operates may change drastically over time, the values usually remain constant. Keenan Suggs Insurance Company (Chapter 2 opening interview, pages 24–25) provides an example. The company strives to maintain a desirable working environment and to facilitate team building. Suggs says, “We want the workplace to be

light, airy, friendly, and viewed by all employees as a comfortable, productive place to work with each other.”

Each year, *Fortune* magazine publishes a list of the top 100 companies to work for in the United States. In perusing this list, you will discover corporate culture’s positive impact on recruitment and retention.

Corporate culture in successful companies often extends beyond employees, customers, clients, and vendors to include the local community. These companies want employees to be engaged in the community and give back to it.

Motivation

A primary role of managers is to ensure employees perform their jobs efficiently and effectively. Employees generally need to be motivated to achieve personal, team, and organizational goals. **Motivation** involves an employee’s desire or drive to achieve. A widely debated question is, Can managers really motivate employees? Those who believe managers cannot motivate employees argue that a manager’s job is to create a working environment where people will motivate themselves. According to this line of thinking, motivation comes only

Though the environment in which a successful company operates may change drastically over the years, the values usually remain constant.

motivation

an employee’s desire or drive to achieve

Employee motivation is essential to organizational success.

from within the individual. On the opposite side of this debate are those who believe managers can motivate employees with appropriate words, actions, consequences, and decisions. Regardless of which position you might take, the fact of the matter is that employee motivation is essential to organizational success, and managers need to develop a style that gets results.

Knowledge to ACTION

1. Do you agree or disagree with the idea that supervisors cannot motivate employees that people must motivate themselves? Explain.
2. Reflect on a personal experience in which someone was supervising your activities or leading a team. It could be at work, in a volunteer capacity, or in an extracurricular activity. Did the leader's words, actions, rewards, and decisions impact your motivation, and if so, in a positive or negative way? Explain.

Dimensions of Motivation

Motivation factors into many topics already discussed in this textbook. Note from the following quick review how much you have already learned about it. The emphasis in this chapter on fostering a positive work environment will add another dimension to the topic.

- Motivation is a significant component of many of the leadership theories discussed in Chapter 4. For example, on page 76, you learned that path-goal theory is based on the assumption that effective leaders can enhance employee motivation by (1) clarifying the individual's perception of work goals, (2) linking meaningful rewards with goal attainment, and (3) explaining how goals and desired rewards can be achieved.
- Chapter 5 focused on leading, motivating, and empowering teams. The five actions identified by *The Wisdom of Teams* authors Katzenbach and Smith for groups to form themselves into effective teams are (1) shaping a common purpose, (2) agreeing on performance goals, (3) defining a common working approach, (4) developing high levels of complementary skills, and (5) holding themselves mutually accountable for results. All are important elements in motivation.
- Chapter 6 reinforced the key role of goal setting in motivation. You learned about SMART goals and the work of Locke and Latham on motivating employees in the goal-setting process and task performance. You also learned that goals motivate employees by challenging them and by serving as a means of gaining both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards.

- Chapter 9 explained the use of feedback, coaching, fair appraisals, fair compensation, and other extrinsic and intrinsic rewards as motivational tools.
- Many of the soft skills discussed throughout this book, such as self-management, require the ability to motivate oneself. Practicing these soft skills can help employees become more self-motivated.

Practical Advice and Best Practices

Psychologists have studied motivation from a variety of perspectives. Rather than review theories beyond those already discussed in this textbook, the focus in this chapter is on practical business advice that managers can use.

Stop Demotivating Employees

Writing in *Harvard Management Update*, research specialists David Sirota, Louis Mischkind, and Michael Meltzer present an interesting perspective. They think of motivation in terms of enthusiasm about the job. These writers believe companies often demotivate employees rather than motivating them. According to their research, in most companies, motivation tends to be high as employees begin a job. However, it often begins to decline in about six months and continues to fall thereafter. Sirota, Mischkind, and Meltzer make this recommendation:

- To maintain the enthusiasm employees bring to their jobs initially, management must understand the three sets of goals that the great majority of workers seek from their work—and then satisfy those goals:
- **Equity:** To be respected and to be treated fairly in areas such as pay, benefits, and job security.
 - **Achievement:** To be proud of one's job, accomplishments, and employer.
 - **Comraderie:** To have good, productive relationships with fellow employees.¹

Promote Model Employees

Human resources consultant Ruth Mayhew suggests that "the best type of employee motivation is promoting an employee who exemplifies the quality and performance expectations of the organization." She proposes these additional methods:

- Reward employees with tasks that challenge their particular skills and abilities.
- Propose them for a committee of the "best and brightest" charged with making important company changes.
- Use job assignments, transfers, promotions, and professional development activities.²

Provide Growth Opportunities

A report by management and technology consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton and the Center for Creative Leadership emphasizes the importance of assisting employees in finding "opportunities that will help them build a career and support the mission." Employees with more access to learning are more committed to the organization's mission. "Researchers have found growth opportunities to be an important motivator for employees to stay at their jobs. These opportunities provide benefits to the organizations, as people learn and master new skills and knowledge."

