

Questions for Review

1. What is the importance of interpersonal skills?
Answer: Understanding human behavior is critical for managerial effectiveness today. To attract and retain high-performing employees, managers must possess interpersonal skills in order to relate to the employees and create a positive and supportive work environment where people want to work. People skills in addition to technical skills are imperative for managers to succeed in the modern demanding workplace.
2. What do managers do in terms of functions, roles, and skills?
Answer: One common thread runs through the functions, roles, and skills of managers: the need to develop people skills if they are going to be effective and successful. Managers get things done through other people. Managers do their work in an organization.

Management functions involve managing the organization, planning and controlling and managing people within the organization, organizing and leading. Management roles (see Exhibit 1-1) are the “parts” managers play within an organization and involve their interaction with people. Management skills, as identified by Robert Katz, boil down to three essential management skills: technical, human, and conceptual. These use OB to manage processes and people to problem solve.
3. What is *organizational behavior (OB)*?
Answer: Organizational behavior (abbreviated OB) is a field of study that investigates the impact that individuals, groups, and structure have on behavior within organizations for the purpose of applying such knowledge toward improving an organization’s effectiveness. As managers accomplish their work through others, OB provides the tools for guiding the productivity of others, predicting human behavior at work, and the perspectives needed to manage individuals from diverse backgrounds.
4. Why is it important to complement intuition with systematic study?
Answer: Behavior according to systematic study is not random. There are fundamental consistencies underlying the behavior of all individuals that can be identified as well as individual differences. The consistencies allow predictability and reasonably accurate predictions regarding behavior and relationships. Systematic study basing conclusions on scientific evidence is complemented by the Evidence-based management (EBM) approach that involves basing managerial decisions on the best available scientific evidence. Intuition, in contrast, is based on one’s “gut feel.” Although unscientific and unsystematic, it is not necessarily incorrect. The use of all three often results in better decisions, but according to Jack Welch, “the trick is to know when to go with your gut.”
5. What are the major behavioral science disciplines that contribute to OB?
Answer: OB is a field of study that investigates the impact that individuals, groups, and structure have on behavior within organizations. Both psychology and sociology are concerned with behavior. Psychology is the science of behavior that studies individual behavior, whereas sociology studies people in relation to their fellow human beings.

Psychological study in the field of OB has contributed knowledge on a number of topics including learning, perception, personality, emotions, training, leadership, motivation, job satisfaction, decision making, etc. Social psychology blends concepts from both psychology and sociology and focuses on people's influence on one another. Sociological study has contributed knowledge on topics such as group dynamics, teams, organizational culture, organizational theory and structure, communications, and power and conflict. Anthropology is the study of societies in order to learn about human beings and their activities within different cultures and environments.

6. Why are there few absolutes in OB?

Answer: Human beings are complex and there are few universal principles that explain organizational behavior. There are many theories about how people behave in organizations but most are not pure cause-and-effect relationships. People are not alike and therefore it is difficult to make many generalizations. Variables such as people's wants, needs, values, and goals can differ tremendously.

7. What are the challenges and opportunities for managers in using OB concepts?

Answer: This field of study offers managers specific insights and opportunities to improve managerial and people skills. Recognizing the value of and embracing diversity in a global marketplace can improve productivity. Learning to empower your people, designing and implementing change programs, focusing on customer service, supporting employees' work-life balance, etc., can all lead to improved productivity, quality, and profitability. Challenges can also be found in the critical labor shortages, the fast pace of change in a world of temporariness, and the need for continuous innovation. Finally, providing a positive workplace with an ethical compass can create a healthy work climate.

8. What are the three levels of analysis in our OB model?

Answer: The three levels of analysis are: individual, group, and organization. The three basic levels are analogous to building blocks—each level is constructed upon the previous level. Group concepts grow out of the foundation laid in the individual section; we overlay structural constraints on the individual and group in order to arrive at organizational behavior.