CHAPTER 3 – Attitudes and Accommodation to Work

OBJECTIVES
The general purpose of this chapter parallels those of Chapter 2 on personality. That is, it serves as a refresher of selected behavior topics that the student likely studied in other human behavior courses, and it attempts to focus on relevance and applications to behavior in organizations. It continues to attempt to provide useful models for thinking about behavior and dispel myths that students may hold in order to manage behavior more effectively.

There is little doubt, in addition to learning and personality (Chapter 2), that values, beliefs, and attitudes are fundamental components of individual behavior. There is hardly a behavioral situation or problem at work that won't benefit from the use of these concepts as a diagnostic and an action-taking aid.

This chapter also introduces socialization as a key process in the development of individual belief, attitudes and values especially relating to work related attitudes. Organizational socialization processes are considered in detail. We also consider early socialization and preliminary work socialization.

In this chapter, we discuss the role of work and its place in the person's life. The primary goal of the chapter is to make the student aware of the many factors which, according to some thinking and theory, shape human beings' orientation toward work and how that orientation is related to the adjustment of individuals in the place where they work.

An additional objective is to outline our conception of organizational personality orientations. These represent a generalized perspective of different ways that persons view their relationship with the organization and build on the discussion of personality presented in Chapter 2. We develop this into a discussion of organizational commitment and describe continuance, affective, and normative types of commitment.

KEY POINTS

This chapter focuses on (1) a model of attitudes that includes the role and sources of values, beliefs, intentions, and behavior, (2) the functions that attitudes serve, (3) cognitive consistency and dissonance, (4) socialization, and (5) organizational commitment and accommodation.

Once again, students must learn the definitions of basic concepts in order to use them accurately and to understand the models in which they appear. The models can then be used to diagnose and take action on the situation as needed. Because individual behavior is one of the building blocks of the entire text, concepts learned here will apply throughout subsequent topics. Concepts will also remain relevant for their relationships to key dependent variables of performance, satisfaction, attendance, retention, learning, and health and safety.

There is little doubt, in addition to learning and personality (Chapter 2), that values, beliefs, attitudes are fundamental components of individual behavior. There is hardly a behavioral situation or problem at work that won't benefit from the use of these concepts as a diagnostic and an action-taking aid.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

<u>Fundamentals of Work Attitudes</u>
Psychological Functions Attitudes Serve for People

<u>A Model of Attitudes</u>
Figure 3.1: A Model of Attitudes
The Cognitive Component
Values and Beliefs
Attitude and Intentions
Attitudes and Overt Behavior

<u>Attitudinal Consistency and Cognitive Dissonance</u>

<u>Socialization: Developing Work Related Attitudes and Behaviors</u>
Early Socialization Experiences
Parental Influence
Socioeconomic Factors
Preliminary Work Socialization
Organizational Socialization

<u>Organizational Commitment and Accommodation</u>
Table 3.1: Organizational Personality Orientation

<u>Summary</u>

KEY CONCEPTS
Affective component
Affective Commitment
Attitude cluster
Attitude object
Attitude surveys
Attitudes
Beliefs
Cognitive dimension of attitude
Cognitive dissonance
Commitment / Organization commitment
Compartmentalization
Continuance commitment
Decisional dissonance
Disconfirmed expectations
Insufficient justification
Job satisfaction

Multi focal view of organizational commitment
Norms
Normative commitment
Occupational socialization
Organizational commitment
Person-organization fit
Preliminary work socialization
Person-organization fit
Psychological contract
Pivotal norms
Peripheral norms
Socialization
Sufficient justification
Values

EXERCISES
A. KIDNEY MACHINE DECISION

This exercise demonstrates how values, attitudes, and beliefs manifest themselves when people have to make difficult judgments and decisions. The students are asked to act as a hospital advisory committee and decide which one of eight people get to fill a vacancy available on the hospital's kidney machine. To conduct this exercise:

1. Hand out the "Kidney Machine Problem" and "Patient Candidate" sheets on the following 2 pages, and tell the students to study the material in preparation for a meeting of the hospital committee of which they are a member.

2. Give students 5-10 minutes to study the material, working independently, and if they like, to make their choice on one person who should go on the machine.