Provide Support That Enhances Progress

Managers often debate the importance of various workplace factors in employee motivation; however, their views do not always coincide with those of employees. In a recent survey, Teresa Amabile, professor of business administration at Harvard University, and Steven Kramer, an independent researcher, writer, and consultant, asked 669 managers to rank the impact of five workplace factors on employee motivation and emotions. The factors were recognition for good work, incentives, interpersonal support, support for making progress, and clear goals. The majority of managers ranked recognition for good work first.

In a separate study, Amabile and Kramer used daily email surveys to track emotions, motivation levels, and related data for 238 members of different project teams over several months. After analyzing the

employees' top motivator for performance is making progress in their jobs.

employees, the top motivator for performance was progress—the factor nearly all managers ranked last. "On days when workers have the sense they're making headway in their jobs, or when they receive support that helps them overcome obstacles, their emotions are most positive and their drive to succeed is at its peak," Amabile and Kramer note. They add that the best way for managers to increase their teams' productivity is to:

- Take actions that directly support their work, such as helping.
- Foster good work in ways such as showing respect or making encouraging comments.
- Remove or prevent obstacles and potentially discouraging or undermining experiences, such as interpersonal conflict.

As you think about motivation, remember that job performance requires both personal motivation and the ability to get the job done. Occasionally, supervisors will say an employee failed because of lack of motivation, when in fact the person was not sufficiently prepared with proper training and experience to be successful. For example, all the motivation in the world will not enable a computer-literate person to sit down and create a spreadsheet using a computer. Ability and skills—acquired through education, training, and/or on-the-job experience—are also necessary.

$$\text{Motivation} + \text{Ability} = \text{Success}$$

Developing an Organizational Attitude

Supervisors (and customers) frequently comment on their employees' attitude: their viewpoint, perspective, feelings, and disposition (good or bad). Yet attitude is too often ignored during performance evaluations. One way to encourage good behavior and a positive work attitude is to develop an "attitude standard" for your organization and then assess and hold employees accountable for their attitudes.

An **attitude standard** is a set of expected employee behaviors

for fostering a positive, friendly, creative, and professional corporate culture where employees are civil and pleasant to everyone, including customers, vendors, and each other. Employees' attitudes largely determine their behavior and productivity at work. Both good and bad attitudes are contagious. So it is important to foster a positive environment and quickly address any demonstration of a negative attitude. A good work attitude is essentially a free asset with a positive impact on the organization's bottom line. Conversely, a bad attitude is an expense and has negative impacts.

William Crottinger, a business consultant, sport psychologist, college professor, and author, has identified six personal characteristics that should be included in an organization's attitude standard: (1) friendliness, (2) positivism, (3) teamwork, (4) enthusiasm, (5) responsibility, and (6) professionalism.

Friendliness

Friendliness is a trait exhibited with a simple smile, an act of kindness, good-natured humor, and social pleasantries. Its opposite is found in the employee who frowns, seems always to be angry or defensive, blames others, spreads malicious gossip, and/or is overly serious.

Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval, authors of *The Power of Nice: How to Conquer the Business World with Kindness*, recommend that people "exercise their 'nice' muscles every day for a week, by doing five nice things that yield no personal gain."

Positivism

Positivism is demonstrated by employees with a "can do" attitude who get things accomplished. This sharply contrasts with the negative employee who exhibits cynicism and pessimism, which can drain the creative energy from any team.

Teamwork

Teamwork occurs when employees leverage individual strengths and talents and embrace individual differences to work together to achieve



A positive attitude and a sincere smile make work more enjoyable.

© iStockphoto.com/Robert D'Amico

attitude standard

a set of expected employee behaviors for fostering a positive, friendly, creative, and professional corporate culture

organizational goals. Teamwork requires people to get along and to share the credit instead of individuals' doing things their own way and taking full credit. Productive teams ultimately achieve much better long-term results than individuals working independently, especially in today's high-tech global economy.

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is exhibited when employees enjoy their work, do not complain or talk negatively, are self-motivated and eager to learn, and see problems as challenges and opportunities rather than obstacles. It can be very contagious.

They Sold It Best

There is real magic in enthusiasm. It spells the difference between mediocrity and accomplishment.

—Norman Vincent Peale

Responsibility

Employees with a sense of responsibility are committed and hold themselves accountable for their actions. Responsibility is exhibited when employees follow up on their commitments, do what they say they are going to do, have a sense of urgency, and go above and beyond what is expected of them.

Professionalism

Professionalism refers to high standards of performance and quality along with integrity and pride in the work. Employees with professionalism communicate openly and honestly, and they respect themselves and other people. They are persistent in achieving established goals without compromising quality or integrity.⁹ Like a great painter or sculptor, they take pride in their craft.

Knowledge to
ACTION

1. If you were asked to create an attitude standard for a team or work group, what elements would you include?

2. Pick one of the items listed above, and explain how you would measure or assess your employees to determine if they were meeting the standard.

Creativity and Innovation

Some people distinguish between creativity and innovation by defining creativity as generating new ideas, new ways to combine things, or new ways to do things and innovation as using the creative ideas to develop new products and services and to implement new ways of doing things. Some people think of creativity as an internal concept—the process of thinking and generating ideas—and of innovation as an external concept—implementing the creative ideas. This textbook uses the terms interchangeably, and it defines them as **creativity/innovation**: the ability to generate and implement new ideas to support the organization's mission and goals.

Core Values to Support Innovation

Creativity expert Judith Estrin describes five core values of people and organizations that must work in balance to support innovation. In an interview, Estrin said, "Everybody I interviewed [for her book, *Closing the Innovation Gap*], every company I've built or been part of, everybody I've met who is really innovative as a leader or as an individual contributor, has these values." The values are questioning, risk, openness, patience, and trust.¹⁰

- **Questioning**—Curiosity drives innovation. It typically starts with questions such as, How can I do this better? Why doesn't this work? or Could I think about this differently? Questions should be framed broadly and should not be judgmental.
- **Risk**—Risk is the ability to let yourself be vulnerable and to fail. Failure should be perceived as a lesson to learn from and a step toward success.
- **Openness**—Openness means being ready to imagine, collaborate, and change. It also means being receptive to surprises and others' ideas.
- **Patience**—This is the tenacity to stick with ideas, a process, or a product, especially in the early developmental stages.
- **Trust**—Trust is necessary for people to let themselves be vulnerable or take risks.

Estrin points out that the five core values are intertwined. Having just one or two is not sufficient; they all go together in a comprehensive package.¹¹

Igniting a Creative Spark

Often when managers are trying to get employees to think creatively, they challenge them to think outside the box. This is another way of asking

creativity/innovation
the ability to generate and implement new ideas to support the organization's mission and goals

people to do something new or different than they are currently doing. A management consultant who specializes in creativity explains as follows:

Creativity is a function of knowledge, imagination, and evaluation. The greater our knowledge, the more ideas, patterns, or combinations we can achieve. But, merely having knowledge does not guarantee the formation of new patterns; the bits and pieces must be shaken up and interrelated in new ways. Then, the embryonic ideas must be evaluated and developed into usable ideas.¹²

In the opening interview, Susan Cotter emphasizes the influence the work environment has on creativity. To be creative, employees must have the freedom to think, to make suggestions, to make mistakes, and to be bold in their approach.

**They
Sold It
Best**

When people are doing work that they love and they're allowed to deeply engage in it—and when the work itself is valued and recognized—then creativity will flourish.

— Theresa Amabile, professor of business administration at Harvard University

Identifying general types of creativity is easier than explaining the mental process. One pioneering writer on the subject isolated three overlapping domains of creativity: art, discovery, and humor.¹³ These have been called the "ah!" reaction, the "aha!" reaction, and the "ha-ha!" reaction, respectively.¹⁴ The discovery ("aha!") domain is most relevant to management. Entirely new products and businesses can spring from creative imagination and innovation.

Workplace Creativity: Myth and Reality

Research has shattered a long-standing myth about creative employees. According to the myth, creative people are eccentric nonconformists. But Alan Robinson's field research paints a very different picture. As reported in *Management Review*, Robinson concluded that "only three out of the 600 [innovators studied] were true nonconformists. The rest were more like your average corporate Joe, much more 'plodding and cautious' than most managers would expect."¹⁵ Thus, creative self-expression through unconventional dress, extreme body art, and strange behavior does not necessarily translate into creative work and marketable products.