3. Form students into teams of 4-6 people and give them 20 minutes or so to arrive at their recommendation.

4. Instruct each group to elect a recorder who will also report out and explain their decision to the class.

5. During and at the end of group reports, have the class examine how values, attitudes, and beliefs effected:
        a. The decision process
        b. The final decision made
        c. The interpersonal relationships between
          group members.

Kidney Machine Problem

Community Hospital located in a large southeastern city, operates a kidney machine. A marvel of technological ingenuity, it is the only hope of life for people with some kidney disease.

In actuality, the machine functions as a kidney for people who have lost the use of their own. By connecting themselves to the machine for a period of time each week, people with renal failure can remain alive indefinitely -- or until they die from some other ailment not connected with their kidneys.

There are several problems associated with using this machine, for there are many more people who need it than there is time available on the machine. In fact, only about five people can be placed on it at any one time. Doctors examine all potential patients and determine those who could profit most from connection to the machine. They screen out those with other diseases, for whom the machine would be only a temporary expedient, and they turn their list of recommended patients over to the hospital administration. At present, the doctors have submitted the names of eight persons for one place on the machine.

The committee assembled to make the decision has been given a brief biography of each person appearing on the list. It is assumed that each person has an equal chance of remaining alive if allowed to use the machine. Thus, the committee is asked to decide which one of these may have access to the machine.

Assignment
You are asked to act as a member of this committee. Remember, there is only one vacancy, and you must fill it with one of these eight people. You must agree, unanimously, on the single person who is to be permitted to remain alive. One and only one person from this group can be selected to live. This person will be permitted to use the kidney machine. You must make the decision.

You must describe the criteria (reasons, bases) you used to make your decision, and the method your committee used to arrive at the decision. The only medical information you have is that people over forty seem to do poorer on the machine than those under forty (although they do not necessarily find it useless). It is up to you.

Patient Candidates
1.   Member of the U.S. Senate
        Age 50
        Chairman of Government Waste and Fraud Committee
        Leader of Congressional Hawks
        Disinherited son who demonstrated against Vietnam involvement
        33rd Degree Mason

2.   Political activist
        Age 26
        Girlfriend is active in women's liberation movement
        Published in his field
        Talk show appearances
        Believes society as it exists must be radically changed
        Jailed for demonstrations
        I.Q. 165

3.   Psychiatrist
        Age 59
        Lucrative practice
        Studied in Vienna
        Married, second time for both
        No children
        Consultant to National Civil Rights groups
        Expert in the "Psychology of the Ghetto"

4.   19-year-old college freshman
        Jewish upper middle class parents
        Upper third of high school class
        In high school, active in science affairs and creative in literature
        Able student
        Undecided vocational goals
        Only child, shy, socially not out-going

B. Job Attitude Exercises

These exercises are merely an attempt to give students first-hand experience at taking or using a job attitude survey. Both instruments are ready for reproduction on the following pages.

There are several ways to use these questionnaires. One is to have students fill it out as an employee on a job they currently hold or have held in the past. Another is to have the students administer the questionnaire to others outside the class. In the latter case, the instructor is advised to discuss the sample and monitor the process of administering the questionnaire to insure anonymity and privacy of respondents. Your university may also have specific requirements for working with human subjects.

Score the questionnaires using the attached key. Interpreting the results presents various discussion points. Attention should be given to the implications of collecting such data from an employee group. For example, there are dangers in surveying attitudes and then failing to take action on the results. Students can discuss ways to follow up on such a questionnaire.

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire

SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE
For each of the items below, indicate the degree to which you are satisfied or dissatisfied using the following scale. Enter the appropriate number in the space provided for each item.

1 - Extremely dissatisfied
2 - Very dissatisfied
3 - Somewhat dissatisfied
4 - Indifferent
5 - Somewhat satisfied
6 - Very satisfied
7 - Extremely satisfied

_____ 1. Management's interest in the welfare of employees.

_____ 2. My chances for a promotion to the next higher level.

_____ 3. Pay received for overtime work.

_____ 4. The challenge that my job provides for me.

_____ 5. The feeling of being able to use one's own unique capabilities, realizing one's potentialities.

_____ 6. The feeling of security in my position.
_____ 7. The pay I receive for my work.

_____ 8. The feeling that my job is an important one.

_____ 9. My pride in working for the company.

_____ 10. My chances of going as high as I would like to here.

_____ 11. The feeling of self-esteem in my position.

_____ 12. The feeling of worthwhile accomplishment at work.

_____ 13. The appreciation shown for my work.

_____ 14. The existence of reward based on accomplishment.

_____   15.   The prestige of my position <u>outside</u> the company (the regard received from others <u>not in</u> the company).