Today's managers are challenged to create an organizational culture and climate capable of bringing to the surface the often hidden creative talents of every employee. In the Internet age, when intellectual capital is the number-one resource, the emphasis is on having fun in high-energy work environments. For example, as a vice president and general manager at Dell, Theresa Garza sought to generate enthusiasm and encourage employees to invest their creative energy in their work. Garza observed, "It's people who have momentum, who are working hard, and who are excited to be here."¹⁶

Learning to Be More Creative

Some people seem to be more creative than others. But that does not mean that people cannot develop their creative capacity. It does seem clear that creative ability can be learned, in the sense that our creative energy can be released from the bonds of convention, lack of self-confidence, and narrow thinking. We all have the potential to be more creative.

The best place to begin is by trying consciously to overcome what creativity specialist Roger von Oech calls *mental locks*.¹⁷ The following mental locks are attitudes that get us through our daily activities, but tend to stifle our creativity:

1. *Looking for the right answer.* Depending on one's perspective, a given problem may have several right answers.
2. *Always trying to be logical.* Logic does not always prevail, given human emotions and organizational inconsistencies, ambiguity, and contradictions.
3. *Strictly following the rules.* If things are to be improved, arbitrary limits on thinking and behavior need to be questioned.
4. *Insisting on being practical.* Impractical answers to "what-if" questions can become the stepping-stones to creative insights.
5. *Avoiding ambiguity.* Creativity can be stunted by too much objectivity and specificity.
6. *Fearing and avoiding failure.* Fear of failure can paralyze us into not acting on our good ideas. This is unfortunate because we learn many valuable and lasting lessons from our mistakes.¹⁸
7. *Forgetting how to play.* The playful experimentation of childhood too often disappears by adulthood.

8. *Becoming too specialized.* Cross-fertilization of specialized areas helps to define problems and generate solutions.

9. *Not wanting to look foolish.* Humor can release tensions and unlock creative energies. Seemingly foolish questions can enhance understanding.

10. *Saying, "I'm not creative."* By nurturing small and apparently insignificant ideas, we can convince ourselves that we are indeed creative.¹⁹

If you and your employees can conquer these mental locks, then you can encourage the creative process in the workplace. However, the concept of thinking outside the box requires employees to take a step back and look at the big picture first by answering the question, What are the mission and goals?



A change in routine can spark creativity. For instance, try reading a different newspaper or magazine.

Then, let the fun begin! By looking at the organization, its customers, challenges, or day-to-day tasks with a different perspective, employees can come up with all kinds of new ideas. Some of these ideas may grow, while others may be considered too outrageous or unrealistic (at least for now). Start by encouraging employees to think outside the box, and give them time to do so.

Knowledge to ACTION

1. Do you agree or disagree with the assertion that creative ability can be learned? Explain.
2. Describe a time when you experienced a mental block or had a difficult time generating ideas. What steps did you take (or should you have taken) to get beyond the block or to generate ideas?

Creating a Positive Work Environment

The common wisdom is that job satisfaction results in higher productivity. Yet decades of research show that the correlation of job satisfaction to productivity is very modest. In fact, Lyman W. Porter and Edward E. Lawler, two respected motivation researchers, found that job satisfaction is the result of performance rather than the cause of it.²⁰ A positive work environment has many benefits—especially with less absenteeism and employee turnover. A **positive work environment** is one in which satisfied employees achieve organizational goals with less turnover and absenteeism.

Managers can do a host of things to create a positive work environment. They can (1) model and promote social responsibility; (2) develop fair and equitable personnel policies and procedures; (3) celebrate achievement; (4) allow employees to have a voice; (5) make learning, creativity, and innovation part of the culture; and (6) make employee and customer satisfaction a way of life. Keep in mind that these steps may not all be feasible or appropriate for your work environment.

positive work environment
an environment in which satisfied employees achieve organizational goals with less turnover and absenteeism

Model and Promote Social Responsibility

When Sirota Survey Intelligence polled 1.6 million workers in a study of corporate social responsibility, they found that 70 percent of respondents believed their organization was socially responsible. Among those employees, 71 percent viewed their senior managers as having high integrity, 75 percent saw their employers as interested in their well-being, and 86 percent experienced high levels of engagement in their jobs. Researchers concluded there is a correlation between employees' satisfaction and their perception of the company's social responsibility.²¹

There is a correlation between employees' satisfaction and their perception of the company's social responsibility.

Develop Fair and Equitable Personnel Policies and Procedures

Human resources professionals, managers, and supervisors will tell you that employee pay and performance appraisals are confidential. However, the reality is that employees will gossip. Therefore, it is essential to have well-documented personnel policies and procedures that are fair and equitable for all employees. They should include a policy that ties employees' salaries, bonuses, and promotions to performance. These items should also be consistent with the contribution the employee makes to the organization.²² This approach requires that policies and procedures recognize and reward employees for exceptional performance, while not penalizing those who are good—but not great—workers. Employees' perceptions about personnel policies are important. Therefore, it is worth the extra time to meet with employees to explain policies and procedures, invite their input and suggestions, and answer their questions.

Celebrate Achievement

Another way to foster a positive work environment is to celebrate success. You do not have to wait for the organization or your team to achieve a major milestone. As noted in Chapter 6, it is great for team morale to celebrate the completion of an incremental goal, no matter how small. In addition, it is a nice boost to employees' self-esteem and confidence when they are recognized for their contributions and/or for reaching personal goals.

Chapter 9 pointed out that celebrations should be in line with the accomplishment. If the team achieves a reasonable goal, it may be appropriate to provide a team luncheon. How you choose to celebrate will depend on your company, your budget, you, and your employees. What is meaningful and valued as a reward for one person may mean a lot less to another. It is important to learn what motivates each individual employee as you plan to celebrate and reward performance.

It is important to learn what motivates each employee.

Allow Employees to Have a Voice

Listen to your employees. They are the front line of your organization, and they typically have the most contact with your customers. As a result, they understand what your customers like and dislike. In addition, they have great insight into what is efficient and effective about organizational policies and procedures. Yet, managers often feel they need to have all the answers and do not invite those who report to them to share their ideas. By listening to your employees, you will ultimately end up with better ideas that will be implemented with greater success because your employees were part of the process. In addition, your employees will be happier because they will feel they are contributing and making a difference. This increases their sense of worth to the organization and is a source of pride and self-confidence. You want your employees to know you value and respect their opinions.

You may not agree with all your employees' ideas and opinions. However, it is still important to let them share what they are thinking. Even if you disagree, you are giving them the chance to be heard, and they are giving you the chance to explain your decisions.

Being open, honest, and up-front with employees will earn their respect. Inviting their input and giving them credit where credit is due will demonstrate your respect for them.

They Said It Best

Listening and responding to suggestions from employees and customers was the key to winning.

—Shelby Reese, USA Today, referring to Redpage Award winner Wal-Mart Supercenters

Make Learning, Creativity, and Innovation Part of the Culture

Work specialization usually leads to efficiency and quality, but it can also turn talented employees into bored, unengaged workers. Allowing them to learn new skills or gain new knowledge can keep them interested and challenged. Encouraging creativity and innovation is another way to keep employees interested. In addition, fostering an environment where employees feel safe trying new things will lead to discovery and innovation, but it also may lead to failures because not every new idea actually works. Allowing people to learn from their mistakes in an effort to generate new ideas is a common characteristic of successful and creative organizations.

Knowledge to ACTION

1. What do you think are the benefits to an organization that permits mistakes?
2. What do you think are the drawbacks or potential risks to an organization that permits mistakes?

Make Employee and Customer Satisfaction a Way of Life

Some companies focus on customer satisfaction, while others focus on employee satisfaction. Making both part of the organization's culture increases the odds of having a positive working environment. Organizations focusing on employee satisfaction share the philosophy that a happy workforce will take good care of the customer. In comparison, companies focusing on customer satisfaction believe that if their employees are doing a good job, both customers and employees will be happy. Both approaches are valid and have worked for very successful companies. Still, when you combine them, it creates a powerful force that ultimately can lead to loyal customers and loyal employees.

Creating a Productive Work Environment

Creating a productive work environment involves many factors. Some of the key ones are managing time, meetings, and space and facilities; focusing on health and wellness; managing systems and procedures; and organizing for efficiency and effectiveness. Managers and employees are jointly responsible for many of these factors.

Time Management

Everybody has exactly the same amount of time each day, but some people are more productive than others because they make better use of their time. Each person needs to look at time in a holistic way. People must manage both personal time and work time because invariably one affects the other. The real challenge is to strike a productive and satisfying balance between work and personal time.