_____   16.   The opportunity to plan ahead and carry out the plan.

_____   17.   Pay here compared to most places.

_____   18.   Steadiness of work here compared to most places.

_____   19.   The opportunity to develop friendships in the company.

_____   20.   The opportunity for personal development and growth.

_____   21.   My feeling that the company is a good place to work.

_____   22.   The pleasure of interacting with fellow employees.

_____   23.   The opportunity for independent thought.

_____   24.   Company recognition for a job well done.

_____   25.   Chances of keeping this job as long as I want it.

_____   26.   Satisfaction I get from carrying out my position responsibilities.

_____   27.   Management's understanding of employee's problems.

_____   28.   The feeling of self-fulfillment from work.

_____   29.   Fairness of compensation.

_____   30.   My changes for advancing at a reasonable rate.

_____   31.   The knowledge that my work is acceptable.

_____   32.   The prestige of my position <u>inside</u> the company (the regard received from others in the company).

_____   33.   The awareness that others have of my performance when I perform well.

_____   34.   The opportunity to decide on appropriate courses of action.

_____   35.   The dignity with which I am treated.

_____   36.   The opportunity to discuss personal problems with fellow employees.

_____   37.   The degree to which my work is interesting.

_____   38.   The existence of understanding or sympathetic concern for personal problems.

_____   39.   The freedom to express independent opinions about my work.

_____   40.   Enjoyment of the work I am doing here.

Scoring Instructions: Satisfaction Questionnaire

The questionnaire has 10 subscales. Items for each scale are indicated below. Raw scores can be converted to averages for each scale to allow direct comparisons between scales with different numbers of items.

1.   Extrinsic Rewards: 13, 24, 31, 32, 33

2.   Intrinsic Rewards: 5, 8, 11, 20, 26, 28, 37, 40

3.   Autonomy and Independence: 16, 23, 34, 39

4.   Job Security: 6, 18, 25

5.   Accomplishment Opportunity: 4, 12, 14

6.   Compensation: 3, 7, 17, 29

7.   Advancement: 2, 10, 30

8.   Co-worker Relations: 19, 22, 36

9.   Concern for Personal Welfare: 1, 27, 35, 38

10.   Pride in Company: 9, 15, 21

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

Some people are highly committed to their job, others are loyal to the organization, and others are more oriented to external factors. The purpose of this exercise is twofold:

> 1. To illustrate the differences in the way people view their work as it relates to other parts of their life
> 2. To help you think about different things you expect from your work.

  Listed below are a series of statements. Each statement has three possible responses.

> 1. Indicate your reaction to a statement by choosing the response that most nearly approximates your view and enter a 1 to the right of that response.
> 2. Then decide which is second closest to your views on the statement and enter a 2 in the blank to the right of that response.
> 3. Finally, fill in the remaining blank with a 3.

When you are finished, add up the figures in columns A, B, and C.

	A	B	C
1. I am most interested in:			
Things about my company.	_____		
Things I usually do around the house or in the community.		_____	
Things about my job.			_____
2. I prefer to have as friends:			
People who share my leisure interests.	_____		
People who have work like mine.		_____	
People who work in the same company.			_____
3. I believe that, in general:			
Helping my fellow human beings is more important than anything else.	_____		
My career in the company is more important than anything else.		_____	
The work I do is more important than anything else.			_____
4. Interruptions bother me most:			
When I am talking to someone about my work.	_____		
When I am talking to someone about the office or plant.		_____	
When I am talking to someone about my family.			_____

5. In my free time at work I would rather talk about:
    Whatever comes up.   _____
    The things I am working on.   _____
    Other things going on in the company.   _____

6. I hope my children can:
    Work in any occupation, but in a company like the one I am   _____
        now working in.
    Work in the same kind of occupation as mine.   _____
    Concern themselves with work and company less than I have.   _____

7. I would like:
    To be a more important member of my church, lodge, club,   _____
        or other nonwork organization.
    To be a more important member of my company or office.   _____
    To be specially recognized by those who have work like mine.   _____