Managers should make a concerted effort to encourage and help employees balance work and personal time. Many companies offer alternative work schedules as discussed in Chapter 8, and most will work with employees to vary schedules for special needs. For example, they may allow employees to work at home when a child is sick or to work flexible hours in order to attend a special family or personal event. This approach tends to reduce stress and prevent employees from feeling guilty about missing significant events in their personal lives.

The goal is to be sure the work gets done, while also providing employees with flexibility to manage their lives. In many cases, it does not matter where or what time of day the work gets done, as long as it is high-quality and on time.

Time management is the process of identifying what needs to be done and having a plan to accomplish it within the time allotted.

time management the process of identifying what needs to be done and having a plan to accomplish it within the time allotted

- Establish effective goals with clearly defined tasks, timelines, and due dates.
- Schedule time for daily planning. This includes planning for work-related as well as personal goals and activities.
- Prioritize your "to-do" list. Each day brings new challenges, which often require a change in plans. It is important to take time to revisit your original plan and re-prioritize the list.



Providing employees who are effective self-managers with the flexibility to work at home or in another remote location often enhances productivity.

- Focus your investment of time on essential and important tasks and activities.
- Eliminate or minimize time wasters such as interruptions and inefficient procedures. Review the tips in Chapter 3 for ideas.
- Get organized! By organizing your office, schedule, activities, and home life, you will become more efficient and feel more in control.

If you never seem to have enough time, keep a time journal for a week. Record what you do throughout each day. The simple act of recording your daily activities will raise your awareness about how you are spending your time. This insight is a key first step toward regaining control of your time and refocusing your priorities and goals.

USE TECHNOLOGY WISELY

The latest technology hyped in the media often leads people to purchase and implement gadgets without considering the trade-offs. A goal in reducing stress is to use technology to work more efficiently, but not to let it consume or control you. For example, consider the common wireless devices that serve as a cell phone, media player, and computer. They allow users to text-message, phone, and exchange email from just about anywhere at any time. High-performing employees often feel they cannot turn off these devices because they may miss an important message. (Ask smartphone users if they could live without it for a week.) However, this attitude creates a 24/7 employee who is always on the job. The brain needs a break—and so do your employees. Create policies and procedures that encourage people to turn off their work-related technology unless they are working or are scheduled to be on call or available for a special project.

In addition, evaluate information technology tools to identify solutions that may make your job and/or life easier or more efficient. Before implementing any new technology, consider the positive impacts it will have, and balance them against any negatives.

Knowledge to ACTION

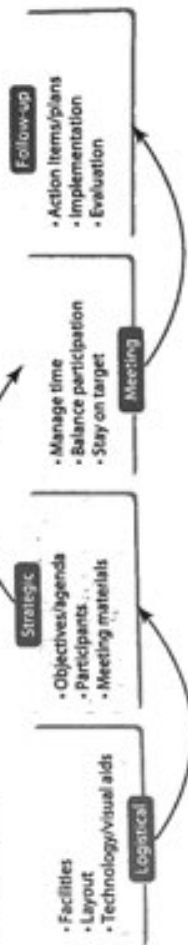
1. Describe a period in your life when you felt you were in complete control of your time. You had sufficient time for work, school, family, recreation, and other interests. What were the keys to your success in managing your time?
2. What steps can you take today to improve your time management?

Meeting Management

Administrative managers spend a high percentage of their time preparing for meetings, in meetings, and following up on meetings. Both face-to-face and technology-facilitated meetings are often necessary for making decisions, sharing information, coordinating work, solving problems, and other purposes. However, when the same objectives can be accomplished with email or a telephone call, much time and money can be saved by not having a meeting. Managers should schedule meetings only when they are truly needed and should take steps to ensure they are effective. Effective meetings result from careful planning (both logistical and strategic), conducting the meeting effectively, and following up on action items. Figure 11.1 provides an overview of the four phases in the meeting process.

Effective meetings result from planning carefully, conducting the meeting effectively, and following up on action items.