8. It is harder for me to listen to criticism of:
    My work.   _____
    My company.   _____
    My family.   _____

9. When I am worried, it is usually about:
    Things that happen at home.   _____
    What people in the company think of me.   _____
    How well I am doing in my career.   _____

Total   _____ _____ _____

Diagnostic Questions
        1. What is your score for column A, B, and C?
        2. Column A reflects what type of organization orientation?
        3. Column B reflects what type of organization orientation?
        4. Column C reflects what type of organization orientation?
        5. What do you think are some implications for the kind of work preferred by one who
        holds a view reflected by a high score in Column A? Column B? and Column C?

*Source: Adapted by Henry Tosi and John Jermier from a questionnaire designed by Robert
Dubin, as a Central Life Interest Scale. We thank him for his tolerance about what we did to his
instrument and for his permission to use it.*

CHAPTER 3 STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define and differentiate among attitudes, values, and beliefs. How are these three concepts linked together to help explain behavior?

Attitudes are predispositions to react in a favorable or unfavorable way to almost anything in the world around us. Values are more general than attitudes and reflect the emotional side of attitudes. They indicate what people consider to be right or wrong. Beliefs represent the cognitive part of attitude. They include thoughts and ideas we hold and the conclusions we draw about objects and events. Our values and beliefs form the basic underpinning of our attitudes and are behind behavioral intentions.

2. What are the various ways that attitudes, values, and beliefs are formed?

Attitudes, values, and beliefs are formed through learning and socialization, so learning models apply to their formation. They are formed through (1) direct personal experiences with an object or event, such as flying for the first time; (2) association, such as when we learn to dislike injections and therefore dislike people who administer them; (3) interacting with people, which provides countless opportunities to shape our likes, dislikes, beliefs, and predispositions; and (4) the mass media such as newspapers, films, and television, which often have a strong cumulative effect.

3. What functions do attitudes serve for people?

Attitudes serve many functions for us. These include (1) providing us a frame of reference such as when we disbelieve that a good friend committed a crime; (2) serving a reinforcement function, such as being on guard when we are near a person who had threatened us in the past; (3) as an expression of values, such as when we publicly take a position on an issue central to our values; (4) protecting our ego or self-esteem, such as when a dominant person views others as usually lazy or dependent; and (5) reconciling contradictions, such as when we compartmentalize two attitudes in order to explain events (e.g., we might retain our positive attitude toward our car when it fails us by holding a negative attitude toward, and blaming, a mechanic or factory worker).

4. List five people, events, or objects about which you have strong attitudes, positive and negative. In what ways might these attitudes affect your behavior as a manager? How will subordinates react to such behavior?

This question can be difficult because students may be unable or unwilling to reveal or evaluate some of their attitudes. Yet this can be a useful exercise if the student can see clearly how powerful attitudes are in shaping behavior. Furthermore, examining how attitudes might operate in their role as a manager can be a beneficial and revealing exercise. Particularly relevant here might be attitudes toward the opposite sex, poor performers, hierarchical organization, personality types, shorter work weeks, and the like.

5. What kinds of new attitudes do you think you might learn as you advance upward in management?

This question also calls for self-examination and reflection. The question can evoke perceptions (or misperceptions) students have about the managerial role. The process may reveal ideas students hold about requirements for managerial success. Some students may focus on humanitarian values while others emphasize competitiveness. Examine which attitudes might be lost or changed is an attempt to uncover dysfunctional attitudes. Some of the chapter's teachings may challenge myths and misconceptions about behavior that are rooted in attitudes and values the student hold.

6. What is the purpose of employee attitude surveys? What cautions should be taken in their use?

Employee attitude surveys are conducted to assess employee feelings, satisfaction, or dissatisfaction with any of a number of work-related factors. Among these are pay, benefits, supervision, the type of work assignments, vacation policy, hours of work, and freedom on the job, to name just a few. Although often anonymous, the organization can code the data to identify whether attitudes vary as a function of the department, organization level, part-time versus full-time employees, etc. Some organizations conduct surveys regularly, others less consistently or not at all. The important thing in doing such surveys is to design them well so that useful and valid data are collected, to fully interpret the results, and above all, to take necessary actions.