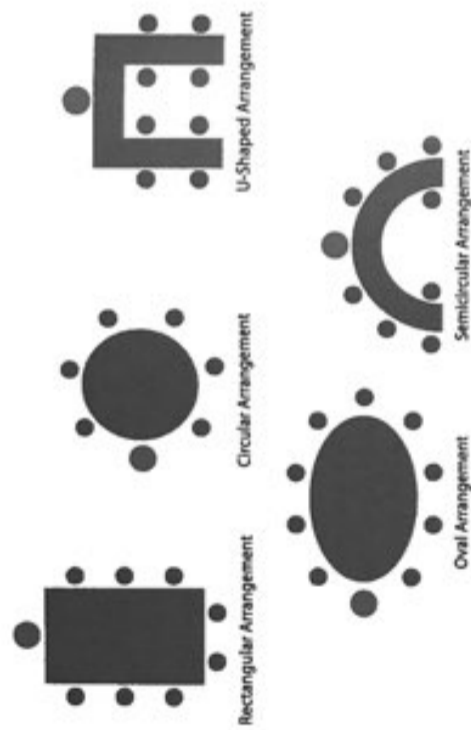
FIGURE 11.1 Overview of meeting process



Planning the Meeting: Logistical Phase

Often, the planning phases determine the ultimate success of meetings. Facilities can have a significant influence, particularly on long meetings. Comfort factors include seating, temperature control, and beverages and food if appropriate. The size of the group and purpose of the meeting determine the best room size and layout (Figure 11.2 on page 254).

FIGURE 11.2
Meeting room layouts



- The rectangular arrangement is a good choice for formal meetings. In this arrangement, the leader sits at the head of the table.
- The circular and oval arrangements work well for relatively informal meetings and discussions in small groups.
- The u-shaped and semicircular arrangements facilitate discussion and the use of visual aids, which can be positioned at the front.

In choosing visual aids (electronic presentations, white boards, flip charts, etc.), the manager should consider the meeting objectives, room size, and setup. All participants must be able to see visual aids clearly.

Planning the Meeting: Strategic Phase

The key to a successful meeting is to determine the specific objectives or outcomes and then set the agenda to accomplish them. The agenda provides an outline of the topics to be discussed, the person presenting each topic, and in many companies the amount of time allocated for each topic.

The manager should select participants carefully. A common mistake is not including the individuals who will actually do a particular task or project. Instead, the manager delegates the project to those individuals once plans are finalized. Although they receive a briefing, it does not always include many of the details essential for understanding the project and meeting expectations.

Advance preparation plays an important role in the effectiveness of meetings and the time required for them. The manager should send participants the agenda and any documents for review several days before the meeting. The cover letter, memo, or email should restate the start and end times and should clarify or remind participants of any work to be completed in preparation.

agenda
An outline of the topics to be discussed, the person presenting each topic, and the time allocated for each topic

action minutes
A brief summary of all items needing action, the people responsible, and the timeline

Conducting the Meeting

The leader's responsibilities are to start and end the meeting on time, keep the discussion focused on the objectives, and ensure all participants are engaged in the discussion. Before the meeting concludes, the leader should review and note all items needing future action, the people responsible, and the relevant timelines. Participants' responsibilities include arriving on time and being prepared to discuss all agenda items. Participants also need to focus on the objectives and should not allow themselves to be distracted by items such as smartphones, side conversations, or topics outside the agenda.

Following Up on Action Items

Action minutes should be prepared and sent to all participants. Action minutes are a brief summary of all items needing action, the people responsible, and the timeline. Additional follow-up may be required to ensure all actions have been completed and, if not, to determine what needs to be done to accomplish them. Finally, the manager should take a few minutes after each meeting to evaluate it. Good questions to ask include the following:

- Were the objectives accomplished?
- Did we adhere to the time frame?
- How can future meetings be made more efficient and effective?

Space and Facilities Management

First-line managers rarely have the opportunity to plan and design new facilities, but they are often asked to manage current facilities. Their specific responsibilities depend on the size of the company. Medium- to large-sized companies usually have dedicated facility managers with technical expertise who oversee all aspects of the facility. First-line managers and managers in small companies are often involved in allocating space within a department, deciding how to position work groups to enhance performance, managing furniture and equipment replacements, and handling similar responsibilities. However, it is important for all first-line managers to understand the impact of the physical workplace on communication, productivity, and costs.

The *Wall Street Journal* cited the findings of a 2010 survey by the International Facility Management Association reporting that 68 percent of U.S. offices have an "open plan" or "open seating" design, with desks separated by low or no walls. Frequently, the remaining offices and conference rooms have glass walls. According to employers, these arrangements improve communication and collaboration, encourage teamwork and creativity, reduce real estate and energy costs, and provide more natural light and outdoor views for all employees.²³ However, various studies cite negative aspects of open-plan designs such as lack of privacy, lower productivity, and lower job satisfaction.²⁴

Many offices have guidelines on what can be displayed on desks or walls of open offices if outsiders frequently visit. Some companies make conference rooms available near the lobby for meetings with customers, clients, and other visitors. It is important for managers to discuss issues that arise from working in an open environment with employees and get their input. If employees can find a workable solution to problems, it is usually better accepted than a management directive.