7. Explain cognitive consistency and dissonance. Cite several factors that help to cause dissonance.

Cognitive consistency occurs when there is agreement or consonance between our behavior and attitudes, or between our beliefs or thoughts (cognitions). For example, it is consistent to act politely when we value good manners. Cognitive dissonance occurs when there is inconsistency among attitudes, behavior, or cognitions. For example, people who view themselves as honest

may overestimate the value of their charitable donations on their income tax forms, or they may experience dissonance when they see a criminal engage in an inconsistent socialized way. One feels dissonance when there is insufficient justification to act against one's beliefs or values, or when our expectations are disconfirmed.

8. What are the phases of organizational socialization?

Most theories of socialization have three stages. The first is <u>preliminary work socialization</u>. This is the period before one starts to work. It is during this period that one begins to learn organization and work values.

The second stage is <u>organizational entry</u>. This is the period when one first joins an organization. During this period, the person is first exposed to norms of performance and norms of involvement.

The last stage is <u>organizational accommodation</u>. During this stage, a person develops a way of coping with, or adapting to, the place he or she works.

9. What is occupational socialization? Differentiate it from organizational socialization. Analyze to what extent you have experienced occupational socialization at this stage in your life.

Occupational socialization is learning the values of a particular <u>field of work</u> while organization socialization is learning the values that permeate a <u>place</u> of work.

You should be able to engage the class in a discussion of occupational socialization. If your class has any accounting students, for example, you can ask them what they have learned about what an accountant should do, about ethics, and so forth.

10. Give some examples where there is strong occupational socialization before one actually assumes an occupational role.

Some of the fields in which there is very strong occupational socialization are medicine, law, most religious careers, military personnel who attend service academics, and in occupations with long apprenticeship programs.

11. Select two personality orientations discussed in Chapter 3. What are the implications of these types for management and control? Can you relate these personality types to people you know?

This classification of organization orientations is an attempt to characterize the way people are involved with their work and the place that they work. The key point here is that these perspectives are most useful from a motivational and control perspective. They give some

insights about the types of rewards that might appeal to individuals and the way that they may be managed. The types and some of their characteristics are:

1. The <u>organizationalist</u> tends to be highly committed to the place of work. The organizationalist tends to respond to organizational rewards because they represent his or her success in achieving organization status. Organizationalists tend to avoid controversy, maintain the chain of command, have low tolerance for ambiguity and high morale.

2. The <u>professional</u> is more oriented to the <u>work</u> that is to be done rather than the place of work. Professionals see organizational authority as nonrational. They are highly ideological about work values and tend to seek recognition from peers in their field, both inside and outside the organization.

3. The <u>indifferent</u> tends to be alienated both from work and the place of work. They have lower morale, are more oriented toward leisure, and tend to reject status symbols of the organization.

ETHICAL, DIVERSITY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

Diversity Issues:
The Psychological Contract and Women in Procter and Gamble

The case of how Procter and Gamble changed its organizational culture to accommodate women managers is a good example of how learning the organizational norms of performance and norms of involvement do not necessarily lead to better performance. In the early 90s, women recruited for managerial positions in P&G, like men, were led to believe that P&G rewarded high performers with promotion and advancement, not an uncommon thing to promise in the recruiting process. However, until recently, there were not many women in high level positions and women were actually leaving the company at a very high rate.

P&G discovered in an analysis of managerial turnover that two of every three good managers who quit were women. Analyzing the exit interviews, the most frequent reason that the women gave was that they wanted to spend more time with their families. Yet, nothing was further from the truth. P&G dug further into the matter, finding some of the women who had left and interviewing them.

They found that many of these women were in high level, high pressure management jobs, often more demanding and more stressful than the work at P&G. What they also discovered was that these women left because they perceived the norms and practices of P&G were not consistent with a "family friendly" work environment. For example, when women said they wanted to spend more time with their family, the P&G response was to suggest that they take a part-time position. Because this would remove them from the promotion stream, many of the women want more flexible working schedules that would protect their advancement opportunities. The norm of performance, then, was not just that high performance leads to advancement (what they thought when they took the job), but that also that performance had to be executed during the conventionally accepted working hour. What is strange about this is that long hours are expected and, if you think about it some, does it really make a difference when you put them in, so long as you can be there when you must meet with others?