Health and Wellness

News articles report frequently on the rapidly rising costs of health care and the unhealthy eating and exercise habits of the general population of the United States. Increasingly, employers are supporting and promoting healthful lifestyles and wellness. According to Andy Goldstein of the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy, "Corporate wellness programs are part of a growing trend to fight not only obesity in the U.S., but the skyrocketing cost of medical care and insurance premiums." He cites statistics from the American Institute for Preventative Medicine: 91 percent of organizations offer some type of health promotion program today, versus only 78 percent ten years ago.²⁵

Corporate wellness programs are part of a growing trend.

For a number of years, companies viewed workplace wellness programs as a nice, but too costly, benefit for employees. However, current research shows these programs are a good investment. The Wellness Council of America cites the following research results:

- Several scientific reviews indicate that worksite health promotion programs reduce medical costs and absenteeism and produce a positive return on investment.
- The most definitive review of financial impact reported the following:
 - 18 studies indicated that these programs reduce medical costs, and 14 studies indicated that they reduce absenteeism costs.
 - 13 studies calculated benefit/cost ratios and all showed the savings from these programs are much greater than their cost, with medical cost savings averaging \$3.48 and the absenteeism savings averaging \$5.82 per dollar invested in the programs.²⁶

Professors Ann Mirabito and Leonard Berry, and William Baun, manager of a wellness program and a director of the National Wellness Institute and International Association for Worksite Health Promotion, conducted extensive research on workplace wellness programs. They found these programs benefit organizations through lower health care costs, greater productivity, and higher morale, and organizations do not have to spend much money on them. Mirabito and her colleagues identify six elements that will help companies establish a successful wellness program:

1. Encourage leadership at all levels of the company. Managers should model healthful behaviors.

2. Align the program with the organization's core values and priorities.
3. Provide scope, relevance, and quality.
4. Ensure accessibility. Offer services onsite at little or no cost.
5. Create partnerships. Pick up expertise and infrastructure quickly with internal and external partners, such as local gyms.
6. Communicate effectively. Be sensitive and creative in promoting the program.²⁷

Wellness programs raise two cautions for managers. First, effective programs are voluntary. Second, health information provided to the company is private and cannot be disclosed to others or used in a discriminatory manner.



1. If your company offered a workplace wellness program, would you participate? Why or why not?

2. Would a comprehensive wellness program be a retention factor for you? Why or why not?

Systems and Procedures Management

Systems management normally relates to manufacturing and production settings; however, the concept can be applied to an office setting. As noted earlier, a system is a set of parts that work together to accomplish a common purpose or goal. Managers should look for connections between the different parts of an organization to create synergy.²⁸ For example, if one department is planning a software training program, including other departments with similar needs would save substantial time and money. The same concept applies to creating employee handbooks. As you learned in Chapter 5, synergy is the idea that the whole exceeds the sum of its parts, called the "peanut butter and chocolate effect" by some.

Company policies and procedures are also important in improving quality and increasing productivity. In administrative settings, **standard operating procedures** (SOPs) are used frequently. Standard operating procedures are guides that specify the way an organization wants its employees to do their jobs. In an office setting, SOPs might include a style guide that illustrates document formats and explains rules for use of company branding. High-performing employees usually embrace SOPs because they have to ask fewer questions and have more opportunities to work independently with limited supervision.

standard operating procedures

guides that specify the way an organization wants its employees to do their jobs

Organization for Efficiency and Effectiveness

Efficiency refers to doing a task the most productive way. Many people think of efficiency in terms of speed and time. **Effectiveness** refers to producing good-quality results in a timely fashion. Many people think of effectiveness in terms of working smarter rather than harder.

Managers can encourage effective work organization and provide training or tips for organizing workspaces, data and files, and offices. It is important to focus on organizing both online information and information in hard copy. However, employees have different work styles and preferences for how they function in their work environment. Ultimately, it is up to employees to organize their work and environment so they can be most productive.

Focusing on priorities and effective time management is closely related to work organization. For example, to save time, employees should handle a document (paper or electronic) only once by reading, responding, or taking appropriate action. Then they should store it. This reduces clutter on desks or in email or electronic document systems. Calendars and planners are excellent organizing tools.

efficiency
doing a task the most
productive way

effectiveness
producing quality results in
a timely fashion



Well-organized work spaces help you work smarter, not harder.