When these problems were discovered, P&G undertook a serious effort to change things, creating a number of task forces to attack them. One conclusion was that "there was a gender aspect to [P&G's] culture that was not intentional, but very real." This is one of the strong forces that determined the norms in P&G, and it needed changing if the turnover of women was to be successfully reduced.

P&G did several things to work on these issues. One was to create a mentoring program in which women worked with male managers to help them understand the power of the culture and what could be done to change it. Another solution was to create more family friendly benefits, allowing all employees more choice in how they took the benefits. And because P&G is so good at marketing, it also undertook to sell the changes internally. One of these internal marketing

strategies was to produce a video in which senior female executives in P&G talked about their jobs and their families and how they had tried to integrate these two facets of life.

These efforts were successful in changing the expectations of both P&G and female employees. After five years of effort, the turnover rate of women managers is the same as for male managers, women are more than 30% of the general managers, and a woman recently was appointed to the Executive Committee, the first in P&G's history.

Source: Parker-Pope (1998)

A Question of Ethics:
Values and Cognitive Dissonance

In the business environment, where maximization of shareholder wealth is often the ultimate goal, the prospect of ethical practices may seem unrealistic for most managers. Typically, a given manager may feel torn when their personal ethics clash directly with the ethical standards (or lack thereof) expected by the corporation. A manager must not only make judgements conducive to business practice, but should, for obvious internal peace, make decisions appropriate for personal morality. Is such a compromise possible?

To begin with, it should be noted that most of the decisions of the business will certainly not fall into blatant categories of right and wrong. Many times, the manager is faced with decisions that, while beneficial to the corporation and not illegal, may make for an uncomfortable personal burden. Just the opposite is also true. Managers will often face a possible outcome that makes for a greater ethical satisfaction, yet leaves the company in a more difficult position. Herein lies the problem: where on this 'ethical spectrum' should you position yourself to stay true to your personal ethics *and* maintain a professional approach to your employer's needs?

Although the position on this spectrum may fluctuate as corporate positions change, the overall keys to finding that ethical compromise remain the same. One such key lies in the repeated consideration of the ethical implications of even simple day-to-day decisions. This repetition of considering the ethical implications of each decision allows for the manager to become better skilled at determining that satisfactory ethical level. Over time, decisions will become more obviously ethical or unethical. Further, this repetition creates an awareness among the manager's co-workers. The amount of unethical prospects put forth by employees will decrease substantially. Finally, it is recommended that the manager start in small steps. This allows for an easier transition to increasing the emphasis on ethical behavior as opposed to making important, highly public decisions based on a new found ethical ideal.

Obviously, finding this balance between business and personal ethics is not a trivial endeavor. The ability to perceive and accurately judge such a situation must be developed and adjusted over time. Still, the balance is not impossible to maintain. It has been successfully implemented by many managers and will continue to be so in the future.

Source Adapted from Dumville (1997)

Global Focus:
A Clash Of Values

The globalization of business puts great pressures on countries on the European continent, at times taking them to a breaking point. Countries such as France and Germany are divided internally over the nature and pace of reforms needed. Certain factions are very resistant to a new European currency, to foreign economics, and even to Anglo-Saxon capitalism and free enterprise. They resist budget cutting, corporate downsizing, service sector growth, and changes in legislation that protects against more open competition and markets. Opponents argue that unless reforms continue, Europeans will lose their capacity to compete and survive in a global economy. Some businesses are already selling or relocating noncompetitive businesses and increasing operations outside Europe. They are concerned about economic health, unemployment, and increasing crime rates. At the root of this controversy lies the threat that reforms bring to basic values about what makes for a good society. Those resisting reform defend social security and social solidarity. They favor a humane government as a safety net, and a high standard of living for all workers. They see service sector jobs as lacking in dignity and potential, and as a cause of an economically divided society. Their opponents want economic survival and prosperity in a global environment. Politicians on either side of these issues walk a tightrope.

CASE: Harrison Electronics and Sarah Cunningham

Harrison Electronics is a large, profitable hi-tech firm located in New Jersey. It designs and produces advanced electronics products mostly for the space program or for specialized industry applications. The president of Harrison is John Dowd. He was a professor of electrical engineering at an important state university before he took a job at Harrison and moved quickly to the top. Dowd is a tough, hard-nosed manager who expects results. His philosophy is to make tough demands and to reward high performers. If he has one fault it is that he is quick to call someone on the carpet. When he believes a person didn't do the job, he lets him or her know, in clear terms.

The major units in Harrison are the production division and the research group. There is a very small government contracts division. The research division is Dowd's pride and joy. Most of the staff are highly trained physical scientists. Dowd boasts that Harrison will always be a growth company as long as they have such strong technical personnel. In fact, Harrison does have a good growth record and there are always opportunities for advancement for those executives who Dowd thinks are good.

Recently Harrison had a contract to develop some specialized computers in a government contract. As a result, several people in the company, especially Dowd, thought the product had potential as a personal computer, so they decided to enter the personal computer business. Dowd set his research group out to the task of developing the hardware and software necessary for the new product line. He and his staff put together a very ambitious schedule to complete product development and put the personal computer on the market.

Harrison added a vice-president of marketing, Sarah Cunningham, who was hired from one of the leaders in the retailing industry. Sarah was a successful top manager in the appliance division, located in California, before coming to Harrison. Sarah is thirty five years old, unmarried, and had lived on the West Coast all her life. Sarah hired a marketing staff and began to develop a plan to sell the new product. She brought in several top people from other firms. However, soon Sarah began running into problems. She couldn't get the ear of Dowd for marketing problems; he and the other top people were, it seemed, more concerned with the technical matters. Sarah had to get most of her programs approved by the executive group, all engineers except her. It became difficult to get anything done. Soon the project began to run with scheduling difficulties. The best engineer assigned to the personal computer project was pulled off by John Dowd to work on a new government contract. It became known around the company that the project was in serious difficulties and there were rumors that it would soon be dumped.

John Dowd called a meeting of the group responsible for the personal computer project. He was very angry about the progress. He told them: "I don't know why you people can't make this thing work. You've got the resources of the best technical staff in the country. I've, spent a lot of money on the project. If it fails, it's your fault. I am holding you all personally responsible."

Sarah became a little concerned. She thought the criticism was unfair. She asked John Dowd, "Don't you think that's a little harsh judgment? After all, we've had serious technical problems and our best engineer has been pulled from the project."

Dowd looked at her and glared, "Sarah," he said, "I don't know what you did in that damned department store where you used to work. Here we deal with hardware, not with fashion. We get results. That's what I want. If you can't get them, maybe you should look for something else to do." Then he turned and walked out of the room.

Sarah didn't know what to do or what to say, John Rice, an old Harrison hand, leaned over to her and said quietly, "Sarah, don't worry. The old man is going through one of his phases. This happens every time something gets behind schedule. He'll be O.K., and so will you."

Sarah wasn't so sure.

1. What would you do if you were Sarah? Why?
2. What are the important factors about the company and the situation that should have been considered by Sarah before she took the job at Harrison?
3. Would a career failure at Harrison hurt Sarah? Why?

CASE DISCUSSION: HARRISON ELECTRONICS

1. What would you do if you were Sarah? Why?

Sarah does not want to react to John David's flare-up in the meeting right now. The reason is simple. Apparently, he has a reputation for being rather aggressive and straightforward and he could become angry at her. If David is as good a manager as it appears he is, later he will see that Sarah is not the cause of the problems.

2. What are the important factors that Sarah should have considered before she took the job?

The company is technology oriented and it has been for several years. Harrison wants to enter a new market, one which is highly competitive. This is the kind of firm that Sarah came from so, in a sense, she is suited for the job.

The real problem is whether or not Harrison can, or will, change the orientation of the unit so that the policy making and strategic influence comes from the marketing side for the word-processing project.
Sarah, and anyone else who is changing jobs, should look carefully at how the new situation fits with her experience. It is a crucial issue in a job choice to try to fit the person's work orientation and experience to a particular job setting.

3. Would a career failure hurt Sarah?

Generally, no career failure can help. However, in this case when there is a misfit between the person and the organization, perceptive employers will notice it. Thus, Sarah will want to be certain that any potential employer is aware of the circumstances.

It would be a very different matter if Sarah had been hired at another retailing firm and failed. Here, perhaps, the failure would be more of a problem because you can draw a stronger, though not certain, inference that her failure was her fault.